COMUNICATION FROM THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

Geneva, August 30th, 1937.

Sir,

Acting on the instructions of my Government I have the honour to forward to you herewith its Statement on the Japanese aggression in China since the Lukouchiao incident on July 7th last.

I would be grateful if you would be good enough to communicate this Statement to the Members of the League of Nations and to the Advisory Committee set up under the resolution adopted on February 24th, 1933, by the Assembly of the League of Nations.

I have the honour, etc.

(Signed) Hoo Chi-Tsai,

Director of the Permanent Bureau of the Chinese Delegation to the League of Nations.

Monsieur Joseph AVENOL,

Secretary-General of the League of Nations, Geneva.

Statement of the Chinese Government.

"On the evening of July 7th, Japanese troops held illegal manoeuvres at Lukouchiao, a Railway junction of strategic importance in the vicinity of Peiping, where there presence could not be defended under any existing treaty or agreement. Alleging that one Japanese soldier was missing, Japanese troops demanded after midnight to enter the adjacent city of Wanping to conduct a search. When permission was refused by the Chinese authorities, the Japanese suddenly opened an attack on Wanping with infantry and artillery forces and thus the Chinese garrison was compelled to offer resistance.

"While the Chinese authorities from the very beginning showed their willingness to reach an amicable settlement of the Lukouchiao incident, Japan has sought to exploit the incident for furthering her designs on North China and relentlessly forced China to resort to armed resistance, thus precipitating a sanguinary conflict of which the world has as yet only witnessed the beginning.

"With a view to avoiding further hostilities and effecting a peaceful settlement with Japan through regular diplomatic channels, the Chinese authorities with great self-restraint and forbearance, in face of repeated provocative attacks by Japanese forces, proposed a mutual withdrawal of troops in order to separate the two opposing forces and, later, as unmistakable proof of China's peaceful intentions, actually proceeded to withdraw her troops from the scene of conflict even before Japan commenced similar withdrawal.

"On the other hand, the Japanese deliberately aggravated the situation by immediately despatching large reinforcements to the province of Hopei, by renewing their offensive in the Peiping-Lukouchiao area and by extending the field of conflict to the immediate outskirts of Peiping.
"In spite of such grave provocations, the Chinese local authorities continued their efforts for peaceful settlement and, on July 11th, accepted the following terms proposed by the Japanese: 1) expression of regret by a representative of the military authorities, disciplinary measures against officers directly involved in the conflict and guarantee against recurrence of similar incidents; 2) replacement of Chinese regular troops at Lukouehiao and Lungwangmiao by peace preservation corps and 3) effective suppression of anti-Japanese and Communist organisations in the Hopei Province.

"On July 12th, the Counsellor of the Japanese Embassy, accompanied by an assistant Japanese military attaché and assistant naval attaché, acting under instructions from his government, called at the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and advised the Chinese Government 'not to interfere' with the local settlement which had been reached on the previous day. The Japanese Counsellor received the reply that any local arrangement, in order to be binding, must be approved by the Chinese Central Government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also proposed the mutual withdrawal of troops to their original positions pending the final settlement of the incident.

"While the Chinese local authorities were carrying out the terms of the agreement by withdrawing their troops, the Japanese extended their warlike activities and provocative attacks to the Peiping-Tientsin area. By July 15th it was estimated that over twenty thousand Japanese troops and a hundred aeroplanes had been concentrated in this area with further reinforcements held in readiness on the other side of the Great Wall. Under threat of military coercion the negotiations between local representatives were rendered exceedingly difficult, especially as Japanese attempted to dictate measures for complementing the agreement of July 11th.

"On July 16th, China presented a memorandum to the Governments of Powers signatory to the Nine-Power Treaty (with exception of Japan) and Governments of Germany and Soviet Russia, drawing their attention to the fact that the sudden attack on Lukouehiao and the invasion of North China by large Japanese military forces constituted a clear violation of China's sovereignty, contrary to the letter and spirit of the Nine-Power Treaty, the Paris Peace Pact and the Covenant of the League of Nations. It was also stated in the memorandum that, while China was obliged to employ all means at her disposal to defend her territory and national existence, she nevertheless held herself in readiness to settle her differences with Japan by any of the pacific means known to international law or treaties.

"On July 17th, the Japanese Embassy presented a memorandum to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, demanding the Central Government not to interfere with local negotiations, nor to make military preparations of any kind. On the same day, the Japanese military attaché, under instructions from the Tokyo War Office, made representations to the Chinese Ministry of War against the entry of Chinese reinforcements into the Hopei Province even for defensive purposes and threatened with 'grave consequences' if the demand be not complied with.
"To such preposterous representations the Chinese Government, on July 19th, replied in writing, renewing its proposal for simultaneous cessation of troop movements on both sides and mutual withdrawal of troops to their respective original positions on date to be agreed upon by both parties. It was also unequivocally stated in the reply that for the settlement of the incident the Chinese Government was prepared to accept any pacific means known to international law or treaties, such as direct negotiations, good offices, mediation and arbitration. Unfortunately, these conciliation demarches failed to receive the desired response. That the Chinese Government went to the utmost limit of forbearance was shown by the fact that it did not raise objection to the terms of the agreement reached on July 11th between the Chinese local authorities and the Japanese army.

