

INTERR of MUTS, AKIRIA (17 Apr. 40)

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
WASHINGTON



DEPARTMENTAL RECORDS BRANCH, T.A.G.O.

INTERROGATION OF

Akira MUTO

Date and Time: 17 April 1946, 1000 - 1115 hours.

Place : Sugamo Prison, Tokyo, Japan

Present : MUTO, Akira

Mr. Pedro Lopez, Interrogator
Mr. Elton M. Hyder, Jr., Interrogator
Commander F. B. Huggins, Interpreter
Miss Louise Wiehle, Stenographer

Mr. Pedro Lopez: Do you solemnly swear, by Almighty God, that you will truly and accurately interpret and translate from English into Japanese and from Japanese into English, as may be required of you, in this proceeding.

Commander Huggins: I do.

Questions by: Mr. Pedro Lopez

Q. You stated, General, some time ago that the Information Bureau of the Army was superseded by the Information Bureau under the Cabinet. Is that right?

A. Yes. Originally the organ in the Army was known as the Newspaper Unit. This became the Cabinet Information Bureau.

Q. When?

A. I do not remember the date.

Q. During your incumbency? Before or after?

A. Before I took office. In any case, as I said, this became the Cabinet Information Bureau and what remained in Imperial Headquarters was the Imperial Headquarters Information Bureau.

Q. Formerly the Foreign Ministry, the Navy Ministry and the War Ministry had their own information bureau, and these were merged together, was it not, and you were the Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau?

A. Yes.

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- Q. The head of that combined bureau was Colonel MATSUMURA.
A. Yes.
- Q. Was he a friend of yours?
A. Yes.
- Q. Were you intimate with him?
A. Yes, I knew him well.
- Q. How long did you know him?
A. I have known him for many years.
- Q. Do you know Nobufumi ITO?
He was also holding office in the Information Bureau, together with Colonel MATSUMURA.
A. Yes. He was head of the Information Bureau in the Cabinet under whom MATSUMURA worked as a Section Chief.
- Q. So Colonel MATSUMURA was under ITO?
A. Yes.
- Q. From whom was ITO getting his orders?
A. From the Prime Minister.
- Q. The Prime Minister was Mr. TOJO at the time?
A. No. Before TOJO's day.
- Q. When TOJO was the Prime Minister, did ITO continue to be the President of the Information Bureau?
A. I believe it was TANI after the TOJO Cabinet came into power.
- Q. It was you who put Colonel MATSUMURA as Chief of the Section under ITO, is it not?
A. No, that was not me, but the Personnel Bureau.
- Q. But Colonel MATSUMURA was supposed to be the representative of your bureau in the Information Bureau, was he not?
A. No.
- Q. Did you have any dealings with Colonel MATSUMURA in connection with his duties as one of the Chiefs of the Section under ITO.
A. He had formerly been head of the Newspaper Division in the War Ministry, so it followed that we kept in fairly close contact.

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- Q. When you say "fairly close contact", do you mean regarding the policies that ought to be adopted and pursued in the Information Bureau?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You also had contact with Mr. ITO, the Chief of the Information Bureau, on matters regarding propaganda and censorship?
- A. I do not believe that I have personally had any direct contact with ITO, although some of my subordinates kept in touch with him.
- Q. You mean you never had any talk with him on any matter involving propaganda or censorship?
- A. I have no remembrance of ever having spoken to him about such matters, although I know him personally.
- Q. All your contacts with the Information Bureau were through Colonel MATSUMURA?
- A. I am not certain as these matters were handled by one of my section chiefs.
- Q. You said a while ago that you had frequent conversations with Colonel MATSUMURA regarding censorship and propaganda. Is that right or not? We want a clarification on that.
- A. Yes, but you asked if I always went through Colonel MATSUMURA and that I cannot say for sure, as I do not know.
- Q. Do you know Tatsuo IWABUCHI? He was Vice-Chief of the Information Bureau.
- A. I do not recall the name.
- Q. He is not your friend? You have not met him?
- A. I might have met him, but I have no remembrance of him.
- Q. Is this the first time you have heard this name?
- A. Yes. If, as you say, he was Vice-Chief of the Information Bureau, it must have been at the time when I was not in office, as the name is not familiar to me.
- Q. Have you any remembrance about an organization called Showa Kenkyu Kai?
- A. I do not know of it very well, but I think it might have been one of Prince KONOYE's organizations.

