

The Tripartite Pact and the Idea of a Eurasian Continental Bloc

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1) Shinpei Goto as a pioneer of the Idea of a Eurasian Continental Bloc

The idea of a Eurasian Continental Bloc which Yosuke Matsuoka and Joachim von Ribbentrop had thought can be seen in the theory of "the confrontation between the New Continent and the Old Continent" which was advocated by Shinpei Goto a Japanese politician. Goto studied hygienics in Berlin and Munich under the instruction of Max von Pettenkofer, and obtained an M.D. PhD in the comparison theory of the medical police (Medizinalpolizei) and the medical affairs (Medizinalverwaltung) between Japan and other countries, and returned to Japan. While he was residing in Taiwan as the Director of public welfare, he eagerly read "Der Wettkampf der Völker, mit besonderer Bezugnahme auf Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika (The various competitions among nations: paying attention especially to Germany and the United States of America)" (1905) written by Emil Schalk, and was greatly impressed. Although Emil Schalk was a German, he went to the U.S. at an early age and spent most of his life in the U.S. Emil Schalk felt that Russia and the U.S. would develop into superpowers, particularly the U.S. Therefore, he persuaded Germany to discontinue its dispute with France, and form the central European coalition of nations, including Holland, Italy, Austria, Hungary and Spain, not only with Germany and France, to sound an alarm to Germans of the mother country who had hardly noticed the continued growing strength of both countries.

Goto was probably shocked by the forecasts and warnings of Schalk regarding the U.S. becoming a superpower, and from there, he went beyond the statements of Schalk, and conceived "the confrontation between the New Continent and the Old Continent", which was not discussed by Schalk at all. In order to confront the U.S. who was becoming more powerful, Goto believed that the establishment of an Old Continent union i.e., a Eurasian Continent bloc was essential. Therefore, in 1907, Goto requested a meeting with Hirobumi Ito, who was the Governor General of Korea at that time, in Itsukushima, Hiroshima prefecture, and he explained "the confrontation between the New Continent and the Old Continent" to Ito over a three day period. The reasons for why Ito was gradually pursued by Goto, even though Ito did not listen to the arguments of Goto at first, is described impressively in the "Itsukushima Yawa (Itsukushima Night Story) " written by Goto. Goto recommended Ito to have a meeting in Harbin with Kokovtsov an influential Russian politician, and succeeded in inviting Kokovtsov whom Goto had already met in St. Petersburg, to

Harbin. However, Ito's trip to Harbin turned into a trip to death. Ito, who seemed to be reluctant towards the annexation of Korea, was assassinated immediately after his meeting with Kokovtsov in Harbin.

After the Bolshevik regime was established by the Russian Revolution, Goto as the Foreign Minister played a role to promote Japan's Siberian Invasion for short period; however, after he ascertained that Japan's Siberian Invasion was a failure, he exerted himself for the restoration of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, and invited Adolf Ioffe to Japan in 1923. Although Goto was exposed to the dangers of an assassination by the right-wing opposition movement, he did not flinch and visited severely cold Moscow in December 1927, in an inconvenient health condition after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage. In January 1928, he conferred with Stalin two times. Goto believed that the geopolitical location of Russia for Japan could not be changed, either before or after the revolution, and continued groping for the formation a coalition of Japan, Russia, and Germany¹.

2) A Document (July 19, 1939) which Indicates the Idea of a Four Country Bloc with Japan, the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy discovered in the Yomei Bunko (Yomei Library)

The Yomei Bunko (Yomei Library) of the Konoe family, of which Fumimaro Konoe was a member, still remains quietly today surrounded by trees, in Utano, Ukyo-ku, Kyoto City. In this library, rare historical writings are carefully preserved, such as the Midokanpaku-ki, a diary written by Michinaga Fujiwara (996-1027) who is an ancestor of the Konoe family. Fumimaro Konoe was also keeping important documents which he obtained himself in this library.

In the work: "*Taiheiyo Senso to Nihon Gunbu no Kenkyu* (A Study of the Pacific War and the Japanese Military)" written by Dr. Minoru Nomura (deceased), who was a former Navy serviceman, and successively held positions as the Director of the Military History Department, Japan Defense Agency and professor of the National Defense Academy after the war, contains

¹ Cf. Masaki Miyake, "Goto Shinpei no Gaiikoso (Diplomatic Concept of Shinpei Goto)", *Kan: Rekishi, Kankyo, Bunmei* (Kan: History, Environment and Civilization) Vol. 29, Special Vol. "*Sekai no Goto Shinpei, Goto Shinpei no Sekai* (Shinpei Goto of the World, The World of Shinpei Goto)" (Fujiwara Shoten, April 2007), cf. also Masaki Miyake, *Eurasia Gaiko-shi Kenkyu* (Studies of Eurasian Diplomatic History) (Kawadeshobo-shinsha, 2000), Chapter 5 Part 1, "Confrontation between the New Continent and the Old Continent of Shinpei Goto". The original title of the book is: *Der Wettkampf der Volker, mit besonderer Bezugnahme auf Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (The various competitions among nations: paying attention especially to Germany and the United States of America) Jena, 1905, Natur und Staat, Beitrage zur naturwissenschaftlichen Gesellschaftslehre. Eine Sammlung von Preisschriften, Herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. H. E. Ziegler in Verbindung mit Prof. Dr. Heackel, Siebenter Teil. It was a posthumous work of Emil Schalk (1838 - 1904) published after the writer passed away.

numerous valuable historical records which he was able to acquire from his background and positions. As a part of such research activities, Nomura was permitted access to modern history related documentation which was preserved in the Yomei Bunko (Yomei Library). According to descriptions by Nomura, while he was inspecting the documentation, Nomura was drawn to a document titled 'the Way to End the China Incident both immediately and favorably', which was typed vertically on eleven pages of ruled paper without the name of the writer. "14, 7, 19 Ko (written on July 19, Showa 14 [1939])" was indicated on the last page of this document. That is to say, the document was written on July 19, 1939 without the name of the writer. This document attracted Nomura's attention as a document which advocated a coalition of Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy as a solution to the Second Sino-Japanese War shortly before the conclusion of The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union. Nomura mentioned that Yosuke Matsuoka who became the Foreign Minister of the second Cabinet of Fumimaro Konoe in July 1940, wrote this document and passed it to Fumimaro Konoe, not Toshio Shiratori as suggested in the past. As shown in the following quote, this document mentioned that the best solution to the Second Sino-Japanese War was to establish collaboration between the four countries of Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy². This document insists as follows:

<At present, as the world already knows, Chiang Kai-shek's Regime was supported by two stanchions or two footholds. There is no doubt that these are England and the Soviet Union.

If one of the two stanchions can be removed, this incident can be resolved unexpectedly quickly. If one of the stanchions to be removed is the Soviet Union, this incident can be completely resolved within half a year.

The Soviet Union has been hostile to Japan, and Japan has come to think of the Soviet Union as an enemy. Can this situation be reversed, regardless of these circumstances? That is, can the Soviet Union be alienated from the English-French camp, to bring the ongoing negotiations between England and the Soviet Union to a deadlock? Is there any method to form a camp with Japan, the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy?

If Japan and the Soviet Union can come to terms, that will be enough to determine the attitude of China and the trend of the incident instantly. Even though the Chongqing government still resists, a coup d'etat can easily be executed in Chongqing, and we can do anything, like capturing Chiang. However, I can strongly assert that the situation will be determined without using such methods. In that case, England will be made to look foolish, and his power will

² Minoru Nomura, *Taiheiyo Senso to Nihon Gunbu no Kenkyu* (A Study on the Pacific War and the Japanese Military) (Yamakawa-Shuppan-Sha, 1983), pp.201-218.

become completely useless, and his concessions will be totally shut out from the Eastern sphere³.>

If this document was created by Yosuke Matsuoka as Nomura assumed, considering that this document was found in the Yomei Bunko (Yomei Library), Fumimaro Konoe would have certainly known about Matsuoka's concept of a Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy coalition. If this assumption is correct, I believe that Konoe, who appointed Matsuoka as the Foreign Minister in the second Cabinet of Fumimaro Konoe, expected Matsuoka to achieve this concept.

3) The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union

Andor Hencke the Counselor of the Embassy of Germany kept records of the talks between Joachim von Ribbentrop the Foreign Minister of Germany who visited Moscow to sign The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union and Stalin, from August 23 - 24, 1939, and the records remain in the Diplomatic Documents of the Foreign Ministry of Germany. Joachim von Ribbentrop stated that Germany is prepared to be the mediator in the confrontation between the Soviet Union and Japan who were engaged in the Nomonhan Incident; however, the attitude of Stalin who stated that there are limits to our patience towards Japan's provocation and was very uncompromising to Japan, refused mediation by Germany as suggested by Joachim von Ribbentrop.

First, in the secret protocol of this treaty, it was agreed that the four Baltic countries would be split between Germany and the Soviet Union, and Finland, Estonia and Latvia were to belong to the Soviet Union, and Lithuania to Germany. Secondly, it was agreed that Poland would be split in half between Germany and the Soviet Union, bordering on the three rivers of the Narev, Vistula and San. Thirdly, Germany stated that Germany would have no political interest towards Bessarabia of northern Romania⁴.

