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Report of Interrogation: No. 5749 of
P/W : 3WG-1293
Rank : Ambassador at large
Unit : Foreign Office, Berlin
Captd: 7 May 1945 - Garmisch-Partenkirchen

6 September 1945
Capt. HALLE

Veracity: Believed reliable.

Report : The Conclusion of the Three-Power Pact of September 1940.

On 27 September 1940 Germany, Italy, and Japan surprised the world with the ceremonious conclusion of the Three-Power Pact in Berlin, in which the parties to the pact bound themselves to mutual support with all political, military, and economic means at their disposal in the event of any of them being attacked by a power not then involved in the European war or in the conflict between China and Japan.

Ribbentrop was the guiding spirit behind this treaty. For years a military alliance with Japan had been one of his pet political ideas. He had persuaded Hitler to accept his point of view although the majority of those Germans acquainted with the Orient preferred China, including Colonel Kriebel, a close friend of Hitler who was sent to Shanghai as General Consul by Hitler himself. As early as November 1936 Ribbentrop, then ambassador to London, had fostered in Berlin the signing of the "Anti-Comintern Pact" by Germany and Japan, which had been extended into the world-political triangle of Berlin, Rome and Tokyo with the signature of Italy about a year later. Although the Anti-Comintern Pact had been directed exclusively against Moscow, Berlin clearly considered the Three-Power Pact to be aimed primarily at the United States. The treaty provided Japan with considerable support in its coming difficulties with the United States; the promise of support, in fact as the condition determining Japanese inclusion in the pact. To be sure, the wording of the treaty was subject to an interpretation hostile to Russia, but this consideration was of minor importance to Germany in September 1940. Beyond doubt, Hitler had considered the possibility of war with Russia, but relied upon the hope that Moscow would not feel itself compelled by the Three-Power Pact to align itself with Germany's enemies at that time. Not only the Japanese, but also the Germans feared that further development of the war could lead to intervention by the United States, while England showed no tendency to acquiesce in the situation which Hitler had created in Europe. Hitler's plan to subjugate England by an invasion proved to be unfeasible in view of the technical means at Germany's disposal. The air-war against England had proven less effective than Hitler had hoped, and there remained only a time-consuming war of attrition by submarines as a means of bringing England to her knees. And this very submarine warfare might bring the United States into the war, just as it had in 1917.

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At that time, however, the Japanese government was ignorant of Hitler's inner speculations and was not entirely satisfied that she might not become involved utterly against her will in a war between Germany and Russia. When, in the time that followed, tension between Germany and Russia increased, the Japanese government resolved to make its friendly intentions toward the Soviet Union a matter of record. This was done by the Russo-Japanese Neutrality Treaty of 13 April 1941, which was concluded by Foreign Minister Matsuoka in Moscow, on his return from his visit to Germany and Italy. He had been given to understand in Berlin that, in view of the turn which the relations between Germany and Russia had taken, a treaty between Tokyo and Moscow would not be favorably regarded in Berlin, and this circumstance may have increased Matsuoka's determination to guide Japan away from the threatening conflict between Germany and Russia. In any event, Hitler and Ribbentrop learned of the subsequent Russo-Japanese Neutrality Pact with certain misgivings, because it demonstrated Japan's unwillingness to join hands unequivocally with Germany against Russia.

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