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Q. Do you have any remembrance about an organization entitled Kokusaku Kinkyu Kai?

A. Yes, I know of it.

Q. What organization was it?

A. This was an organization of civilians of some note who got together to look into internal conditions in Japan and decide what should be done.

Q. What was your connection with it?

A. I was not a member, but they sent me the results of their studies.

Q. You were an honorary member?

A. I was never any kind of a member, but I have many friends in the organization and they would send me these reports.

Q. Who, for example, were your friends?

A. There were a great many, but at the moment I cannot recall their names.

Q. Not even one of them?

A. Yes, one of the directors by the name of YATSUGI.

Q. Was he your very good friend?

A. Yes.

Q. You knew its president?

A. I do not believe there was any so-called president.

Q. What were its policies?

A. They were particularly interested in the economic problems in Japan and the existing state of political affairs, but whether they had actually reached a point where they had a definite policy or not, I do not know.

Q. The name of the association suggests that it was an investigative association, was it not?

A. Yes.

Q. What were they investigating?

A. These matters that I just told you of.

- Q. They were investigating the political views of the members of the Cabinet and also of the Diet, were they not?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And they were sending the / of their investigations to you?
- A. They sent me such things as copies of speeches that were being made in their meetings, but I never received any definite report on the results of their investigations.
- Q. Going back to the Information Bureau, of course, you know Mr. TANI who succeeded Mr. ITO as President of the Bureau?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you know where Mr. TANI is now?
- A. I do not know.
- Q. Do you know where we can locate Mr. ITO, for example?
- A. I do not know.
- Q. Do you know where we can locate Colonel MATSUMURA?
- A. I do not know.
- Q. How about Mr. IWABUCHI?
- A. I do not know.
- Q. Would you mind telling us about your friendship with Mr. TOJO: How long does it date back?
- A. TOJO is my senior in the Army and I first knew of him around the time that he was the a colonel. I spoke to him for the first time when I was head of the Military Affairs Bureau and he was War Minister.
- Q. What was your rank when you were his subordinate for the first time in the Army.
- A. Major General.
- Q. Where were you both serving then?
- A. As major general in the Military Affairs Bureau.
- Q. When you first met General TOJO, what was your rank then?
- A. When I was a major, I believe.

- Q. Where did you meet him?
- A. At General Staff Headquarters. I remember him because I was admonished by him at the time.
- Q. May we inquire when your friendship with him began?
- A. The day after he gave me hell, he came around and apologized for having done so, and from that time on we became acquainted with each other, although I would not go so far as to call it a deep friendship.
- Q. Is it right to say that you have been a close and intimate friend of General TOJO?
- A. No, he was my superior and I was his subordinate, and as such you could not term it close friendship.
- Q. In Japan it is not possible to develop deep friendship when one is subordinate to the other?
- A. No, he was eight years my senior and normally your friends in the military were those of your own class. I have been trying to explain to you about the position of the head of the Military Affairs Bureau in the War Department. It follows that this is a very unenviable position where you are the brunt of attacks from the General Staff Headquarters and various ministries. In other words, the man who holds this job becomes the whip-post for everyone, and in general the position is never held more than a year or so before the man reaches a point where he asks that his resignation be accepted. For that reason, I am sure that the name MUTO was bandied around by everyone. At the time that the KONOYE Cabinet fell, I believe I told you that I requested General TOJO to let me leave the post, but he did not accept my resignation. In any case it is not surprising to me that harsh things should be said about me because of the difficulties occurring from holding this position. I assure you it is not a very happy post for anyone.
- Q. Did you tell Mr. TOJO the reason why you didn't want to go on with the job when he assumed the Premiership?
- A. At a meeting where the War Minister, the Vice Minister of War and the head of the Personnel Bureau were present, I asked that I be allowed to leave the post. The reasons for this were the difficulties that I have told you about. It went so far as to require having some MPs to guard my life as many harsh things were said about me and certain radical elements were attacking me.

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Q. When was this?

A. From about the time that the American-Japanese talks were going on.

Q. Could you remember the month -- more or less?

A. Around the summer of 1941.

Q. Who were the radicals who were displeased highly with you?

A. I myself was wrapped up in my work and did not pay much attention to this, but some of my subordinates were very worried. I can only say that they were certain right wing elements.