The Kiichiro Hiranuma Cabinet which believed that there would be no approach between Germany and the Soviet Union to this point, and the repeated hesitation on whether to limit the target to the Soviet Union or include England and France in a military alliance treaty with Germany and Italy, were astonished by the conclusion of The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, and the government issued a statement saying that a

³ Hiroshi Yoshii, *Zoho Nichi Doku I Sangoku Domei to Nichibei Kankei* (The Tripartite Pact and Japan-U.S. Relations, Revised Version) (Nansosha 1987) pp.79-80.

⁴ Cf. Masaki Miyake, *Stalin, Hitler to Nisso-Doku-I Rengo-koso* (Stalin, Hitler and the Concept of a Coalition of Japan, the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy) (Asahi Sensho 816, The Asahi Newspaper Co., 2007) pp. 69-72.

complicated and mysterious new situation had occurred in Europe. Accordingly, the Hiranuma Cabinet resigned on August 28, 1939. From this point, there was an ambitious debate for a coalition treaty between Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy which suddenly grew in Japan.

The earliest appearance of such an ambitious debate for a coalition with Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy, was in a document called the 'Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Foreign Policies' prepared by Sokichi Takagi an Imperial Japanese Navy Captain on August 24, 1939, which was the next day after The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union was concluded. Captain Takagi was the Research Section Chief of the Ministry of the Navy and concentrated on the Nishida's philosophy, and met with Kitaro Nishida at Harada's residence in Oiso, which was arranged by Baron Kumao Harada in February of this year.

The document prepared by Captain Takagi debates the advantages and disadvantages of three policies, such as a 'Lone and Independent policy', 'Coalition policy with England-France (U.S.)' and a 'Coalition Policy with Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union', and he concluded that the most advantageous policy which Japan should choose, was the 'Coalition Policy' with Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union. Captain Takagi mentioned the following items in this document, as advantages for choosing the 'Coalition Policy' with Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union'. First, since this policy can be started as a foundation of the existing friendly relations between Japan, Germany and Italy, there is an extremely high possibility of achievement, even though some emotional cracks occurred by The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union. Secondly, the policy of England's support of Chiang Kai-shek (route to support Chiang) was mainly of an economic nature; however, it was already nearly stuck, and if the European situation becomes tense, England will have less leeway to worry about China. In contrast, the Soviet Union continued its armed assistance, and it can be expected to increase further in the future. Therefore, there is a great possibility that the collaboration of the coalition of Japan, Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union, will make the Soviet Union stop support of Chiang Kai-shek, and solve incidents with China quickly⁵.

Takagi's document shows the fact that fear existed in a portion of the Imperial Japanese Navy of a full-scale war breaking out with the Soviet Union more serious than the Nomonhan Incident May-September 1939, which was caused by the rash behavior of the Imperial Japanese Army. On the battle field of Nomonhan, an all out attack by the Soviet Union Army on the Far East Front and the Mongolian Army started on August 20, 1939, eight days before the conclusion

⁵ Masaki Miyake, op.cit., pp. 80-87

of The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union. The 23rd Division commanded by Lieutenant General Michitaro Komatsubara suffered a devastating defeat. The complete defeat at Nomonhan brought about results that the upper levels of the Imperial Japanese Army became more prudent than before, at least in regards to the outbreak of war with the Soviet Union, which Takagi had been dreading.

There was a tradition, where some of the upper levels of the Japanese Imperial Navy wanted to stress the friendship with the Soviet Union from the beginning. Although the upper levels of the Navy were opposed to the Tripartite Pact including Takagi, they changed their stance to positively support the concept of a coalition of Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy, as the potential suddenly developed by The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union. This is not so astonishing considering the pro-Soviet tradition of the Navy, since Prime Minister Admiral Tomosaburo Kato⁶.

The concept of a coalition treaty between Japan, Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union had also started in the Army, immediately after the conclusion of The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union. This concept was indicated in the 'Written report regarding the measures on the situation accompanying the sudden changes in the situation in Europe' which was telegraphed to Prince Kanin Kotohito, the Chief of the General Staff, from a General of the Army Kenkichi Ueda, the Commander of the Kwantung Army on the same day the report was created on August 27, 1939, when the Kwantung Army was almost completely defeated by the Soviet Union Army on the Far East Front in the Nomonhan Incident. In this written report, it was proposed that Japan should use Germany and Italy to make the Soviet Union request an armistice, in order to conclude a 'Japan-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact' with the Soviet Union, and advance towards the conclusion of a military alliance with Japan, Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union, which would oppose England. The following was stated at the beginning of this written report.

'In order to accelerate and complete the process of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the following must be performed simultaneously, supply more armaments to be used against the Soviet Union as quickly as possible, thoroughly attack the Soviet Army in the Nomonhan sector and use Germany and Italy to make the Soviet Union request an armistice, and at the same time, conclude the Japan-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact immediately. Furthermore, advance towards the conclusion of a military alliance with Japan, Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union against England,

⁶ Tatsuya Sakai, *Taisho-demokurashi-taisei no Hokai: Naisei to Gaiko* (The Dissolution of the System of the Taisho Democracy: Domestic Policies and Diplomacy) (University of Tokyo Press, 1992) pp. 153-155.

to completely wipe out the foundation of England's strength in the Far East⁷.

Toshio Shiratori who was the Japanese Ambassador to Italy and one of the most enthusiastic advocates of the Tripartite Pact targeting the Soviet Union, England and France, changed to become an active leader in the promotion of the alliance with Japan, the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy. Teiji Yabe, a political science professor at the University of Tokyo, Faculty of Law, wrote that Shiratori gave a speech to the Showa Kenkyu-kai (Brain Trust of Fumimaro Konoe) on October 30, 1939, where he analyzed the situation of Europe, and concluded with a debate on the alliance with Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy⁸.

There was a statement by Harada, who met Prime Minister Nobuyuki Abe on November 4, 1939, where he told Abe that Shiratori insisted an Alliance Japan, Germany, Italy and Soviet Union in order to evict England and the U.S. by this alliance. This insistence of Shiratori is recorded in "*Saionji-Ko to Seikyoku* (Prince Saionji and the Political Situation)" Vol. 8, a commentary of Kumao Harada which is often called the "Saionji-Harada Memories"⁹.

The contents of the talks between Arita and Harada, a few months earlier on September 3, 1939 immediately after the conclusion of The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, when Mr. & Mrs. Hachiro Arita who served as the Foreign Minister in the Hiranuma Cabinet visited the residence of Baron Kumao Harada in Oiso and spent the day together, are also recorded. Arita said, "Recently the Army tried to conclude a military alliance with Germany and Italy and in the end failed. Now, they are taking action to force Japan to join the Non-Aggression Pact of Germany and the Soviet Union, and conclude a military alliance of Japan, Germany and the Soviet Union to fight against England. It is very dangerous because those people who changed from the left wing to the right wing to become the driving power for this idea. Furthermore, a portion of the Army is sympathizing with this group"¹⁰.

4) The Promise of Heinrich Stahmer

On July 22, 1940, the second Cabinet of Fumimaro Konoe was inaugurated after each of the short-lived Cabinets of Nobuyuki Abe and Mitsumasa Yonai. Konoe chose Yosuke Matsuoka as the Foreign Minister. In early September, Heinrich Stahmer who was a special envoy of

⁷ Masaki Miyake, op. cit., pp. 80-87.

⁸ Teiji Yabe, *Yabe Teiji Nikki* (Diary of Teiji Yabe), Vol.1. (The Yomiuri Newspaper Co., 1974) ,p.261.

⁹ Kumao Harada, *Saionji-Ko to Seikyoku* (Prince Saionji and the Political Situation), Vol.8.(Iwanami Shoten, 1952) p.112.

¹⁰ Kumao Harada, *ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop visited Japan, and held secret talks with Matsuoka on the 9th and 10th. The particularly important item in the records of the talks consisting of 15 items which is still preserved today is the 10th item, which is the promise of Germany regarding the friendship between Japan and the Soviet Union, where Germany would play the role of an 'honest broker' as described by Otto von Bismarck during the Berlin Talks in 1878. This tenth item was described as follows.

"Better to reach agreement between Germany, Italy and Japan first and then immediately approach Soviet Russia. Germany is prepared to act part of an honest broker between Japan and Soviet Russia, and she can see no insurmountable obstacle on the path may be settled without much difficulty. German-Soviet relations are good contrary to what the British propaganda tries to represent, and Russia is carrying out to the satisfaction of Germany all her engagements"¹¹.

Stahmer clearly stated that the words he mentioned in item No. 14 could be accepted as the words from the German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop. Assuming that the statement of Stahmer is correct, Joachim von Ribbentrop promised that Germany would take over the role of mediator for the relationship between Japan and the Soviet Union, which greatly deteriorated due to the Nomonhan war. It can be understood that Matsuoka thought that the coalition with Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy, i.e., the "Quadrupartite Entente" in the language of Matsuoka, was possible if an alliance could be concluded with Germany, who had already concluded The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union. Germany and Italy had already concluded an alliance pact in May 1939.

