

(HIROTA 16 Feb cont'd)

- Q. Do you recall what part Col. Chiaki HIGUCHI played in the China Affair?
- A. I do not even know his name.
- Q. Do you recall what part Col. Kotoku SATO played in the China Affair?
- A. I do not know his name.
- Q. Have you ever heard of the name of Major Isamu CHO in connection with the Chinese Incident?
- A. I know the name of Isamu CHO. I do not know him in connection with the Chinese Incident, but I know him as a man who had something to do with Russia in the incident which took place in the northern part of Korea at a place known as Chokoho.
- Q. Have you ever heard the name of Major Ysumasu KAGESA in connection with the Chinese Incident?
- A. I am not quite sure of the first name of this man, but the name KAGESA sounds familiar to me although I have never met him. He was active in the area of the Yangtze River.
- Q. If Baron HIRANUMA implicated this gentleman in the Chinese Affair, do you believe such information would be reliable?
- A. Just like I am finding myself with reference to the activities of these people where I have heard of them but do not know the facts. I don't know to what extent Baron HIRANUMA had factual knowledge of each of them but he must have had some knowledge if he said so. I have no definite basis to deny his statement or affirm it.
- Q. In 1937, the policy of the Japanese Government was one of total war, is that correct?
- A. Not necessarily so. The Government's policy then was not to have it expand.
- Q. You would certainly say that the policy of the Japanese Government at this time was one of national unity, is that correct?
- A. I believe that could be said.
- Q. Did it not originate at the time when you were Prime Minister?
- A. I do not remember it in that manner. When I was asked to form a new cabinet, the condition within the army was so disorganized that it was necessary to reform it. That is when I was called upon to form my cabinet and that is why I was asked to do so.
- Q. Mr. Hirota, with reference to the SEINSAN RYOKU KAKUYU KEIKAKU Plan

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this was instituted in your cabinet, is that true?

- A. ^{Almost} ~~Most~~ all cabinets advocated this productive expansion program of the productive power in Japan. When you make specific reference to this plan, you must be placing some significance on it which might be different from similar plans followed by all other cabinets as well.
- Q. Was this a five year plan for both Japan and Manchuria?
- A. I do not remember any plan that could be called a Five Year Plan.
- Q. You do not recall that this plan was to form Japan and Manchuria into a political autarcny?
- A. I believe the economic plan set up for Japan and Manchuria was based upon economic cooperation between the two countries. Japan planned to assist Manchuria to become an independent country.
- Q. Could that happen when the Japanese army appointed and controlled the the political heads of the Manchurian government?
- A. What you have just now said is very true as to what was taking place in Manchuria under the Japanese Army. However, the policy of the Japanese Government was to nurture Manchukuo into an independent country.
- Q. With reference to this five year Economic Plan, do you recall that it was passed by the Planning Board (KEIKAKU) of the HAYASHI Cabinet?
- A. I don't know what the HAYASHI Cabinet did on that matter, but nothing like that was planned in my cabinet.
- Q. To your knowledge?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you recall such a plan being in force when you next came in as Foreign Minister in Prince KONOYE's cabinet?
- A. I do not remember ever handling that type of work in my ministry, however, if there were such an activity, it could have been handled by the Manchurian Affairs Bureau.
- Q. Did you retire from the government in 1940?
- A. In May 1939 I retired from government duties.

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- Q. But in 1940, you became a member of the Cabinet Advisory Council, is that correct?
- A. During the YONAI Cabinet, I was made advisor to it. Therefore I held that position either in 1940 or 1941.
- Q. Why was it considered necessary to pass the National Mobilization Law in 1939?
- A. I don't know that but I think the KONOYE Cabinet must have negotiated it with the army.
- Q. Is it possible that it was passed because of the attitude that war with the western powers would be necessary if Japan was to win the China Affair?
- A. That presents a rather difficult question to me. However, from right around that time there was pressure from the military side to operate the government without interference from the Diet, so as to retain a centralized control in the government.
- Q. You mean in the army?
- A. Insofar as general mobilization plans were concerned, it would be handled by the government.
- Q. But the army under this plan was to really be the government, is that correct?
- A. That would be the tendency.
- Q. While you were premier, did you ever hear of SEIJI GYOSEI KAIZO AN which means the political and administrative reform program?
- A. Whether it was under that particular title or not, a plan for that type of work was brought to me by the army but I tabled it.
- Q. To what type of work do you refer?
- A. The plan as presented to me by the army included so many different things, for instance, consolidation of the railroad department and communication department, abolishing the foreign affairs department and establishing a new department known as ZAISEI-SHO, and to increase the power and authority of the premier. These, it seems to me, were some of the high lights of the plan, if my memory serves me correctly.

