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of Doc No. 1137

I M T F E

United State America Etc.

- Versus -

ARAKI, Sadao etc.

SWORN DEPOSITION

Deponent: OKAMOTO, Suenasa

Having first duly sworn an oath as on attached sheet and  
in accordance with the procedure followed in my country I  
hereby depose as follows.

(1)

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- 1) I was the Chief of the American Bureau in the Foreign Office until April 1937 (12th year of Showa). I was the Consul General in Shanghai from May 1937 (the 12th year) until March 20th 1938 (the 13th year), and was a Councillor at the Japanese Embassy in London, from June 1938 (the 13th year of the Showa era) until September 1940. I received an order to return home in August 1940 (the 15th year of the Showa era) at the time when Mr. MATSUOKA was the Foreign Minister, I resigned when I returned home in October, 1940, and was appointed as the Japanese Consul General at Singapore in October 1941 (the 16th year of the Showa era), I arrived at Singapore on October 5th of the same year, and was interned on the 8th day of the same month due to the outbreak of the war. I was transferred to India, then sent to Lorenyz Marcey (phonetic) due to the exchange of diplomats between Japan and England in August 1942. (the 17th year of the Showa era), I was ordered to go Europe from the same place, and was appointed as the Minister to Sweden in November 1942. I took office there, and after the surrender of Japan, departed there in January 1946 (of the 21st year of the Showa era), I returned home in March and resigned from the office in April.
- 2) During my life as a diplomatist I was in England from the 9th year till the 11 year of the Taisho era, again from the 13th year till 15th year of the Showa era, in <sup>America</sup> ~~Japan~~ for the 6 years from the 14th year of the Taisho era till the 6th year of the Showa era, and took office, in the home office, of the Chief of a Section in the European and American Bureau, and the Chief of the American Bureau. My relationship with England and America

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extended over a long period of time, and I had so many friends among the people of the both countries that, I think, I might be regarded as one of the pro-British and pro-American faction in the Foreign Office.

Realizing the correctness of this principle, I believed that Japan, England and America should not conflict in any manner, at any time, and that, further, they were not able to wage a decisive conflict, considering many conditions surrounding them, the only way for them to get along was to bring about friendly understanding between them.

3) In Shanghai too, I made a friendly acquaintance with Mr. Yu Hung-chun, the then Mayor of Shanghai, Mr. Gauss, the U.S.A. Consul General, Mr. J.W.O. Davidson, the British Acting Consul General, and Mr. John Koswick, an influential business man in Shanghai.

4) At the time when I arrived at my post at Shanghai, while there was the feeling of relief among the Chinese people on the news that the Sian Incident was settled and Generalissimo Chiang Kaishek rescued, there was a gloomy and uneasy foreboding about Sino-Japanese relations even in Shanghai over stormy indications caused by the North China situation.

5) When I investigated the affairs concerning Japan and China on my arriving at my post at Shanghai, I got the report that China, breaking the Cease-Fire Agreement of May, 1933 (of the Showa era), was reinforcing many Pacantui (or Peace Preservation Corps) in the forbidden area, mixing it with the regular army, and was constructing trenches and wire-entanglements around the place, and was reported to be reconstructing the Wusung Fortress. When I received these reports, I did not want to neglect them, though it was not long since my assuming office, and recognizing the necessity of

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calling them to attention of the authorities concerned, I requested on 23rd of June the calling of a meeting of the joint committee based on the Cease Fire Agreement of May 5, 1933. The navy, after consultation, approved my idea.

This Committee was organized with the Consul-Generals and military and naval attaches of Japan, Britain, U.S.A., France and Italy, and was to meet from time to time. But it had not met for five years.

The Joint-Committee met at the French consulate-general, and was chiefly concerned with the discussion between Mayor Yu and myself.

I proposed in substance as follows: "I have received information about the reinforcement of the Pacantui, the construction of trenches, and the use of light tanks and iron-entanglements by the Chinese army at the forbidden area. If this were true, it would constitute a breach of the Cease-Fire Agreement. And I wish the Committee would take measures to investigate whether the above facts are true or not." Mayor Yu made an objection to the proposal for investigation, insisting that Japan was too nervous. And the third party members present at the Committee seemed not too pleased to intervene in the strife between Japan and China. The meeting did not reach any specified conclusion. But I believed that I should call the attention of the Powers to the source of uneasiness at Shanghai and that I drove a nail into the Chinese policy.

6) On July 7, 1937 the Marco Polo Bridge Incident broke out. It brought serious anxiety to the Chinese and Foreigners at Shanghai.

At that time, the HAYASHI Cabinet had already fallen and Prince KONOYE formed a Cabinet. The Foreign Minister was Mr. HIROTA. A few days after the

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outbreak of the Incident, I received instructions by telegraph from the Government.

The instructions were as follows: "The Government is maintaining the policy of local solution and of no-enlargement of this incident. You shall take all possible means to prevent any incidents at Shanghai." Instructions bearing the same import reached my hands on two or three successive occasions.