5) Secret Letter "G-1000" to Foreign Minister Matsuoka from Ambassador Eugen Ott

In order to appease the opposition of the upper levels of the Imperial Japanese Navy towards the Tripartite Pact, and to simplify the discussions in the Privy Council, Matsuoka compelled Ambassador Eugen Ott to write secret letter "G-1000", and to include a clause where, if

¹¹ International Military Tribunal for the Far East Criminal Investigation Document No. 1129, Court Documentary Evidence No. 549, Mitsuo Nitta (ed.), *International Military Tribunal for the Far East Stenographic Records* (Vol. 2, Yushodo Co., Ltd., 1968) p.240. The records of talks between Stahmer and Matsuoka is also recorded in: *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik* (Diplomatic Documents of the Foreign Ministry of Germany), Serie D, hereinafter referred to as *ADAP-D*) Vol. 11, 1, Document No. 44, footnote 3 of the document issued on September 10, 1940 sent from the German Embassy of Tokyo to the German Foreign Minister.

the countries indicated in Article 3 of the pact are attacked, whether the country is actually attacked, shall be decided by "Consultation" between the three contracting parties, dated on September 27, 1940, the signing date of pact.

Articles 1 - 3 are as follows;

Article 1. Japan recognizes and respects the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe.

Article 2. Germany and Italy recognize and respect the leadership of Japan in the establishment of a new order in Greater East Asia.

Article 3. Japan, Germany and Italy agree to co-operate in their efforts on the aforesaid lines. They further undertake to assist one another with all political, economic and military means when one of the three Contracting Parties is attacked by a power at present not involved in the European War or in the Sino-Japanese Conflict.

Looking at Article 3 only it seems that if one of the three countries of Japan, Germany or Italy is attacked by the U.S., the other two countries would immediately join the war against the U.S. automatically. However, the "secret letter G-1000" signed by German Ambassador Eugen Ott indicated that Germany agreed to the contents; "It is needless to say that whether or not a Contracting Party has been attacked within the meaning of Article 3. of the Pact shall be determined upon consultation among the three Contracting Parties." The portion on whether a country is actually attacked, shall be decided by "Consultation" between the three contracting parties was meant to avoid automatic inclusion in the war. Using this letter as a basis, Matsuoka insisted that the right of voluntary participation in the war by Japan was ensured, and persuaded the Imperial Japanese Navy, which was concerned that Japan would be pulled into a world war by Germany.

In this letter, it was also indicated that Germany would 'promote a friendly understanding' and 'offer its offices to this end', in regards to the relationship between Japan and the Soviet Union¹².

¹² The Japanese translation of the Letter G-1000 to Matsuoka from Eugen Ott is indicated in Masaki Miyake, *Nichi-Doku-I Sangoku Doumei no Kenkyu* (A Study of the Tripartite Alliance Berlin-Rime-Tokyo) (Nansosha, 1975), pp. 554-556, English on pp. 557-558 and German on pp. 559-561. International Prosecution Section Documents includes the record of the interrogation of Eugen Ott by the trial prosecutor Tavener, on March 12, 1946. Tavener presented this letter to Eugen Ott and demanded confirmation of the letter by Eugen Ott.

Joachim von Ribbentrop was not informed of the letter G-1000 written by Eugen Ott, at the time the pact was signed or after. A detailed historical investigation regarding this matter is indicated in an essay written by Johanna Menzel Meskill a U.S. historian, published in a German Scientific Journal "Contemporary History Journal" Vol. 2, 1957¹³, and in "Germany and Japan between Power: From the Anti-Comintern Pact to the Tripartite Pact" (1962), a doctoral dissertation by Theo Sommer who became the chief editor of a typical German weekly newspaper "Die Zeit"¹⁴.

In the interrogation protocol of Ott and Stahmer, which is included in the records of the International Prosecution Section (IPS) of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, it can also be proven that they both did not attempt to obtain permission from Joachim von Ribbentrop by telegraph from Tokyo, and did not present the secret letter to Joachim von Ribbentrop. However, this letter was very useful to appease the resistance of the Imperial Japanese Navy and the Privy Council.

5) Conclusion of the Tripartite Pact and the 'Secret Letter G-1000'

Talks between Matsuoka and Stahmer were held on 9 - 10 September, 1941, in profound secrecy in the private residence of Yosuke Matsuoka in Sendagaya. They were very careful not to draw the attention of newspaper reporters. The summary of the 15 items in their talks, are as explained previously. After their talks, the discussions between Stahmer and Matsuoka continued over the issue of whether Japan can independently determine to join the war, while not bearing the obligation to automatically join the war when a war breaks out between Germany and the U.S., as assumed in Article 3. of the Tripartite Pact. Matsuoka requested Stahmer to include the independent decision to join the war in the exchange notes of the pact. After all, it was settled by the arbitrary decision of Stahmer, without consulting Ribbentrop in Berlin, to include the clause: "It is needless to say that whether or not a Contracting Party has been attacked within the meaning of Article 3. of the Pact, shall be determined upon consultation of the three Contracting Parties." in the letter to Matsuoka from the German Ambassador Eugen Ott.

International Prosecution Section, File No. 324: Interrogation of Major General Eugen Ott. Cf. *Kokusai Kenjikyoku (IPS) Jinmon Chosho* (Records of the Interrogations of the International Prosecution Section (IPS)), edited and commented by Kentaro Awaya and Yutaka Yoshida Vol. 1 (Nihon Tosho Center, 1993).

¹³ Johanna Menzell Meskill, "Der geheime deutsch-japanische Notenaustausch zum Dreimächtepakt (Dokumentation)", *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1957), Heft 2.

¹⁴ Theo Sommer, *Deutschland und Japan zwischen den Mächten. Vom Antikominternpakt zum Dreimächtepakt* (Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr, 1962), S. 437f.

Although "Japan, Germany and Italy agreed to co-operate in their efforts on the aforesaid lines. They further undertake to assist one another with all political, economic and military means when one of the three Contracting Parties is attacked by a power at present not involved in the European War or in the Sino-Japanese Conflict." was stipulated in Article 3. of the pact, it is unquestionable that the affect of intimidation against U.S. which was the aim of Article 3. of the pact, was lessened by denying the automatic participation in the war with the secret letter. Matsuoka insisted that the contents be added to the exchange notes attached to the pact, not as a secret letter. However, it was natural for Stahmer to oppose this, because Berlin would not accept the exchange notes attached to the pact incorporating such content¹⁵.

Furthermore, there was a concern which would raise another issue. If either Ott or Stahmer, or both of them sent the contents of secret letter G-1000 by telegraph from Tokyo, the telegraph would be immediately intercepted and decoded by the U.S. intelligence agency. In that case, the U.S. would learn the fact that the disclosed provision of the automatic participation in a war in Article 3. of the Tripartite Pact, would be meaningless with this secret letter, and the effect of threatening the U.S. would disappear. If the U.S. had already learned the fact that the Tripartite Pact is no more than a bluff towards the U.S., there was no reason for the U.S. to be excessively hostile to the Tripartite Pact, and the Tripartite Pact may not have further worsened the Japan-U.S. relations.

From December 1945 immediately after Japan was defeated in the war to January of the following year, the leaders of the Imperial Japanese Navy gathered and held 4 round-table talks known as the Naval War Records Review Committee. In the round-table talks held on January 17, 1946, the Tripartite Pact was taken up as the subject of the talks. On September 5, 1940, Koshiro Oikawa was inaugurated as the Naval Minister, replacing Zengo Yoshida. Yoshida, Oikawa and Teijiro Toyoda who was inaugurated as the Vice Minister of the Navy on September 7, 1940, the day Stahmer arrived in Japan, and five former Navy Admirals including Nobutake Kondo and Shigeyoshi Inoue, three former Navy Vice Admirals including Tokutaro Sumiyama, four former Rear Admirals, seven former Navy Captains, three former Navy Commanders, and former Secretary Shigeharu Enomoto attended these round-talks.

¹⁵ The Japanese translation of the Letter G-1000 to Matsuoka from Eugen Ott is indicated in the "Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy Records related to the Conclusion of the Tripartite Pact", pp. 554-556, English on pp. 557-558 and German on pp. 559-561, recorded in :Masaki Miyake, *Nichi-Doku-I Sangoku Doumei no Kenkyu* (A Study of the Tripartite Alliance Berlin-Rome-Tokyo) (Nansosha, 1975). Cf. particularly "Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy Records related to the Conclusion of the Tripartite Pact" recorded in the same book by Miyake, where Matsuoka requested in the beginning that the contents included in this letter be added to the exchange notes, and Ott and Stahmer opposed this strongly.

Among these attendees, Teijiro Toyoda who was inaugurated as the Foreign Minister on July 18, 1941 replacing Matsuoka, the same time the third Konoe Cabinet started, gave testimony which came close to the core. At the beginning of his testimony, Toyoda made the following statement.

"The purpose of the pact of Matsuoka were focused on 7 or 8 items; and their central points were that the support of Japan was not required in the war between England and Germany, and that by restraining the participation of the U.S. in the war by Japan, Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union, we want to restore the global peace as quickly as possible."

According to Toyoda's testimony, it can be assumed that Matsuoka had conveyed the main points which were recorded in the talks with Stahmer, to Toyoda. The following testimony of Toyoda seems to be especially important.

