

= John Van Antwerp MacMurray =

John Van Antwerp MacMurray (1881 ? 1960) was an American attorney , author and diplomat best known as one of the leading China experts in the U.S. government . He served as Assistant Secretary of State from November 1924 to May 1925 , and was subsequently appointed Minister to China in 1925 . Although MacMurray had coveted the China post , he soon fell into disagreement with the State Department over U.S. policy towards the ruling Kuomintang government . He resigned the position in 1929 and briefly left the foreign service . Following several years in academia , MacMurray returned to the State Department to become Minister to Estonia , Latvia and Lithuania from 1933 to 1936 . He later served as ambassador to Turkey from 1936 to 1941 , and then was made a special assistant to the Secretary of State until his retirement in 1944 .

In 1935 , MacMurray was commissioned to write a memorandum on the conflict between China and Japan . In it , he suggested that the United States , China , and Great Britain were partly to blame for Japan 's aggression , and anticipated that unless the United States recognized Japan 's grievances , a war between the two powers was likely . His warnings proved prescient , and the Pacific war broke out when Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor in December 1941 .

= = Early life = =

MacMurray was born in Schenectady , New York to Junius Wilson MacMurray and Henrietta MacMurray (née Van Antwerp) . His father was a career soldier , serving as a captain in the Union Army during the American Civil War , and later joining the regular army . MacMurray 's father also taught military tactics at the University of Missouri and Cornell University , and was the author of several books . His mother , Henrietta Wiswall Van Antwerp , was the daughter of a bank president .

In 1892 , at the age of eleven , MacMurray attended Captain Wilson 's boarding school near Princeton , New Jersey . Later , while he was attending the nearby Lawrenceville School , his father 's death dealt a ? deep emotional blow ? , according to historian Arthur Waldron . After graduating in 1898 , MacMurray enrolled at Princeton University . The school 's president , Woodrow Wilson , encouraged him to pursue a career in academia , noting his aptitude for language and literature . MacMurray was also said to display an independent nature , declining to participate in eating clubs or attend chapel .

In 1903 , MacMurray was admitted to the Columbia University Law School , and gained admission to the New York State Bar Association in 1906 . He concurrently pursued a master of arts degree in Elizabethan drama at Princeton University , which he received in 1907 .

= = Career = =

Following his admission to the New York Bar , MacMurray sought a career in government . A letter of commendation from Woodrow Wilson helped MacMurray secure an opportunity to take the foreign service examination . In 1907 , he was appointed as Consul @-@ General and Secretary of Legation in Bangkok , Siam , and then became second secretary at the U.S. embassy in St. Petersburg . There he worked under ambassador William Woodville Rockhill , who was credited with helping to shape the United States ' open door policy towards China .

Upon returning to Washington in 1911 , MacMurray was made chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs , a position he held until 1913 . He then had several appointments in East Asia : from 1913 to 1917 , he was secretary of Legation in Peking , China , and from 1917 to 1919 , he was counselor of the embassy in Tokyo . He had been offered a post as Minister to Siam in 1913 , but declined in order to pursue the position in Peking . He again returned to the State Department in 1919 to serve as Chief of Division for Far Eastern Affairs from 1919 to 1924 . During that time , MacMurray was involved as an observer to negotiations between China and Japan concerning the status of the Shandong Peninsula , and authored a book titled *Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China* . The book was a compilation of all treaties and agreements with China from 1894 to 1919 ,

and was published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace .

MacMurray briefly served as Assistant Secretary of State from 1924 to 1925 . In 1925 , he was appointed Minister to China under President Calvin Coolidge , who described him as " our top China expert " . He assumed the post in July 1925 . MacMurray was well regarded within the diplomatic community in Peking ; Sir Ronald Macleay with the British delegation described him as friendly and agreeable , and relatively unburdened by the preconceived ideas and sentimentality towards China that afflicted several of his predecessors . Macleay noted that MacMurray could express himself well and forcefully in diplomatic meetings , but that he was " rather academic " , and may have lacked confidence in himself . " I imagine that he allows himself very little freedom of action and refers to Washington on every possible occasion , " wrote Macleay . Another British diplomat , Sir Miles W. Lampson , recorded MacMurray 's complaints that Washington allowed him little initiative , and seldom adopted his proposals .

Soon after arriving in China , MacMurray fell into disagreement with Washington over U.S. policy towards the ruling Kuomintang (Nationalist) government , which had been demanding immediate revisions to or a cessation of the treaty system in place between the two countries . Whereas Washington wished to make concessions to the Nationalist government , MacMurray favored the enforcement of existing treaties . These differences of opinion led him to resign in November 1929 , whereupon he became a professor of International Relations at Johns Hopkins University .