7) Answering the anxious inquiries from the Chinese, the Foreigners and from consuls, I explained the spirit of the instruction from the Government, and told them that I could assure them, in view of the local solution policy of the Government, the incident would not spread to Shanghai.

8) On around July 15, I remember, Mr. Yu Hung-chun, the Mayor of Shanghai, invited me to a tea-party, requesting the military and naval attaches to accompany me. So I presented myself at the party with Major-General KITA Seiichi (Army), Rear Admiral HONDA Tadao (Navy) and some of the staff of the Consulate-General. The party was held at the Mayor's official residence, and there was a small group of Chinese, an influential man from Shanghai, the Chief of Police, the Chief of the Paotui and the Secretary of the Mayor, -- Tu Yueh-sheng, Yu Chia-ching, Wang Hsiao-hai etc.

The Mayor spoke in greeting as follows:

"The citizens of Shanghai do not want to have another model of the incident which happened five years ago. We wish, whatever may happen in another district, to avoid a warfare between Japan and China at Shanghai. I will do everything possible and I hope the Japanese will cooperate with us in this aim."

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In reply, I said:

"Japan, too, does not intend that the incident shall spread to Shanghai. Especially, since I have been receiving from our Government the instructions which request us to take all possible means to prevent a clash between Japan and China at Shanghai, the policy of our Government being local solution and non-enlargement concerning the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. I am very pleased to hear the present proposal from China. Japan will naturally cooperate with China to prevent any clash between them at Shanghai. But we are afraid that China might invoke a crisis at Shanghai by terrorism and by the anti-Japan movement as was experienced by Japan five years ago, and we hope the Chinese authorities will be careful about controlling these matters."

We exchanged opinions in this manner, and since then, we were very close with each other. The Mayor would phone me two or three times a day, requesting us to restrain some acts on the part of our marines etc.

9) While the situation in North China was aggravated contrary to our expectations, and as the phase developed, the attitude of China seemed to gradually alter.

At first, I thought that China was earnestly wishing to prevent the warfare spreading to Shanghai. But by this time I got the report that it was the prevailing idea of young Chinese officers that if Japan would defy a military action which might develop in North China, China could give pain to Japan in Shanghai and China would be able to fight well in this area because the defense works were comparatively good there. There was the report, too, that the Pacantui had been reinforced in the prohibited area, that the

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regular gathered round Shanghai amounted to several divisions. All these matters indicated to us that something was being actively plotted by China.

10) At the beginning of August, circumstances made us feel that something imminent would happen, and the Japanese residents evacuated from the Yantze Valley on board the gunboats and destroyers which were dispatched by the Japanese Navy along the Yantze River. These people gathered at Shanghai.

11) Under these imminent circumstances, when I was exerting all of my best efforts with a view to avoiding a clash between Japan and China, there finally happened the incident of August 9, in which Sub-lieutenant OYAMA was killed by Chinese soldiers near Honchiao Airdrome, whereupon the situation suddenly assumed a serious turn.

12) On August 11, I, foreseeing a crisis and partly under instructions from the home office, visited Mayor Yu at the City Government. I showed him the information about the reinforcement of the Paoantui, the construction of trenches and wire-entanglements at Wusung or in other places where it was prohibited to do so under the Cease-Fire Agreement, and said "If you neglect these conditions, it may be very dangerous, and a clash between Japan and China may not be avoidable. If you truly desire to avoid such a clash, I hope you will make an effort to withdraw the Paoantui to a reasonable distance necessary to accomplish that end." The Mayor did not easily accept my proposal stating that Japan was responsible for the aggravation of the incident by reinforcing the marines by war-ships. But after four hour's talk at the City Government I received a promise that he would take every possible means to prevent a clash between Japan and China. I left the City Government a little past seven, and it was dark. My automobile was stopped on the way by

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Chinese soldiers with bayonets. They did not allow me to pass, at first even though I told them that I was the Japanese Consul-General. But I passed finally by ordering my chauffeur to tell them clearly to pass us as it was the Japanese Consul-General.

13) On the next morning (12th of the month) the 87th and 88th divisions of the Chinese Army advanced to the Pehchan Station at Shanghai. Immediately, I made a phone call to the City Government, but the Mayor was absent. Then, finding him at his official residence at the French Concession, I requested a member of the staff of the Consulate-General to phone him. That official reported to me that the Mayor said that he could do nothing, when the situation got bad like this. And in reply to the former's question as to why the Mayor was not in the City Government office, the Mayor said he would not go to City Government office because he was stopped several times late last evening on his way home by the Pacantui; and they did not allow him to pass, though he informed them many times that he was the Mayor. This I heard from the official.

14) Then I considered that this was the time to exert my final effort, and I requested a meeting of the joint committee.

The meeting was opened at the Shanghai Municipal Council in the afternoon of the same day.