"In order to settle the China Incident, to prevent Japan from becoming isolated, and to prevent the U.S. from participating in the war, an alliance between the four countries including the Soviet Union was the only way. There were no conditions for the automatic participation in the war this time, and the reason why the Navy was opposed to this during the Hiranuma Cabinet was entirely dissolved, and when the Tripartite Alliance was realized, there was a feeling that there was no other way and it was unavoidable¹⁶."

The greatest fear of the upper levels of the Navy was that Japan would be pulled into the war against England and the U.S., according to the provision of automatic participation in the war as stipulated in Article 3. of the Tripartite Pact. Matsuoka appeased the opposition of the upper levels of the Navy by the draft of coalition treaty between Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union, and promising to approve the independent decision of participating in the war, which was forcibly obtained from Germany; however, the U.S. did not grasp the substantial correction of the pact by Matsuoka. Perhaps, the U.S. may have noticed this fact for the first time when the International Prosecution Section (IPS) started interrogating the former German Ambassador to Japan, Eugen Ott and Stahmer in March, 1946. It can be considered that the reason why the trial prosecutor Frank S. Tavenor continued with the persistent interrogation regarding secret letter

¹⁶ Takeo Shinmyo (ed.) *Kaigun Senso Kento Kaigi Kiroku: Taiheiyo Senso Kaisen no Keii* (Naval War Records Review Committee: Details of the Outbreak of the Pacific War) (Mainichi Newspaper Co., 1976) pp. 77-78.

G-1000, was the indication of shock and surprise of the U.S. after learning this fact.

Here, I would like to trace a small portion of the interrogation further involving the G-1000 which was performed on March 6, 1946, in the interrogation file of Eugen Ott which is recorded in the "Records of the Interrogation of the International Prosecution Section (IPS) Interrogation File" Vol. 1. edited and commented by Kentaro Awaya and Yutaka Yoshida.

Question: General Ott, I requested yesterday that you give further thought and study to questions which may have arisen regarding the text of the treaty. I am referring particularly to the use of the word "attack" in Article 3 of the Pact. You have already explained that Matsuoka in his preliminary draft had included the word "unprovoked". Now, will you please state what alternative was used when the word "unprovoked" was omitted.

Answer: When the word "unprovoked" was omitted, Matsuoka, as far as I remember, suggested a consultation of the powers concerned in case of an attack. And to include this, in order not to weaken the Pact, into a secret clause. In this secret clause there were suggested some more items. I remember a repetition of the obligation to assist each other economically and the definite assurance that Germany would do her best to introduce Soviet Russia into the Three Powers Pact.

Question: Was the text of the proposed secret clause reduced to writing at that time?

Answer: Yes.

(Some sentences in-between are omitted by Miyake)

Answer: The German Government acted in this abrupt way because in presenting the secret part we had suggested to adopt it generally and we informed Matsuoka about the attitude of the government that they didn't wish any secret obligations. As I remember, Matsuoka, who was very embarrassed by it, declared that it brings him in a very difficult situation having had a chance of a personal preliminary talk with the Emperor where he outlined the general trend of the Pact and this secret part. Having informed the Emperor in this way and found a certain inclination on his side, he was, after the Japanese tradition, in the bad situation to have his Sovereign informed on a basis which proved afterwards to be wrong. And to save the situation he looked for some way. Now, if he or Stahmer and myself suggested this way of a letter to him, this I can't remember. Anyhow, we decided to write a personal letter to Matsuoka with my signature as accredited to the Japanese government and with the countersignature of Stahmer with the main contents thanking him for his successful efforts

of the conclusion of the Three Powers Pact, and giving a confirmation that we agreed upon a consultation in case of an attack, about the mutual assistance in raw materials, and about the German assurance to do her best to introduce the Soviet Union into the Three Powers Pact.

Question: This letter that you described was considered a substitute for a secret clause to the treaty?

Answer: Yes.

Question: And by it you intended in fact to limit the provisions of the Three Powers Pact, is that true?

Answer: I intended to secure the conclusion of the Pact and I took the responsibility of this consultation because I thought it would eventually, in case of a conflict, give a chance not to enter automatically into a war.

Question: Did you have the prior approval of your government to enter into such a private understanding?

Answer: No, there was no time to get an approval.

Question: Why do you say there was no time to obtain an approval?

Answer: Because it was just before the fixed date for the signing in Berlin arrived and the session of the Privy Council had been fixed, and Berlin stuck invariably to the 27th of September to sign the Pact.

Question: Was this not a very unusual proceeding?

Answer: Yes, I was convinced it was.

(some sentences in-between are omitted by Miyake)

Question: Did you have a conversation after the conclusion of the Three Powers Pact with any German official or representative regarding the contents of that secret letter?

Answer: The Council of the Embassy, Minister Boltze, only.

Question: What was the nature of that conversation?

Answer: He knew about this secret letter.

Question: You gave him no directions at any later date regarding this matter.

Answer: No.

Question: And you received no new information from him regarding this matter?

Answer: No. He couldn't have it. But I had a talk with Stahmer. I arrived in Berlin for the visit with Matsuoka; I wondered that I had never had heard anything about this. So I asked

Stahmer, "How did the Foreign Minister react?" Stahmer told me, "I came to Berlin just in the progress of Molotov visit, so the main assurance of this letter had been in fulfillment—assurance of introducing Soviet Russia into this Pact, so I refrained from giving the letter to Ribbentrop." He told me, "I saw for the present time it is not necessary." I told him, "But this is your responsibility. You have been negotiator of the Pact and you have to inform the Foreign Minister."

(International Prosecution Section, File No. 324: Interrogation of Major General Eugen Ott. 6 March 1946)

The testimony of the former German Ambassador Eugen Ott during the interrogation is as above. It can be proven that after the German government refused to particularly include the word "unprovoked" as an expression of "attack" in Article 3 of the Pact; that Matsuoka then demanded that "a consultation of the three powers concerned in case of an attack in the meaning of Article 3", be included in a secret clause attached to this pact. In contrast to the total refusal of the German government to establish secret clauses, Matsuoka claimed that "if this is refused, I will be put in a very embarrassing position, because I have already reported this secret clause to the Emperor." According to Ott, he could not remember if it was a suggestion of Matsuoka, himself or even Stahmer. Anyway, it was settled after Ott wrote a letter to Matsuoka, and included the demands of Japan in this letter. The appreciation for the efforts of Matsuoka to the conclusion of the pact, whether one of the three powers of the alliance received an attack or not in the meaning of Article 3 of the Pact, shall be determined by the consultation of the three powers, that Germany must supply resources to Japan in the case of a war, and that Germany would do its best to bring the Soviet Union into the pact, were indicated in this letter, i.e. "Secret Letter G-1000". In contrast to such a testimony by Ott, trial counsel Tavener got Ott to confirm the fact, that the letter was a substitute for the secret clause, and strongly pressed; "Is it true that you tried to limit the effectiveness of the pact using the word consultation?" In response to the above question, Ott answered saying "I agreed, because the consultations would present opportunities to avoid automatic participation in a war, in the case a dispute arises", which seemed to be self-justification by mentioning his intentions for peace.

To the question, "Did you get approval for this letter from your home country?", Ott answered, that he did not have time, and that he entrusted Stahmer who was returning to Germany to report to Foreign Minister Ribbentrop; however, when he questioned Stahmer when he returned to Berlin for the visit of Foreign Minister Matsuoka to Germany in March 1941, he testified that the following answer was obtained from Stahmer. When Stahmer arrived in Berlin in November

1940, Foreign Minister Molotov was visiting Berlin from the Soviet Union. During this period, the main assurance of the secret letter of the Soviet Union joining the Tripartite Pact was near realization, and therefore, Stahmer decided that it was not necessary to show this secret letter to Ribbentrop, so it was never shown to him. Ott was astonished by Stahmer's incredible irresponsibility, and Ott testified that he told Stahmer that he was the person in charge of concluding the pact, and that he must show this secret letter to Ribbentrop. The above testimony of Eugen Ott clarified the interesting inside facts involving the Tripartite Pact. Tavenner showed "Secret Letter G-1000" seized from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to Eugen Ott, and demanded his confirmation.

The interrogation on the issues of the Eurasian Continental Bloc was performed on February 27, a few days before the above interrogation. Eugen Ott responded to the question from Tavenner, "Was it the purpose of Germany to make Japan free to attack England, by attempting to bring Russia into the orbit of the Tripartite Pact?" as follows. The important portion of this interrogation is as follows.

Question: Furthermore, isn't that what Germany was attempting to do in behalf of Japan, bring Russia into the orbit of the alliance so that Japan would be free to attack England?

Answer: It might be the idea of Ribbentrop and Hitler. My personal idea was a different one. My personal idea concluding the Three-Powers Pact and after the Three-Power Pact was that by including Russia and possibly China this pact would be so strong that there would be no possibility of war with the United States. (International Prosecution Section, File No. 324: Interrogation of Major General Eugen Ott. 27 February, 1946)

According to the response from Eugen Ott, "The intentions of Hitler and Joachim von Ribbentrop could have been to start a war between Japan and England, in detail, to expand the Tripartite Pact into an alliance with Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy in order to bring Japan to attack Singapore; however, I believed that an alliance would become extremely strong power by the Tripartite Pact including the Soviet Union, and that there would no possibility of a war starting with the United States of America." This testimony was clearly for self-justification. Joachim von Ribbentrop was the one who was thinking like the response from Eugen Ott at the time the Tripartite Pact was concluded. It is a well known fact, that Eugen Ott was maneuvering in Tokyo in order to bring Japan to attack Singapore¹⁷.

