PART I

THE EARLY OCCUPATION PERIOD,
1945–1947
LETTER 1: November 21, 1945

– NOMURA TO PRATT –

Nomura’s postwar correspondence began with a letter to his old friend, Admiral William Veazie Pratt. Beyond a somewhat cursory reference to Japan’s war-ravaged economy, Nomura’s letter had little to say about postwar conditions in his nation. It instead reflected his concern lest even the oldest and best of his American friends suspect him of connivance in the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

No mail service existed in the early days of the occupation; Nomura prevailed upon the Strategic Bombing Survey’s Rear Admiral Ralph Ofstie to deliver this letter to Pratt. The letter is locatable in Box 2, Folder “1946, Letter File, Outgoing,” Ralph A. Ofstie Papers, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

My dear Admiral,

This is my personal and private, not for publication. My earnest wish is to reestablish our friendship which originated some thirty years ago, with the end of this war, prior to normal diplomatic relations between our two countries being reestablished.

First of all, I wish to express my sincere deep gratitude for your earnest friendly efforts for peaceful settlement before the war. As to the failure of my mission, I feel deep responsibilities to my home government and people although ambassadorship of today is not more than mere voicetube of home government. I talked once to the late president that I would not like to be the last Ambassador and the war was most regrettable thing which has ever happened but I never played double-play, never spoke double-tongue throughout our conversations and therefore my conscience is clear.

Generally speaking, Japanese do not resent your people although nine million became homeless by air attack (by the way my home has been burnt and I have lost “Hamilton” you gave me many years ago) and respect occupation force. I think this trend can be made political capital in your favor by wise statesmanship although political currents are divergent.

The people are now very much tired and nation is close to bankruptcy.