"Thus it will be readily seen that since the outbreak of the Lukouchiao incident, Japan has sought to exploit it in two ways for realizing her object of military, political and economic domination over North China. On the military side, she persisted in sending to the Hopei province enormous numbers of armed forces that would only be required for large scale campaign and, at the same time, sought to prevent the Central Government from taking precautionary defence measures, so that she would be in position more effectively to bring local authorities to submission. Diplomatically, she has endeavoured to coerce the Chinese Central Government into keeping its hands off North China and agreeing in advance to whatever terms the local authorities, when left alone to face Japanese military pressure, might be forced to accept.

"Finally, seeing that China refused to act according to their wish, the Japanese army presented an ultimatum to the Chinese local authorities on July 28th, demanding, among other things, the withdrawal of Chinese troops from Peiping and its vicinity which, it may be noted, was outside the terms of the agreement of July 11th. Even before the expiration of the time-limit fixed by the ultimatum, Japanese military and air forces launched a big offensive against the Peiping-Tientsin area causing a widespread feeling of horror and dismay by their wanton destruction of civilian lives and property, including many educational and cultural institutions.

"After the Chinese troops had withdrawn from the Peiping-Tientsin area, Japanese armed forces further extended their operations into southern Hopei and also northward into Hopei-Chahar border, where fierce attacks are being made on the strategic pass of Nankou. It was estimated by August 20th that Japanese troops in North China totalled approximately one hundred thousand strong. The concentration of such large force of Chinese soil shown that Japan is irrevocably committed to a policy of military conquest and expansion on the Asiatic continent.

"Feared that Japan would bring the war scourge to Shanghai, the financial and economic centre of China, as she did following her occupation of Manchuria, the Chinese Government, during the critical tension in North China, repeatedly ordered the local authorities at Shanghai to take special precautions against the occurrence of any untoward incident. China's efforts to preserve peace of that great metropolis were however frustrated as a result of the incident of August 9th, in which one Japanese naval officer, one Japanese seaman and a member of the Chinese Peace Preservation Corps were killed in a clash arising from the Japanese naval men's attempt to approach the Chinese
military aerodrome near Shanghai, regardless of Chinese warnings.

"While the Chinese municipal authorities immediately proposed that a settlement be sought through diplomatic channels, Japan again preferred the arbitrament of force. Within less than 48 hours she concentrated about thirty warships at Shanghai and had her armed forces there increased by several thousand. At the same time, demands calculated to remove or undermine Chinese defence were made on Chinese authorities. The expected attack opened on August 13th, four days after the incident, when Japanese naval forces both ashore and afloat, using the International Settlement as a base for operations, launched an offensive against the districts of Kiangwan and Chapei.

"Since then, the Japanese have extended their air activity to many provinces, including those of Shangtung, Kiangsu, Chekiang, Anhui, Hupeh, Hunan and Kiangsi. Daily raids have been made on Nanking, national capital of China, and various other cities of economic or political importance. There is every sign that Japan, relying on the numerical superiority of her air force, aims at crippling China's strength for resistance by extensive bombing operation in the most prosperous parts of China, where her economic and cultural life as well as foreign commerce are centred.

"The above brief account of what Japan has done since the outbreak of the Mukouchiao incident on July 7th, brings out the following facts most clearly, truthfully and indisputably:

1) Japanese armed forces have invaded China's territory and are extensively attacking Chinese positions by land, sea and air, in Central as well as North China. It is thus a case of aggression pure and simple.

2) China is exercising her natural right of self-defence, the failure of all other means of repelling violence having compelled her to resort to force, which is contrary to China's wish.

3) Japan's present action in China is the continuance of her aggressive program started in Manchuria in September 1931. Japan has now occupied the Peiping-Tientsin area and is bent upon extension of her occupation to the whole of North China and domination of other regions in spite of all her assurances that she has no territorial designs on this country. She is attempting to destroy all the work of reconstruction which the Chinese nation has so steadily and assiduously undertaken during the last ten years.

4) In thus deliberately disturbing the peace of the Far East, Japan has violated the fundamental principles of the Covenant of the League of Nations. Using war as an instrument of national policy and ignoring all the pacific means for the settlement of international controversies, she has violated the Paris Peace Pact of 1927. Acting contrary to her pledge to respect the sovereignty, the independence and the territorial and administrative integrity of China, she has violated the Nine-Power Treaty concluded at Washington in 1922."