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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. WALTER FOOTE AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT
ON WEDNESDAY, 30 MAY 1945

1. Mr. Walter Foote was the American Consul General at Batavia, Java, from 1927 until the capture of Java by the Japanese in 1942, except for a short tour of duty in Australia. At the present time he is attached to the State Department and is standing-by to return to Java as diplomatic representative of the United States Government. Mr. Foote knew all the NEI officials intimately and was taken into their confidence in all official matters in their relations with Japan. Mr. Foote may be reached on Branch 420 at the State Department, in care of Miss Jane Wilson.

2. Mr. Foote got his information about the Winds "Set-Up" message from "Tony" Lovink, Advisor to the Governor General for East Asiatic Affairs. Mr. Lovink is now Netherlands Ambassador at Chungking, being one of the few high Dutch officials to escape from Java. Mr. Lovink was head of the NEI Intelligence Service and was well informed as to Japanese plans and intentions. As early as July, 1941, Mr. Lovink informed the Governor General that Japan was planning the conquest of East Asia and the only thing in doubt was just when the Japanese would commence their advance. Mr. Lovink said the Winds "Set-Up" was the first tangible thing that he had to show his Government to prove his predictions. As he expressed it, "It was the first thing I could sink my teeth into." Mr. Lovink kept warning the NEI Government as to the Japanese plans and preparations for war, and was regarded as an alarmist. Subsequent events proved him 100% correct throughout.

3. Mr. Lovink informed Mr. Foote of the Winds "Set-Up", and Mr. Foote sent Batavia confidential message #220, dated 4 December 1941, addressed to the State Department, after thinking the matter over for about two hours. This message was largely at Mr. Lovink's behest. Lieut. Colonel Thorpe, USA, and Lieut. Commander Slawson, USNR, got their translations of the Winds "Set-Up" directly from the NEI War Department at Bandoeng. (Lt. Comdr. Slawson was killed in action off the coast of New Guinea.) (Lt. Col. Thorpe is believed to be still alive.)

4. The Dutch listened for the Winds "Execute" message but did not hear it. Mr. Foote is positive that he would have been notified if any Winds "Execute" had been heard in Java. The Dutch were convinced that Japan was going to make war on them on December 6, 1941, when the big convoy of 35 transports (Mr. Foote's recollection), guarded by about six cruisers and several destroyers, was sighted heading straight for Kota Bharu (Malaya). The Dutch did not think that Japan was going to attack the United States and Pearl Harbor came as a complete surprise to them.

5. Vice Admiral Helfrich, NEI Commander in Chief, ordered his subs to sea on December 6, possibly earlier, and stationed them to defend the Netherlands East Indies. Submarines had orders not to commence hostilities

without positive orders. When the news of the Jap attack on Pearl Harbor reached Java, the Governor General immediately broadcast the following message to all NEI armed forces:

"We are now at war with Japan which has just
attacked Pearl Harbor,"

or words to that effect. The Dutch Navy commenced hostilities immediately after this broadcast but took no hostile action before. (Vice Admiral Helfrich attended the San Francisco Conference in 1945 as one of the Dutch delegates.) The story that NEI Fleet put to sea on December 6, 1941, with orders to sink anything flying the Japanese flag seems to be a somewhat garbled version of what actually happened.

6. The NEI Intelligence were very alert. They had all the leading Japanese under constant surveillance throughout November and December, 1941, and had most of them under arrest within fifteen minutes of the time the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor was broadcast by the Governor General. Mr. Foote personally saw one whole block of Japanese run down the street in their underclothes in the custody of NEI policemen.

7. Mr. Foote lived next door to the Japanese Consul General and saw his arrest a few minutes after the previously-mentioned incident. Mr. Foote saw the Japanese Consul General burn his codes and secret papers in his back yard a day or so before Pearl Harbor. He could see servants bringing papers from the consulate and could see the smoke flame up each time a new batch was thrown on. (Mr. Foote was burning his own secret papers at the same time in his own back yard.)

8. When Mr. Foote came to Washington about a year ago, prior to going to duty at Curacao, NWI, he looked up all his telegrams and reports on file in the State Department to refresh his memory. Mr. Foote recalled the #220 as soon as he saw it. He stated that there was no record in the State Department of any further reference to the Winds Message or anything in the nature of a war warning, and that he did not recall ever having sent one. He is thoroughly convinced that the Dutch did not hear the Winds "Execute" message but that they would have believed it if they had heard it. Mr. Foote was one of the very last white men to leave Java. He escaped on a small steamer from a small port down the coast with nothing but the clothes on his back. He received the warning to get out from Captain J. M. Creighton, U.S. Navy, who escaped through some other route, believed by plane.

9. "Tony" Lovink was thoroughly convinced that the Winds "Execute" message would contain the Japanese Government's decision as to peace or war with Russia, the United States, and England (including NEI), respectively, and impressed this fact on Mr. Foote.

10. The above memorandum is prepared from notes made at the time and is a reasonably accurate summary of Mr. Foote's statements.