Q. You don't recall any one of them?

A. I am unable to say.

Q. I give you another chance to recollect any one of them. Can't you recollect any one of them?

A. I really do not know what specific groups were involved. All I was aware of was the fact that certain individuals whose names or affiliations I never bothered to ascertain called at my home from time to time but were driven away at the gate. They objected to my policies as being weak, particularly in regard to Japanese-American relations and permitting the continuance of talks.

Q. How did they come to know your views were weak?

A. It was inevitable that information in regard to my favoring continuance of American-Japanese talks would leak out and get to the ears of the elements that I have spoken of.

Q. Were any one of them arrested by the MPs.

A. No.

Q. Apparently you had active participation in the discussion of whether war should be waged against the United States or whether negotiations for peace should go on.

A. My duties entailed hearing all phases of the question and keeping in touch with the foreign office and General Staff Headquarters, etc.

Q. You mean to say that your participation in the matter consisted of listening without giving your own particular views?

A. No, I gave my views.

Q. And these were the views that must have been heard by the radical elements?

A. Yes.

Q. To whom did you express these views that leaked out?

A. For example, if General Staff Headquarters comes forth with a very strong viewpoint and I stated that such a stand would be prejudicial to our best interests or that I opposed it, then matters of this kind might leak out.

Q. Who on the general staff tried to impose his views about conducting a radical stand against the United States, and were you opposed to it?

A. Not insofar as any particular stand against the United States or talk of war with the United States was concerned, but when they came through with a plan to send troops to Indo-China or make preparations for this or that, I know that in my position as head of the Military Affairs Bureau, I stated that I thought the time was not opportune or that such a thing should not be done.

Q. When you were chief of the Military Affairs Bureau, would you happen to know Field Marshall TERAUCHI?

A. Not when I was chief of the Military Affairs Bureau.

Q. When did you know him?

A. When I was in North China as Deputy Chief of Staff, he was the Commander-in-Chief.

Q. When you were Commander of the Second Guard Division, isn't it true that Field Marshall TERAUCHI was the Commander of the Southern Army.

A. Yes.

Q. And your command, with headquarters at Sumatra, was under the over-all command of the Army headed by Field Marshall HIROICHI.

A. That is correct.

Q. Is it not also true that he was appointed by virtue of an order issued sometime in October of 1941 as Chief of the Southern Army?

A. I do not remember the month.

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Q. But the fact is that his appointment as Commander of the Southern Army was made during your incumbency as Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau?

A. Yes. But this is a problem in personnel and I am not well acquainted with it.

Q. And this Command comprised Sumatra, Borneo, the Malay Peninsula, Phillipines, French Indo-China, and Thailand?

A. I believe the Phillipines were not included in that but were directly under the command of the Imperial Headquarters -- although I am not too sure about this.

Q. When the operations for the landing in Indo-China were to be carried out, it was understood that Field Marshall Terauchi was going to be the top ranking man there, was it not?

A. I have never heard any stories like that at the time of the operations in French Indo-China.

Q. Is it true that as Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau you were cognizant of an agreement between the Army and Navy called the Army and Navy Central Headquarters Agreement?

A. I am unable to state definitely whether I knew about it or not. However, I think such an agreement existed between the General Staff of the Army and the Navy.

Q. As a matter of fact that agreement existed and you knew about it in your capacity as Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau because it was issued in October of 1941.

A. I am not certain exactly what you mean by an agreement.

Q. It was an agreement, the purpose of which was to promote the maximum display of efficiency. in

A. I do not know of any agreement/relation to operations. If it had been an agreement where the foreign office would have to be consulted, it would come to my ears.

Q. It was an agreement entered into between the Imperial Headquarters Army Department and Imperial Headquarters Navy Department and issued in October 1941, and which according to high ranking Army and Navy officers you were cognizant of.

A. No, unless it was something that the cabinet had to be cognizant of I would not know about it in my capacity. If it was a strictly strategic or operational agreement, it would not come to my ears.