¹⁷ International Prosecution Section, File No. 324: Interrogation of Major General Eugen Ott. *Kokusai-kenji-kyoku (IPS) Jinmon Chosho* (Records of the Interrogation by the International Prosecution)

6) Deterioration of Relations between Germany and the Soviet Union

The peak of the good relations between Germany and the Soviet Union was when Joachim von Ribbentrop visited Moscow on September 28, 1939, to sign the German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty, which specified that Germany would turnover Lithuania to the Soviet Union, instead of approving the possession of the area mainly Warsaw City and the Lublin Province, which was occupied by German troops who had crossed the German-Soviet boundary which was specified in the secret protocol of The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union. Subsequently, the German-Soviet relations worsened due to the Soviet Union's annexation of Bessarabia from Romania and Northern Bukovina, which was not specified in the secret protocol on June 27, 1940. Particularly, the annexation of Bukovina which had once been a Habsburg domain, made Hitler angry. The Foreign Minister of Germany and the Foreign Minister of Italy Galeazzo Ciano guaranteed the remaining territories of Romania through the Second Vienna Awards on June 30, in order to secure petroleum; however, this made the German and Soviet Union relations worsen even further. The conclusion of an agreement with Germany on September 27, 1940, in which the Finland government would permit German troops to pass through Finland, unquestionably and decisively worsened the German-Soviet relations. In a meeting on July 30, 1940, Hitler told his military commissioned officers including Franz Halder of his decision to start a military operation against the Soviet Union next spring¹⁸.

7) Molotov, Hitler and Ribbentrop Talks

The Molotov and Hitler talks held in Berlin on 12-13 November, 1940, virtually broke down among others due to the assignment of German troops in Finland. What caused them to oppose each other most intensely was the Finland issue. They also opposed each other regarding the Soviet Union's annexation of Bukovina of Romania and the "Vienna Awards", in which Germany and Italy guaranteed the remaining territories of Romania. Regarding Bulgaria, Viacheslav Molotov also irritated Hitler by strong allegations. After the talks between Molotov and Hitler broke down, Ribbentrop presented a draft of coalition treaty between Germany, Italy,

Section), edited and commented by Kentaro Awaya and Yutaka Yoshida, Vol. 1.

¹⁸ Generaloberst Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, and Band I. *Vom Polenfeldzug Bis Zum Ende Der Westoffensive* (14.8.1939-30.6.1940), Bearbeitet von Hans-Adolf Jacobsen in Verbindung mit Alfred Philippi, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1962), S. 24f.

Japan, and the Soviet Union to Molotov in the final talks on the evening of the 13th. Molotov only promised that the results of the talks would be discussed in Moscow, and left Berlin. On November 25, as a condition of the Soviet Union joining the coalition treaty between the four countries, Stalin responded with a condition that Hitler would never accept, such as the immediate withdrawal of German troops from Finland. Since the records of these talks are well known as they are recorded in the "*Nazi-Soviet Relations 1938-1941*" a collection of documents related to Germany and the Soviet Union released by the U.S. State Department in 1948 ("Taisen no Hiroku" translated in Japanese)¹⁹, it will not be described in detail in this section. However, I would like to only describe the details of Ribbentrop presenting a draft plan of the coalition treaty between Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy to Molotov in the talks between both Foreign Ministers Molotov and Ribbentrop, held from 21:45 to 24:00 on November 13, 1940 in a luxurious air raid shelter dedicated for Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, because the bombardment of Berlin by the Royal Air Force had already started.

In these talks, Ribbentrop stated that he would like to present a draft plan regarding the coalition treaty between Japan, Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union to Molotov today, even though it is only an outline. He also stated that he had not talked to Japan or Italy in regards to this matter in such a detailed form, because he believed that it was necessary to clarify this issue between Germany and the Soviet Union first. Furthermore, he said that this is not a final and decisive proposal from Germany, and that it was just a rough plan, which must be discussed between Germany and the Soviet Union, and between Molotov and Stalin. Ribbentrop said that in order to advance the diplomatic negotiations with Italy and Japan in regards to this matter, it would be meaningful when this issue is clarified between Germany and the Soviet Union.

Ribbentrop presented this agreement in the following form.

"The Governments of the states of the Three Powers Pact, Germany, Italy, and Japan, on one side, and the Government of the U.S.S.R. on the other side, motivated by the desire to establish in their natural boundaries an order serving the welfare of all peoples concerned to create a firm and enduring foundation for their common labors toward this goal, have agreed upon the following:

¹⁹ *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1938-1941*. Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office, Edited by Raymond James Sontag and James Stuart Beddie and Originally published by United States Government Printing Office and for the Department of State, Washington, 1948, Reprinted in 1976 by Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut.

Article 1

In the Three Powers Pact of September 27, Germany, Italy, and Japan agreed to oppose the extension of war into a world conflict with all possible means and to collaborate toward an early restoration of world peace. They expressed their willingness to extend their collaboration to nations in other part of the world which are inclined to direct their efforts along the same course as theirs. The Soviet Union declares that it concurs in these aims and is on its part determined to cooperate politically in this course with the Three Powers.

Article 2

Germany, Italy, Japan and the Soviet Union undertake to respect each other's natural spheres of influence. In so far as these spheres of influence come into contact with each other, they will constantly consult each other in an amicable way with regard to the problems arising therefrom.

Article 3

Germany, Italy, Japan and the Soviet Union undertake to join no combination of powers and to support no combination of powers which is directed against one of the Four Powers.

The Four Powers will assist each other in economic matters in every way and will supplement and extend the agreements existing among themselves²⁰.

Ribbentrop stated that he was thinking that the effective period of this agreement would be 10 years, and discussions would be held to extend the agreement before expiration, and that the agreement would be disclosed. He also mentioned that it would also be possible to create a secret agreement concerning the expectations for the territories of the four countries. He also stated that Germany would like to obtain Central Africa as a territory, apart from the change of territories to be realized by the peace treaty, and stressed the territories that Italy would like to have are in North Africa and North East Africa, apart from the change of territories to be realized by the peace treaty. Ribbentrop also mentioned, that it was necessary to clarify by diplomacy the desires of Japan, for example, the boundary lines could easily be found by a method, such as establishing a line which would run south of the Japanese Empire islands and Manchukuo, and stressed the territories that Soviet Union would like to have, would probably be south of the Soviet Union sphere, in the direction of the Indian Ocean²¹.

²⁰ *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1938-1941*, p. 249f.

²¹ *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, p. 249f.

Ribbentrop described the Japan-Soviet Union relations as follows.

"As Herr Molotov knew, he (the Reich Foreign Minister) had always shown a particular interest in the relations between Japan and the Soviet Union. He would appreciate it if Herr Molotov could say what the state of these relations was at the present time. As far as the German Government was informed, Japan was anxious to conclude a nonaggression treaty. It was not his intention to interfere in matters which did not directly concern him, but he believed that it would be useful if this question were also discussed between him and Molotov. If a mediating influence on the part of Germany were desired, he would be glad to undertake this office. To be sure, he still clearly recalled Herr Stalin's remark, when Herr Stalin said that he knew the Asiatics better than Herr von Ribbentrop did. Nevertheless, he wished to mention that the willingness of the Japanese Government to come to a broad understanding with the Soviet Union was known to him. He also had the impression that if the nonaggression pact materialized the Japanese would be prepared to settle all other issues in a generous manner. He wished to stress explicitly that Japan had not asked the German Government to mediate. He, the Reich Foreign Minister, was, however, informed the state of affairs, and he knew that, in case of the conclusion of a nonaggression pact, Japan would be willing to recognize the Russian spheres of influence in Outer Mongolia and Sinkiang, provided an understanding with China were reached. An agreement could also be reached on possible Soviet aspirations in the direction of British India, if an understanding were reached between the Soviet Union and the Tripartite Pact. The Japanese Government was disposed to meet the Soviet wishes half-way in regard to the oil and coal concessions on Sakhalin Island, but it would first have to overcome resistance at home. This would be easier for the Japanese Government if a nonaggression pact were first concluded with the Soviet Union. Thereafter, the possibility would undoubtedly arise for an understanding on all other points also."²²

It is recorded that Molotov responded as follows regarding the Japan-Soviet Union relations, in correspondence to a question from Ribbentrop, where he wanted to know the opinions of Molotov regarding the various issues that he had mentioned.

"Herr Molotov replied that, concerning Japan, he had the hope and conviction that they would

²² Ibid., p. 251.

now make more progress on the road to understanding than had previously been the case. Relations with Japan had always been fraught with difficulties and reverses. Nevertheless, there now seemed to be prospects of an understanding. The Japanese Government had suggested the conclusion of a nonaggression treaty to the Soviet Government—in fact, even before the change of government in Japan—in which connection the Soviet Government had put a number of questions to the Japanese Government. At present, the answer to these questions had not yet been received. Only when it arrived could negotiations be entered into—negotiations which could not be separated from the remaining complex of questions. The solution of the problem would therefore require some time."²³

Molotov pointed out that the Germans were assuming that the war against England had already actually been won. Molotov continued with remarkable sarcasm saying, if Germany says that Germany was waging a life and death struggle against England, he could only construe this as meaning that Germany was fighting "for life" and England "for death." Molotov stated that he could not take a definitive stand at this time, since he did not know the opinion of Stalin regarding the area of influence. Molotov gave his sincere greetings to Ribbentrop, and emphasized that he shouldn't regret air raid alert warnings, because he owed to it an extensive conversation with the German Foreign Minister²⁴.