The attendance there was Mayor Yu, American and French Consul-Generals, British and Italian Acting Consul Generals, myself and Senior Staff Officer of the Marines TAKEDA from Japan.

At the beginning of the meeting, I told them the imminence of the

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situation, and I said as follows: "Yesterday afternoon, I asked the Mayor to force the Pacantui to withdraw to a removable distance to <sup>avoid</sup> clash between Japan and China, and the Mayor promised to exert every effort. Nevertheless, the Chinese Regular Army advanced to the Pehchan Station this morning and besieged the Japanese residents in Honkou Area. Now the circumstances do not permit any delay in adopting measures to stop a conflict. Then I requested the Joint Committee to investigate China's breach of the Cease Fire Agreement, and to take adequate measures to avoid a clash.

Against this, Mayor Yu said that Japan could not avail herself of the Joint Committee based upon the Cease Fire Agreement, because Japan had broken and voided this Agreement last year by the fact that the Japanese marines advanced to Patsuchiaoo. (With regard to this point, the commissioner of a third power assailed him and inquired whether China had filed a protest with the Joint Committee against Japan's breach of the Agreement). He also said that the present measures were taken by China as a means of self-defence against the concentration of Japanese forces, and declined to cooperate with Japan in order to avoid a clash.

Then I asked further, "What kind of measures for this remedy does each power have?"

The representative of Britain said: "After all it may need the power of the Marines of Shanghai, but, as for Britain, we cannot do anything without instructions from our home land."

The representative of United States of America stated: "It is impossible to use the American Marines without the order of the Chief of the General Staff."

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Italy's representative stated: "We can place the Italian army between the Japanese and Chinese army to avoid a clash, but this very army is now on the way from the home land to Shanghai."

Being that no good ideas were produced at the meeting other than the above, the meeting was closed after we decided that Japan and China should have never resorted to force, not to the extent that they would be actually attacked by the other party.

Under these circumstances, Staff Officer WAKEDA was very anxious saying that we were not then prepared for defense, and if we delayed in taking up some necessary measures, we would be driven into an irrevocable position. In reply to him, I said that in these grave circumstances, we had to claim all that was possible for us, and to exert every effort we could, lest we do <sup>cause</sup> not any trouble for Japan. And I stopped his taking any action.

I believe I took every possible measure for the settlement of the incident, and exerted with the last moment, every effort possible.

Incidentally, the meeting was closed at 6 pm.

15) On August 13, the Chinese plain clothes soldiers began to fire from the building of the China Press and in the afternoon an exchange of shots took place at the Ritsuchiao.

In the evening of the same day, the American and British Consul-General made a proposal that if it was the desire of Japan to avoid a clash, they would use their good offices for it. The condition of the use of their good offices was to reduce the then situation to the state as it existed at the date of the happening of the Captain OYAMA Affair in order to avoid

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a clash between Japan and China. We accepted this, and notified Mayor Yu. Then Mayor Yu managed to report on it to Nanking. But the proposal to use the good offices was too late, as the affair entered an irrevocable phase by the Chinese raiding Japan's squadron and on the Japanese residence area in Shanghai.

16) At the beginning of the outbreak of the incident, I was told by a foreigner as follows:

"We know that Japan has made every effort to prevent an incident. And China had the same idea at the beginning. But the idea gradually changed among the Chinese. The tough elements in the Chinese military circles, believing their strength, have boasted that if Japan would use violence in North China, China could start entanglements for the purpose of torturing Japan around Shanghai where it would be most convenient for China to attack the enemy and to defend herself." They said further "and once there arises a clash at Shanghai, we will seize all the Japanese and throw them into the Hwanpukian River within two days."

Moreover, the Marine strength at the time was 2,000, and to this was added 300 men evacuated from Hankow, plus about 1000 reinforcements from Japan making the total of 3500 against the Chinese forces around Shanghai area which was estimated between 50,000 to 100,000. The odds is so great it is unthinkable that the Japanese would try to wage war. I frequently explained these facts to the consular corps and other interested parties and my explanation was accepted. In fact the Japanese side was placed in a very difficult position soon after the outbreak of hostilities.

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In particular, on August 17, because of the scarcity of Japanese forces in the Yang Tsze Poo area, the Japanese position was also destroyed. As a result we reached the conclusion that we must be prepared for the worst.

18) 1: My efforts in requesting the joint commission on June 23rd, and August 12th, 1957, to investigate and attempt to settle the violation by the Chinese of the Truce agreement of May 1938, may be read in the minutes of the two meetings of the said commission.

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On this 4th day of Jan., 1947

At Tokyo.

DEPONENT OKAMOTO, Suemasa (seal)

I, Inagawa, Tatsuo hereby certify that the above statement was sworn by the Deponent, who affixed his signature and seal thereto in the presence of this witness.

On the same date

At Tokyo.

Witness: (signed) INAGAWA, Tatsuo (seal)

OATH

In accordance with my conscience I swear to tell the whole truth withholding nothing and adding nothing.

OKAMOTO, Suemasa (seal)