- Q. One of the agreements of the October 1941 Army and Navy Central Headquarters Agreement was the coordination of supply plants between the Army and the Navy in its operations in French Indo-China?
- A. I have no recollection of it.
- Q. Also another agreement contained in the Army and Navy Central Headquarters Agreement issued in October 1941 was the plan for escorting Army convoys with respect to place, time and date of landings? I wish to remind you that your duties as Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau were to fill in the details of the major operations, to get the necessary equipment and necessary personnel, and to see whether they would conform to the budget -- whether there was money for it.
- A. No, I simply am requested to provide such and such an amount of such and such a thing at say Formosa or Hainan Island, and what would occur after that is not divulged to me.
- Q. Also one of the agreements in the Army and Navy Central Headquarters Agreement was an understanding between the Army and Navy on the occupied territories and resources within that territory. Is it not true that your Bureau had cognizance of that?
- A. Such investigations under the Japanese organizational set-up are carried on by General Staff Headquarters. However, if for example, after the Japanese Army goes to French Indo-China it becomes necessary for them to obtain a quantity of rice, and in order to do this they must negotiate with the existing Government there, then the matter is brought up to the Military Affairs Bureau, which in turn will contact the foreign office.
- Q. You mean to say that in the particular case of the Indo-China operations the General Staff did not apprise you beforehand about the operations.
- A. No, in the case of French Indo-China, Japanese troops were to be sent in after an understanding had been reached with the Government there. Hence I am notified of the fact that certain elements of the Japanese Army will proceed and occupy positions in French Indo-China.
- Q. How about the operations against the Philippines? Were you not informed?
- A. Yes, in December they notified me.

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Q. They notified you because they had requirements for the personnel and equipment they would need and when they would need them?

A. Yes.

Q. What part of December were you informed?

A. Sometime around the end of November.

Q. How about the Thailand operation?

A. At the same time as the Philippine operation?

Q. How about the Malay Peninsula operation?

A. Also at the same time.

Q. Also the Celebes operation?

A. Insofar as the Celebes operation goes, I knew only of the plan but not the date.

Q. How about the Borneo operation?

A. That, too, I knew only of the plan.

Q. How about Sumatra?

A. That plan was still not set-up concretely.

Q. According to then, when would they attack the Philippines?

A. The plan was written up in this fashion: X plus such and such, the date, and originally I believe it to be some time around the beginning of December.

Q. They also informed you when they would attack Guam, did they not?

A. No.

Q. Wake?

A. No, I knew nothing about the operations which were to be handled by the Navy.

Q. Rabaul?

A. No.

Q. Solomons?

A. Absolutely not.

Q. Fiji?

A. I do not know anything about it.

Q. Samoa?

A. No.

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Q. Santa Cruz?

A. No.

Q. Australia?

A. No, that never even came up.

Q. You knew from the information that they gave you that the Malay Peninsula was to be attacked from Hainan?

A. I heard that elements from Hainan would be sent.

Q. And you also were informed that the Philippine Islands were going to be attacked from Mako, Formosa?

A. I knew it was to be Formosa, but where in Formosa I did not know.

Q. You were also informed about the order on the appointment of Field Marshall HIROCHI as Commander of the Southern Army?

A. Yes.

Q. As a matter of fact, all of this information that you have given to me was contained in one order some time in October, was it not?

A. I am not certain whether it was in one order or whether it was in many orders.

Q. You are not certain because of so many things that have entered into your mind, is it not, since then?

A. Yes.

Q. Naturally they could have been put into one order but you have not much recollection of it now.

A. I am not sure whether it was one order or many orders.

Certificate of Interpreter

I, F. B. Huggins, Lieutenant Commander 167619
(name) (Rank) (Serial Number)

being sworn on oath, state that I truly translated the questions and answers given from English to Japanese and from Japanese to English respectively, and that the above transcription of such questions and answers, consisting of 12 pages, is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

F. B. Huggins

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 19th day of April, 1946.

Elton M. Hyder
(Name and Rank)

Duly Detailed Investigating Officer,
International Prosecution Section, GHQ, SCAP.

Certificate of Stenographer

I, Louise Wiehle, hereby certify that I acted as stenographer at the interrogation set out above, and that I transcribed the foregoing questions and answers, and that the transcription is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Louise Wiehle

Certificate of Interrogator.

I, (we) Pedro Lopez, _____,
and Elton M. Hyder, Jr., _____,

certify that on the 17th day of April, 1946, personally appeared before ~~me~~ (us) General Akira MUTO and according to Lt. Comdr. F. B. Huggins, Interpreter, gave the foregoing answers to the several questions set forth therein.

Tokyo, Japan
Place

April 19, 1946.
Date

Elton M. Hyder