In 1933 , MacMurray returned to the foreign service . On September 9 of that year , he was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Estonia , Latvia and Lithuania ? a position he held until 1936 . From 1936 to 1941 , MacMurray served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Turkey . He returned to Washington in 1942 and worked as a special assistant to the Secretary of State until his retirement in 1944 .

= = = 1935 Memorandum = = =

In 1935 , as tensions in East Asia were mounting , the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs , Stanley Hornbeck , commissioned MacMurray to write a memorandum on the situation . The memorandum , " Developments Affecting American Policy in the Far East " , challenged many of the underlying assumptions of U.S. policy towards Japan . The conventional wisdom held that Japan was the unprovoked aggressor in the brewing conflict with China . However , MacMurray posited that Chinese and American policies were partly to blame for Japan ? s actions ; whereas Japan had closely adhered to the treaties and agreements brokered during the Washington Disarmament Conference , the United States , Great Britain and China frequently undermined them . Up until the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 , the " Japanese Government ... was endeavoring in unimpeachable good faith to live up to its undertakings " , wrote MacMurray . " The issue of success or failure for the policies evolved at the Washington Conference was actually in the hands of China herself , of Great Britain , and of the United States . "

According to Arthur Waldron , MacMurray found that China in particular " systematically flouted the legal framework that alone guaranteed her international position , and by so doing invited Japan ? s wrath . " MacMurray believed that the United States should have valued Japan ? s efforts to comply with the treaty agreements , and suggested that the United States should acknowledge Japanese grievances , rather than aligning ever more closely with China . Barring that , he wrote , an American war with Japan was likely :

To oppose the Japanese domination of China and actively take all available means and occasions to frustrate it ... would , if pursued consistently and determinedly , almost inevitably mean war with Japan ... Such a war would be a major misfortune for us , even assuming our victory ... It would be a hideously long and costly process ... Even the elimination of Japan , if it were possible , would be no blessing to the Far East or to the world . It would merely create a new set of stresses , and substitute for Japan the USSR as the successor of Imperial Russia as a contestant (and at least an equally unscrupulous and dangerous one) for mastery of the East . Nobody except perhaps Russia would gain from our victory in such a war .

MacMurray 's classified memorandum was immediately shelved by the State Department , and his

warnings went unheeded . Following the Second World War , it was available only in select archives . In 1992 , the memorandum was published for first time with an introduction by University of Pennsylvania historian Arthur Waldron . Although it had been suppressed and largely disregarded at the time it was written , MacMurray 's analysis was considered prescient by later generations of scholars and diplomats . George F. Kennan wrote of the 1935 memorandum : " I know of no document on record in our government with respect to foreign policy which is more penetrating and thoughtful and prescient than this one . "

= = Films and photography = =

Throughout his diplomatic tours in China , MacMurray captured thousands of photographs and recorded hours of footage of everyday life . A collection consisting of more than 1 @, @ 600 of MacMurray 's photographs taken in rural China between 1913 and 1917 is held by the Princeton University library .

In 1925 , just two years after the advent of the Cine @-@ Kodak motion picture camera , MacMurray began making amateur films of life and travels in China , such as his trips to the Great Wall of China and a journey down the Yangtze River . One film depicted the procession of Sun Yat @-@ sen 's body from its original burial place in Peking to a new mausoleum in Nanking . Another film recorded in April 1928 captured scenes of daily life in Kalgan , north of Peking . MacMurray , along with his wife and sister , had traveled to Kalgan and Changpeh with Roy Chapman Andrews , an American explorer and naturalist who made multiple expeditions to the Gobi desert . During the civil war in 1928 , however , rogue brigands and soldiers had made travel difficult in the region . To secure passage between Kalgan and Changpeh , MacMurray enlisted the aid of local warlord Chang Tso @-@ lin , who provided an escort of 50 cavalry , 8 cars , and 150 camels .

= = Family = =

In 1916 , MacMurray married Lois R. Goodnow , the daughter of Frank Johnson Goodnow ? a legal scholar , president of Johns Hopkins University , and a former advisor to the government of the Republic of China . Goodnow had been one of MacMurray 's professors at Columbia University . The couple had three children : Joan Goodnow MacMurray , Frank Goodnow MacMurray , and Lois Van Antwerp MacMurray .

= = Works = =

Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China , 1894 @-@ 1919 : Manchu period (1894 @-@ 1911)