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INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

-vs-

ARAKI Sadao, et al

A F F I D A V I T

I, ADMIRAL SUZUKI KANTARŌ, make the following statement of facts within my knowledge:

When I received the Imperial command to form a cabinet, in April 1945, being a novice in politics, I requested advice of the Jūshin (Elder Statesmen) concerning the selection of the cabinet members. For Foreign Minister, however, I made my own choice of Tōgō Shigenori, for the reason that although I knew him only slightly I had the feeling that he had opposed the war from the beginning and had resigned from the Tōjō cabinet as a measure of opposition to Tōjō's dictatorship and high-handed policies. I had believed from the beginning that a war against America and Britain could not succeed, and when selected as premier I understood that it was to be my duty to attempt to bring about the ending of the war; therefore I wished to select as foreign minister a man who was known to have opposed war.

At the time of the formation of the cabinet Mr. Tōgō was in Karuizawa, and I requested him by telegraph to accept the portfolio of foreign minister. His reply was that he would have to discuss the matter with me before giving his acceptance. He therefore came to Tōkyō on 8 April, and we did discuss his acceptance of the post. In view of the conditions prevailing in Japan at the time, it was not possible for me to speak openly on the question of ending the war; but from our conversation I had the impression that Mr. Tōgō's views were the same as my own. Although I do not now remember clearly, he may have stated that his acceptance was conditional upon the cabinet's being one which would work to bring about the end of the war.

As a result of that conversation, Mr. Tōgō said that he would have to consult his superiors in the Foreign Ministry (he mentioned specifically Hirota Kōki) before giving his decision. On the next day he gave me his decision to accept. Very soon thereafter Mr. Tōgō and I had a talk in which he brought up the question of ending the war, stating that in his opinion it must be brought about as soon as possible, and we reached an agreement on the point. Beginning about the middle of May six-man conferences of Premier, Foreign Minister, Army and Navy Ministers and Army and Navy Chiefs of General Staff began to be held to discuss the entire question of ending the war. By that time the battle of Okinawa was seen to be hopeless, which weakened the services' insistence on continuation of the war; and by the end of May Mr. Tōgō's urging that we must approach Russia to attempt to bring hostilities to an end had persuaded the services to the extent that they were agreed to approaching Russia, although there was still some idea of securing not merely mediation but assistance from her.

~~From that time until~~ 22 June there was further discussion and some difference of opinion in the six-man conference regarding the method of procedure. During this time Mr. Tōgō took the lead in the conferences in insisting that the war must end, and that Russia's mediation must be sought to end it. On 22 June the six members of the conference were summoned before the Throne, at which time the Emperor clarified his views of the matter, which views were that the war must be brought to a speedy conclusion. Thereafter there was no further disagreement in the six-man conferences, and arrangements were made to send a special envoy to Moscow to request mediation. Owing to various delays this was not accomplished before the announcement of the Potsdam Declaration on 26 July.

On 9 August, at meetings of the six-man conference and the Cabinet, a plan was presented by Foreign Minister Tōgō for acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration with the sole condition attached of maintenance of the national polity. Again there was disagreement, some of the members wishing to add certain conditions concerning disarmament of Japanese troops, occupation of Japan and other points. The matter was therefore presented to the Throne for decision; after hearing the opposing points of view, the Emperor without hesitation accepted Mr. Tōgō's proposal, and ordered it carried out.

~~I consider Mr. Tōgō to be a man of deep convictions, with loyalty to the real interest of his country, and a man who having formed his opinions cannot be shaken from them. He is a brave man and a straightforward one.~~

Kantaro Suzuki

Subscribed and sworn to before the undersigned authority at Sekiyado, Chiba-ken, this 28th day of July, 1946.

Haruhiko Nishi