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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE

OFFICE OF COMMERCIAL ATTACHE  
PEKING, CHINA

American Legation.  
December 28th, 1917.

China

CARDED

Subject: Chinese Attitude to Lansing-Ishii Note  
and German Propaganda

Chief, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce,  
Department of Commerce,  
Washington.

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Sir:

During my recent Southern trip, I found that the Chinese generally exhibited a disappointed attitude toward the Lansing-Ishii note regarding China, believing the recognition of Japan's "special interests" as of more import than the declaration regarding the independence of China and the open door of equal opportunity. They seem to be under the impression that the concession of Japan's special interests is a decided victory for Japan, and that Japan will proceed to develop the "special interests" idea into something of real substantial benefit to Japan, just as she has in the past developed her position in Korea and Manchuria into something quite away from all original declarations regarding these territories. German propaganda work in China will tend to help to increase China's suspicions of America's intentions re this note. Unfortunately we are doing almost nothing to combat this German propaganda work, in spite of repeated representations from the Legation suggesting definite programs of activity calculated to overcome the German quiet but effective propaganda.

I was surprised to find on this trip, a general lack of interest on the part of the Chinese in the war and still more surprised to find a feeling of friendliness toward Germany. Chinese everywhere are exclaiming "what has China against Germany and why have we declared war against Germany" Generally speaking, there is no very friendly attitude on the part of the Chinese toward Great Britain, in fact, there never has been, so far as I am aware. Great Britain's alliance with Japan has never pleased China. Furthermore, the Chinese people are very suspicious of Japan and harbor very unfriendly feelings toward Japan. It would seem that if we would maintain China as an Ally, and prevent her from alienating herself from ourselves, her one time best friend, we should without further delay institute an active propaganda work designed to combat Germany's quiet but effective efforts to win her away from her present allies.

Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce  
Office of Chief

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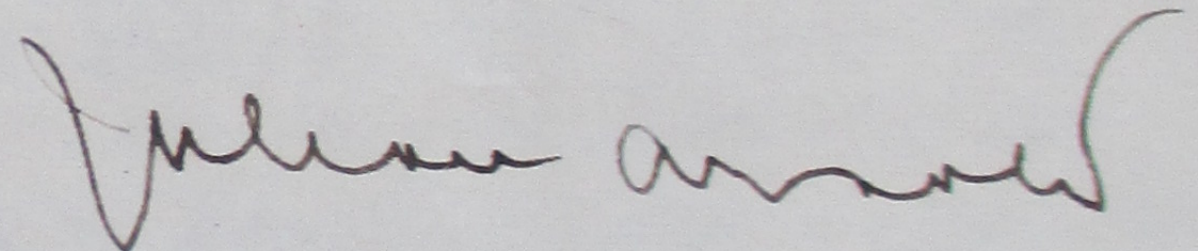
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As one effective way of overcoming the German propaganda, I should recommend the speedy despatch of a highly representative American Commission to China, including on this commission Mr. E. T. Williams, Chief of the Far Eastern Division of the Department of State. While it would be preferable to have this commission come as a distinctly American commission, if our relations at this time with Japan seems to require it, it may be necessary to have a joint American-Japanese commission, in which event it would be advisable to put on the commission one of two of the biggest Americans obtainable as undoubtedly the Japan would see that her representations on such a commission were men of the highest rank.

China has been sadly neglected by the Allies in this war, and the Chinese people reflect this neglect. On the other hand Germans in China have been and continue to court friendship with China, and are undoubtedly responsible to a larger degree than many imagine, for the continued disturbed conditions that obtain here and for much of the general tone of unfriendliness toward the Entente Powers.

Very truly yours,



Commercial Attache.