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Tribune



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LI'S ACTIONS ARE SINISTER

The Latest News from China Is Not Encouraging.

EPIDEMIC OF DIPLOMACY

Representatives of the Flowery Kingdom seem to be keeping something back in all communications—The Power of Ping Hong is regarded as a bad sign—Chaffee's unexpected telegram.

Washington, Aug. 3.—Another move was made today in the diplomatic situation by the return of an evasive answer by Li Hung Chang to Secretary Hay's peremptory demand of August 1 to be put in communication with the foreign ministers at Peking. Li's answer is not final, and leaves the matter open diplomatically. But Li's actions, as reported by Consul General Goodnow, are unquestionably sinister and will amount to a final rejection of the American proposition if persisted in. Mr. Goodnow's dispatch contains no further information bearing on the question of responsibility for the conditions in the statement that the commander of the Chinese troops by inference answerable to the Chinese government, ordered the Ping Ting massacre. It is learned here that Li Ping Hong, the commander referred to, is a civil official and well known to all the Chinese officials abroad as one of the most rabid anti-foreign leaders in China. He is a close friend of the late Li Jiahua, the association of these two in Peking affairs with power enough behind them to cause the ignominious death of two high officials, is regarded here as a bad sign.

Simultaneously with Mr. Goodnow's dispatch came a characteristically diplomatic message from Yuan Shih Kai, governor of Shan Tung, repeating the story of two days ago that the Chinese government was arranging to deliver the ministers in safety at Tien Tsin. No effort is made to reconcile that statement with Earl Li's refusal to allow communication with the ministers.

General Chaffee's message as to the unexpected resistance offered to the Japanese reconnoitering expedition is regarded by military men here as forecasting a greater degree of opposition to the international advance than had been anticipated, and they are now satisfied that the Chinese troops will furnish material for at least one severe battle before the way is clear to Peking.

The navy department today issued an order for the cooperation of United States officers abroad with the officers of the army in landing and in transporting troops destined for Chinese service. This revises the situation that existed in Cuba when Shafter's army corps was landed largely through the efforts of the navy.

It is thought in the department that the navy can lend considerable assistance to General Chaffee's troops, not only in adding their demoralization, but possibly in furnishing them boat transportation. If a move is made along the Pei-Ho.

It appears that some misunderstanding exists as to a St. Petersburg dispatch printed here this morning, saying that the Chinese minister there and his colleagues in Europe had requested the governor of Shan-Tung, demanding that free communication be opened between the Peking ministers and their respective governments. This communication was, in fact, a joint memorial to the throne, concurred in by all Chinese ministers abroad, including Minister Wu in Washington. It was forwarded by Minister Yung-Lu at St. Petersburg, because the latter is the dean of the Chinese diplomatic service. It was transmitted through the governor of Shan-Tung to be forwarded to Peking. This action is considered very important, as indicating that the Chinese ministers abroad have at least reached a unanimous conclusion that the situation is no longer to be trifled with. The memorial may be regarded as a final effort on their part to influence the home government, and its outcome is awaited with great interest.

Meanwhile the government of the United States, like the governments of Europe, has not abandoned its efforts to establish communication with its minister at Peking by independent means, and the state department has instructed Consul General Goodnow, at Shanghai, Consul Fowler, at Chefoo, and Consul Ragsdale, at Tien Tsin, to spare no effort or expense to open up direct communication with Mr. Conger.

Secret Cable Report.
In addition to his short message relative to the Japanese cable, transmitted through Admiral Remy and received this morning, General Chaffee made another and a direct cable report this afternoon. The message was withheld from publication by Secretary Root, who declined to make its purpose public. It was presumably devoted to a recital of General Chaffee's needs in a military way. In view of the London statement that the advance on Peking actually began with the present week there is also a possibility that General Chaffee's message has some bearing on that subject, though it is evident from his report this afternoon that the advance, if started, could not have progressed far beyond Tien Tsin, as the outpost affray described by him took place only ten miles out of town.

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