Molotov, with severe sarcasm, mentioned he was able to have satisfactory talks with the German Foreign Minister, because of the air alert warnings. There is a sequel to these talks mentioned in the "Memoirs of the Second World War" of Winston Churchill. The War Cabinet Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Churchill visited Moscow for the first time in the summer of 1942. At this time, Stalin asked Churchill if an air raid was made on Berlin in November, 1940 knowing that Molotov was visiting Ribbentrop in Berlin, and Churchill nodded with a sense of affirmation. When Ribbentrop led Molotov to a luxurious air raid shelter, and just after Molotov entered the room, the air raid started. According to Stalin, when Ribbentrop said "England is finished", Molotov retorted, "In that case why are we in an air raid shelter, and what country is dropping these bombs?"²⁵

²³ *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, p. 252.

²⁴ ADAP-D, Vol. 11, 1, Document No. 329. Memorandum of Understanding of the Final Talks of the Foreign Ministers of Germany and the Soviet Union, recorded by Embassy Councilor Hilger. *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, p. 254.

²⁵ Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Volume II, *Their Finest Hour* (London:Cassell, 1949), pp. 517-518.

8) Draft of Coalition Treaty between Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union discovered in German Embassy in Moscow after the War

After the German-Soviet war ended with the defeat of Germany, an "Agreement between the States of the Three Powers Pact, Germany, Italy, and Japan, on the One Side, and the Soviet Union on the Other Side" was discovered in secret documents in the German Embassy in Moscow. Ingeborg Fleischhauer asserted that this draft was created in the German Embassy in Moscow, to meet the departure of Molotov from Moscow on November 11, 1940²⁶. According to Ingeborg Fleischhauer, the German Ambassador Schulenburg who attended the party of Molotov carried this draft to Berlin²⁷. Therefore, the draft of the coalition treaty between Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union was created in the German Embassy in Moscow, and Schulenburg presented and explained the draft to Molotov in Berlin. The outcome of Schulenburg's visit to Berlin from September 22 to October 15, 1940 since he left Moscow was the letter from Ribbentrop to Stalin dated October 13 and the realization of inviting of Molotov to Berlin. This letter indicates the remarkable and direct influence of Schulenburg²⁸. According to Fleischhauer, the concept of the coalition treaty between Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy was proposed by Schulenburg while he was in Berlin; however, it is not possible to exactly verify how the concept was deployed in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although it is unquestionable that Ribbentrop saw in establishing a powerful continental bloc including the Soviet Union the possibility of forcing England to surrender, it is hard to believe that Hitler was affirmative for such a concept. Fleischhauer commented that it is questionable whether Hitler was earnestly considering such a solution from the beginning²⁹.

The contents of the draft of the coalition treaty between the four countries discovered in Moscow, completely conformed to Article 1 and Article 2 which Ribbentrop presented to Molotov, and almost conformed to Article 3, even though there was a slight difference in the expression. There were three articles in the draft presented by Ribbentrop; however, the term of validity that was mentioned verbally by Ribbentrop, was stipulated in the fourth article. The draft was as follows.

²⁶ Ingeborg Fleischhauer, *Diplomatischer Widerstand gegen "Unternehmen Barbarossa". Die Friedensbemühungen der Deutschen Botschaft Moskau 1939-1941*, (Berlin/Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1991), S. 224.

²⁷ Ebenda, S. 229.

²⁸ Ebenda, S. 218f.

²⁹ Ebenda, S. 224f.

Miyake The Tripartite Pact and the Idea of a Eurasian Continental Bloc

Draft

"Agreement Between the States of the Three Power Pact, Germany, Italy, and Japan, on the One Side, and the Soviet Union on the Other Side

The Governments of the states of the Three Power Pact, Germany, Italy, and Japan, on one side, and the Government of the U.S.S.R. on the other side, motivated by the desire to establish in their natural spheres of influence in Europe, Asia and Africa a new order serving the welfare of all peoples concerned and to create a firm and enduring foundation for their common labors toward this goal, have agreed upon the following:

Article I

In the Three Power Pact of September 27, 1940, Germany, Italy, and Japan agreed to oppose the extension of war into a world conflict with all possible means and to collaborate toward an early restoration of world peace. They expressed their willingness to extend their collaboration to nations in other part of the world which are inclined to direct their efforts along the same course as theirs. The Soviet Union declares that it concurs in these aims of the Three Powers Pact and is on its part determined to cooperate politically in this course with the Three Powers.

Article II

Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union undertake to respect each other's natural spheres of influence. In so far as these spheres of influence come into contact with each other, they will constantly consult each other in an amicable way with regard to the problems arising therefrom.

Germany, Italy, and Japan declare on their part that they recognize the present extent of the possessions of the Soviet Union and will respect it.

Article III

Germany, Italy, Japan and the Soviet Union undertake to join no combination of powers and to support no combination of powers which is directed against one of the Four

Powers.

The Four Powers will assist each other in economic matters in every way and will supplement and extend the agreements existing among themselves.

Article IV

This agreement shall take effect upon signature and shall continue for a period of ten years. The Government of the Four Powers shall consult each other in due time, before the expiration of that period, regarding the extension of the agreement.

Done in four originals, in German, Italian, Japanese, and Russian languages.

Moscow, 1940."³⁰

According to notes in the Diplomatic Documents of the Foreign Ministry of Germany, "9.11.40" was written in pencil on the upper right corner of the first page, in the above draft of the coalition treaty between the four countries, which is considered to have been created in the German Embassy in Moscow, and approved by Ribbentrop. It can be imagined that the draft was completed in a rush by German Embassy staff including Schulenburg in Moscow, to meet the departure of Molotov from Moscow on September 11, 1940. The date of November 9, 1940 most likely indicates the completion date of the draft. It is clear from the records of Hilger recorded in the Diplomatic Documents of the Foreign Ministry of Germany, that Ribbentrop explained this draft to Molotov. However, it is rather mysterious and continues to be a mystery, that this draft could not be discovered from the Diplomatic Documents of the Foreign Ministry of Germany in Berlin, which was seized by the Allied Forces, and was only discovered in the German Embassy in Moscow. Normally, people would think that at least a copy should have remained in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin, even though it was not original.

Most likely, Molotov received a copy from Ribbentrop and brought it back to Moscow. The above can be imagined from the following reply from the Soviet Union, which mentions that the draft of the coalition treaty between Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union will be accepted with conditions. The draft of the coalition treaty between Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union may still be preserved in documents of the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, or was discarded to conceal the fact that Molotov discussed with Nazi Germany in Berlin

³⁰ ADAP-D, Vol. 11, 1, Document No. 309. Agreement Between the States of the Three Powers Pact, Germany, Italy, and Japan, on the One Side, and the Soviet Union on the Other Side. *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, pp. 255-256.

during World War II.

9) Reply of Stalin on the Acceptance of the Draft of the Coalition Treaty between Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union with Conditions, and War Preparation Directive of Hitler against the Soviet Union

Molotov invited Schulenburg on November 25, and dictated the reply of the Soviet Union government regarding the draft of the coalition treaty between Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union which was presented by Ribbentrop. The contents of the reply are as follows, according to an urgent telegram which Schulenburg sent to Ribbentrop from Moscow on November 26 at 05:34 A.M.

"The Soviet Government has studied the contents of the statements of the Reich Foreign Minister in the concluding conversation of November 13, regarding political collaboration and reciprocal economic support subject to the following conditions:

The Soviet Union government is prepared to accept the draft of the coalition treaty between the four countries concerning political cooperation and mutual economic support as outlined in the final talks on November 13 with the Foreign Minister of Germany, based on the following conditions.

- 1) Provided that the German troops are immediately withdrawn from Finland, which, under the agreement of 1939, belongs to the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. At the same time the Soviet Union undertakes to ensure peaceful relations with Finland, and to protect the German economical rights and interests in Finland (export of lumber and nickel).
- 2) Provided that within the next few months the security of the Soviet Union in the Straits is assured by the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, which geographically is situated inside the security zone of the Black Sea boundaries of the Soviet Union, and by the establishment of a base for land and naval forces of the U.S.S.R. within range of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles by means of a long-term lease.
- 3) Provided that the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of the aspirations of the Soviet Union.
- 4) Provided that Japan renounces their rights to concessions for coal and oil in Northern

Sakhalin."³¹

The reply from the Soviet Union which was read by Molotov was practically the response from Stalin to Hitler. George F. Kennan who was a diplomatic official from the U.S., served as an Ambassador to the Soviet Union, and a researcher of diplomatic history, stated that this was one of the most interesting documents in the history of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. As Kennan has also suggested, it can be assumed that Stalin was thinking that he would be able to reply with these contents, because Stalin overestimated that he was still in a far more advantageous position compared to Hitler, where he could force a high price from Hitler towards the Soviet Union for joining the coalition treaty between the four countries, and he thought that future negotiations would start using this reply as a starting point, and all these negotiations were no more than preliminary dealings³².

Among the four conditions, however, Hitler was not going to accept the demand for the withdrawal of German troops from Finland at all. This became clear from the statements of Hitler, in the second talks between Molotov and Hitler. The meaning of this reply was for Germany to hand over Finland first, according to the promise of Germany in secret protocol of The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, and if Germany requires lumber and nickel so badly, the Soviet Union would promise to supply it later. When comparing the demands of Molotov in Berlin, the reply from Stalin, and the supplementary explanations concerning the reply from Molotov which Schulenburg sent by urgent telegram to Ribbentrop, the second and the third surpassed the first even further. Please refer to the "Stalin, Hitler to Nisso Doku I Rengokoso (Stalin, Hitler and the Concept of a Coalition with Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy)" written by Masaki Miyake, for the details. In the explanation of Molotov, the protocol between Japan and the Soviet Union concerning the abandonment of the mining rights to the coal and oil in Northern Sakhalin of Japan in exchange for adequate compensation was also demanded³³.

Hitler did not reply at all to the reply from the Soviet Union, in which the Soviet Union stated that it is prepared to join the coalition treaty between Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy with the conditions mentioned above. The Soviet Union also presented a draft of the confidential protocol attached to the coalition treaty between the four countries, corresponding to

³¹ ADAP-D, Vol. 11, 2, Document No. 404. Urgent telegram from the Moscow embassy to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs

³² George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*, (Boston/Toronto: Atlantic-Little Brown), 1960, p. 344.

³³ ADAP-D, Vol. 11, 2, Document No. 404.

the four conditions. From the behavior of the Soviet Union, it becomes clear that the Soviet Union was not paying attention to the fact that Hitler was close to deciding on a German-Soviet war.

Hitler issued "Fuehrer's Order No 18" on November 12, 1940, the day Molotov arrived in Berlin. Although this order covered a wide range of items, such as France, Spain, Portugal, Egypt, the Balkans, England and others, in the items regarding Russia, the following was indicated. "The political talks have started for the purpose of clarifying the stance of Russia in the near future. Regardless of the results that these talks will bring, we must continue to prepare towards the East which has already been ordered verbally"³⁴.

Hitler ordered what must be prepared in detail for a war against the Soviet Union, by "Fuehrer's Order No. 21 (Operation Barbarossa Directive)" on December 18. If the attitude of Stalin showed unexpected concessions to Germany, which was to be conveyed by Molotov on November 12, Hitler may have avoided the war against the Soviet Union, or at least delayed it. However, no such situation developed. The final reply from Stalin on November 25 was much stronger than the reply of Molotov in Berlin. For example, the demand of establishing a military base for the Soviet Union in both straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles was contained in this final. Reply . Hitler 's reaction to this reply was "Fuehrer's Order No. 21".

The portion equivalent to the general remarks at the beginning of "Fuehrer's Order No. 21" was described as follows. The deadline for completing the war preparations against the Soviet Union, i.e., the scheduled date for the outbreak of war against the Soviet Union, was assumed to be May 15, 1941. It also directed that the war preparations against the Soviet Union must be kept confidential.

"The German Armed Forces (Wehrmacht) must be prepared to crush Soviet Russia in a quick campaign even before the conclusion of the war against England.

For this purpose, the Army will have to employ all available units, with the reservation that the occupied territories must be secured against surprise attacks.

For the Air Force it will be a matter of releasing such strong forces for the eastern campaign in support of the Army that a quick completion of the ground operations may be expected and that damage of the eastern German territory by enemy air attacks will be as slight as possible. This concentration of the main effort in the East is limited by the requirement that the entire combat and armament area dominated by us must remain adequately protected against enemy air attacks and that the offensive operations against England, particularly her supply lines, must not be permitted

³⁴ ADAP-D, Vol. 11, 2, Document No. 323, "Fuehrer's Directive No. 18".

to break down.

I shall order the concentration against Soviet Russia possibly eight weeks before the intended beginning of operations.

Preparations requiring more time to start are to be started now——if this has not yet been done——and are to be completed by May 15, 1941.

It is to be considered of decisive importance, however, that the intentions of an attack is not discovered³⁵."

The directive continues as follows. The mass of the Russian Army in Western Russia is to be destroyed by driving forward in wedges with tanks, and the retreat of intact battle-ready troops into the wide territories of Russia is to be prevented. The ultimate objective of the operation is to establish a defense line towards the Asian areas of Russia, from a line running approximately from Volga River to Archangelsk, and the industrial area remaining in Russia along the Ural mountain can be eliminated by an air campaign of the German Air Force. As allies, military cooperation will be provided by Romania and Finland. A directive covering details is indicated for each of the Army, Navy and Air Force³⁶.

The margin of peace by compromise with the Soviet Union had disappeared by the issuance of the "Operation Barbarossa Directive". The concept of a coalition treaty between Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy had completely disappeared as well.

8) The Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact

From the end of March to April 1941, Foreign Minister Matsuoka visited Moscow, Berlin and Rome, and signed The Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact on April 13, ignoring that Hitler and Ribbentrop had hinted that the outbreak of war against the Soviet Union was near, to stop Matsuoka from concluding the pact with the Soviet Union.

Although considerable limitations must be attached to the following assumption, The Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact which Foreign Minister Matsuoka of the second Cabinet of Fumimaro Konoe signed in Moscow on April 13, 1941, can be regarded as the carrying over of the last wishes of the Japan-Soviet collaboration of Shinpei Goto mentioned in the beginning. Matsuoka was the 13th President of the South Manchurian Railway Company, starting from Goto who was the 1st President, and inaugurated as the Foreign minister 22 years after Goto. Matsuoka

³⁵ ADAP-D, Vol. 11, 2, Document No. 532, "Fuehrer's Directive, No. 21", *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, pp. 260-261.

³⁶ *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, pp. 261ff..

resigned from diplomatic service in 1921, and became the staff member of the South Manchurian Railway Company. Since he was the Vice President of the South Manchurian Railway Company from 1927 to 1929, and was President of the same company from 1935 to 1939, he spent a considerably long period of time with the South Manchurian Railway Company, where Goto had served as the 1st President.

On March 24, 1941, Matsuoka met with Molotov the Prime Minister / Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union in Moscow, and at that time, Matsuoka was convinced that he had to improve the Japan-Soviet relations. Regarding the improvement of Japan-Soviet relations, Matsuoka told Molotov that he used to hold a position like a Section Chief in the headquarters of Count Shinpei Goto about 30 years ago, and that he has been concerned about establishing good relations between Russia and Japan, since he sympathized with the opinions of Count Goto. The position which Matsuoka held in the headquarters of Count Shinpei Goto mentioned, was the Section Chief of the Foreign Affairs Division of the Directorate of Kwantung Province located in Ryujin, from November 1906 to November 1907.

Stalin came to Yaroslavl Station in Moscow to see off Matsuoka's party. It is a well known story that Stalin held the shoulder of Matsuoka at the station and shouted "we are Asians". When Stalin found the German Ambassador Schulenburg in the send off crowd at the station, Stalin threw his arm around the shoulder of Schulenburg, and said "We must remain friends and you must now do everything to that end". German Ambassador Schulenburg stationed in Moscow sent a telegram to Ribbentrop reporting on what Stalin said. Stalin turned to German Acting Military Attaché, Colonel Hans Krebs, first made sure that he was German, and then Stalin said to him: "We will remain friends with you—in any event (*auf jeden Fall*)!". Schulenburg reported, that "Stalin doubtless brought about this greeting to Colonel Krebs and myself intentionally, and thereby attracted the general attention of the numerous persons who were present"³⁷.

The outbreak of the war between Germany and the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, was the final death sentence to the concept of a coalition of Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy. However, this concept was already dead at the time Hitler issued the preparation directive for Operation Barbarossa on December 18, 1940, after the talks between Hitler and Molotov broke off. Ribbentrop, who was remarkably enthusiastic about this concept, gave up after that. In Berlin, Ribbentrop faced Matsuoka and told him that he was clearly opposed to Matsuoka's concluding of the pact with the Soviet Union in Moscow. The outbreak of war between Germany and the Soviet Union on June 22 was disadvantageous for Matsuoka's position, and he was expelled from the

³⁷ *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, p.324.

Cabinet by the mass resignation of the second Cabinet of Fumimaro Konoe on July 16.

9) Pro-Britain and anti-Soviet Policy of Hitler, and pro-Soviet and anti-Britain Policy of Ribbentrop

The period after the Anti-Comintern Pact was established in November 1936 until the outbreak of war between Germany and the Soviet Union in June 1941, the diplomacy of Japan continued to be confused by Hitler and Ribbentrop. Ribbentrop concluded the Anti-Comintern Pact which made the Soviet Union a hypothetical enemy. Soon after that, however, he lost interest to the track of the Anti-Comintern Pact, where Germany and Japan were assumed to put pressure to the Soviet Union from the East and West, and began to have intense interest in the concept of cooperation where Germany, Italy and Japan would check England as a hypothetical enemy of Germany. During the period while Ribbentrop was stationed in London as an Ambassador, this concept was clearly indicated in a "memorandum for the Fuhrer" (hereinafter referred to as the "Memorandum of Ribbentrop") as a suggestion to Hitler, which was created on January 2, 1938³⁸.

In the "Memorandum of Ribbentrop", Ribbentrop is insisting that there is a high possibility that France may take military action against Germany to protect the "various Eastern allies", such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia and others. In that case, France was counting on support from England; however, if the British empire can be checked by the combination of Germany, Italy and Japan, France could not count on support from England, and they would have no room to maneuver³⁹. Ribbentrop's statements are as follows.

"Due to these reasons, we have interest in strengthening the Berlin - Rome axis and the Berlin - Rome - Tokyo triangle, and in the participation of other countries in this constellation. The more the constellation of our friendship becomes secure, the more the probability of England and France remaining neutral will increase regarding any dispute involving Germany in Central Europe."⁴⁰

The behavior of Japan made Ribbentrop who thought like the above very impatient. Japan would agree to the strengthening of the Anti-Comintern Pact between Japan, Germany and Italy, if

³⁸ Cf. Masaki Miyake, *Nichi Doku I Sangoku Doumei no Kenkyu*, Chapter 3, involving the discussion on "Memorandum of Ribbentrop".

³⁹ "Memorandum of Ribbentrop" is recorded in the Diplomatic Documents of the Foreign Ministry of Germany, Series D, Vol. 1, as Document No. 93, "Notiz für den Führer."

⁴⁰ Ebenda., S. 134.

the Soviet Union was targeted, and Japan would back off if both England and France are included as targets in the so called, and this attitude of Japan was far distanced from the position which Ribbentrop wanted to reach in those days, to check England and France by the "Berlin - Rome - Tokyo triangle".

Ribbentrop then tried to bring Japan who was thinking that it was betrayed by Germany which had concluded by its own initiative The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, into a "cooperative relationship of the four countries targeting England" of Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy⁴¹.

The diplomatic policy of Ribbentrop can be called the "policy of pro-Soviet and anti-Britain". The diplomatic policy of Hitler, however, can be called the "policy of pro-Britain and anti-Soviet". Japan was severely confused, because such conflicting policies existed at the same time in the German diplomacy. What clarified these two conflicting policies in German diplomacy, was "*Deutsche Aussenpolitik 1933-1941*" of Klaus Hildebrand, professor of Medieval and Modern History at the University of Bonn.⁴² To date, I believe that the explanation shown in this book by Klaus Hildebrand, especially in the Chapter 5, is the most convincing thesis regarding German diplomacy during the period from The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, the Tripartite Pact, to the outbreak of the war against the Soviet Union⁴³.

In short, Ribbentrop wanted Russia to remain a strong country, and he was trying to force England to concede by creating a continental bloc from Madrid to Tokyo via Moscow, in contrast to Hitler's continued hope for peace between England and Germany, and Hitler came up with the idea of war against the Soviet Union after the outbreak of the German-British War. Since Hitler temporarily agreed to the concept of the continental bloc, the Tripartite Pact, which was one of the climaxes of Ribbentrop's concept, was concluded. However, since this alliance was not useful for the expectations of Hitler which was to pull England to the German side, Hitler abandoned this continental bloc concept by the end of October 1940 at the latest, and returned to his original concept of confrontation with the Soviet Union. Ribbentrop tried to establish a territorial division of the world for Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union and Japan once again in talks with Molotov in November 1940; however, it failed due to the specific demands for territory by Molotov. The above is an outline of Chapter 5 in the same book by Hildebrand⁴⁴.

⁴¹ Same book by Masaki Miyake, p. 237. Original historical material is ADAP-D, Vol. 8, Document No. 40, the Telegram to Eugen Ott from Joachim von Ribbentrop.

⁴² Klaus Hildebrand, *Deutsche Aussenpolitik 1933-1945* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971).

⁴³ Masaki Miyake, *ibid.*, p. 237, 379-391.

⁴⁴ Hildebrand, *ebenda*, SS. 94-106.

Japan could not correctly perceive the two conflicting policies of German diplomacy.

From the outside, especially from Japan, the presence of Foreign Minister Ribbentrop seemed to be enormous as a negotiating partner. Nevertheless, the final decision on German policies was decided by Hitler the dictator. Once Hitler made a decision for war against the Soviet Union, Ribbentrop who was no more than a Foreign Minister, had to obey his decisions. I must say that Japan, who continued to expect the promise Ribbentrop made to be an "honest broker", to mediate between Japan and the Soviet Union in September 1940, and the concept of a four country bloc of Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy, even after the war against the Soviet Union was decided on December 18, 1940, was stolid of noticing the changes which occurred in the German-Soviet Union relations after the talks between Molotov and Hitler had practically broken off in November. The concept of the four country bloc of Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy was the concept of Ribbentrop, and Hitler had also agreed to this concept for a short period; the original claim of Hitler, however, was to defeat the Soviet Union. It was easy to notice that the original claim of Hitler was to defeat the Soviet Union if the "Mein Kampf" written by Hitler was read, which was already translated into Japanese and other languages and published in Japan. Even a portion of the Japanese Army was attached to the concept of the four country bloc of Japan, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy. It can be imagined that the impact of The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, which was concluded by a hand shake between Hitler and Stalin, was unexpectedly huge, especially for Japan.

The situation where the policy of pro-Britain and anti-Soviet of Hitler, and the policy of pro-Soviet and anti-Britain of Ribbentrop existed at the same time, as suggested in the book mentioned of Klaus Hildebrand, totally confused the diplomacy of Japan. Ribbentrop showed enthusiasm towards the policy of pro-Soviet which was fruitful in The Treaty of Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, and this was reflected in the above-mentioned tenth item in the record of the Matsuoka-Stahmer talks. Stahmer asserted that the contents of his statement could be accepted as the words of Foreign Minister Ribbentrop. It can be assumed, that Ribbentrop, too, was enthusiastic about the idea of a coalition treaty between Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union at that time. However, Ribbentrop was powerless against Hitler's decision to start a war against the Soviet Union.

Finally, as a thought-provoking point, I would like to add an important assumption among the 494 pages of great work by Dr. Vassili E. Molodiakov written in Russian on Ribbentrop which was published in Moscow in 2008. In this book, Molodiakov attaches much importance to Ribbentrop's draft of the coalition treaty between the four countries which was presented to Molotov in their last talks on November 13, 1940, as Ribbentrop was thinking that the draft was

very important to realize his Idea of a Eurasian Continental Bloc. Ribbentrop may not have obtained the complete acceptance of Hitler on the draft of the coalition treaty, Dr. Molodiakov assumes. This seems to be an important assumption.

Dr. Molodiakov made the following statement in the English Synopsis of this great work.

"The last talk between Molotov and Ribbentrop was the most important event in the biography of Joachim von Ribbentrop. The German Foreign Minister introduced his draft regarding the coalition treaty where Germany, Italy and Japan are on one side and the Soviet Union is on the other side to his guest (Molotov), along with two secret protocols concerning the "territorial expectations" of the Contracting Party, and control of Turkey. I (Dr. Molodiakov) believe that he (Joachim von Ribbentrop) did not, or probably did not obtain the complete and earnest acceptance of Hitler regarding his original plan⁴⁵."

Ribbentrop, being the Foreign Minister, was not aware of the Operation Barbarossa (operation against the Soviet Union) plan of Hitler in December 1940 when this operation directive was issued, and became aware of it in the spring of 1941. According to Dr. Molodiakov, after Ribbentrop found out about Operation Barbarossa, he desperately tried to change the intentions of Hitler. First, he recommended Hitler to listen to the opinions of Ambassador Schulenburg in Moscow, and a conference was realized on April 28, 1941.

Schulenburg perceived the decision of Hitler regarding war against the Soviet Union, and surprisingly returned to Moscow. Although Ribbentrop tried to change the attention of Hitler from the Soviet Union to Iraq, and recommended the support of an anti-Britain coup d'etat in Iraq, he also tried to support Subhas Chandra Bose and the anti-Britain influence in India, and all of his attempts were useless⁴⁶.

According to Dr. Molodiakov, Valentin Berezhkov who interpreted the final talks between Ribbentrop and Ambassador Vladimir Dekanozov of the Soviet Union stationed in Berlin, held on the morning of June 22, 1941, the day war against the Soviet Union was declared, later told of the situation of Ribbentrop during the final talks, where he was so totally confused and upset, that he was inarticulate. Berezhkov memorized the last words of Ribbentrop who said, "Please announce in Moscow that I was opposed to the invasion." Dr. Molodiakov adds, "I believe his tale"⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ Vassili Molodiakov, *RIBBENTROP Fuhrer's Stubborn Adviser* (Moscow: AST-Press, 2008). Synopsis p. 9.

⁴⁶ Synopsis p. 10.

⁴⁷ Synopsis, *ibid*. The main point of this essay is indicated in detail in the following essay: Masaki Miyake, "Die Idee eines eurasischen Blocks Tokio-Moskau-Berlin-Rom 1939-94", *Internationale Dilemmata und europäische Visionen*. Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Helmut Wagner, herausgegeben von Martin Sieg und Heiner Timmermann (Berlin: LIT-Verlag, 2010).