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- Q. So that the army contemplated moving a General or high-ranking officer into the office of premiership?
- A. Hardly anyone can say what the army really had in mind. The army's power and influence in those days was quite strong, and the army, if it should succeed in placing one of their high-ranking officers, I can imagine the power of the premier would be quite great.
- Q. It would have amounted to a virtual dictatorship?
- A. That could be one of the tendencies.
- Q. On the 5th of September, 1937, when you addressed the Diet, you stated (reading) "It is hardly necessary to say that the basic policy of the Japanese Government aims at stabilization of relations between Japan, Manchukuo and China, for their common prosperity and well being. Since China, ignoring our true motives, has mobilized her vast armies against us, we cannot do otherwise than counter the mobilization by force of arms". Is that correct?
- A. I believe that was taken from a part of my speech made to the Diet. Then I must say I must have made it.
- Q. Was this speech handed to you by the War Minister, or the Chief of Staff?
- A. I did not receive any specific instructions from the army as far as I am concerned, but whenever a statement of that type was made, the army and the foreign office representatives conferred on what the contents of the statement should be.
- Q. This is done at the time when the five persons we mentioned the other day meet in a secret cabinet meeting, is that correct?
- A. The usual procedure for handling a speech of this type pertaining to the diplomatic policy is that a staff representative of the war ministry and chief of staff and chief of naval operations, and foreign affairs department, meet to discuss the principles to be embodied in the statement. The principles will then be enunciated in a form which would be prepared by the Foreign Affairs Department, and then, through the Minister of Foreign Affairs, presented to the cabinet for approval, then delivered to the Diet.
- Q. Because of the army's power in 1937, do you believe that the representative of the chief of staff may have dictated this policy?
- A. I can reasonably assume that representatives of these departments I have just mentioned no doubt made their own claims. However, I have no way of knowing how much each contributed to this.

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- Q. In this same speech you further stated (reading): "We firmly believe that it is in accordance with the right of self-defense as well as with the cause of righteousness that our country is determined to deal a decisive blow to such a country (referring to China) so that it may reflect upon the error of its ways. The sole recourse open to the Japanese Empire is to administer the foregoing blow to the Chinese Army so that it may lose completely its will to fight".
- A. If this quotation was taken from my speech, then I must say it was made in that speech.
- Q. Are these not strong words (quoting) "in the cause of righteousness we should deal a decisive blow to China?"
- A. I think they are indeed extremely harsh words.
- Q. Do they not amount to a declaration of war on China?
- A. I certainly do think so.
- Q. Do you recall that on the same day the Tokyo Naval Office declared that a blockade of the China Coast would become effective against Chinese vessels?
- A. Yes, I remember a blockade of the China Coast was declared - whether it was on the same day or not.
- Q. It was not declared, it was announced?
- A. At any rate, the navy adopted that policy.
- Q. Was Vice Admiral HASEGAWA commanding the Japanese Naval forces in China at about this time?
- A. I don't remember, perhaps he was.
- Q. Did you ever see a copy of the pronouncement of the blockade as proclaimed at Shanghai on the 25th of August, 1937?
- A. Perhaps I saw it. I don't remember.
- Q. As a student of the law, you appreciate, do you not, that unless two countries are belligerents, a blockade cannot be announced?
- A. That is fundamental.
- Q. Yet, ^{even} even on top of these two declarations, your speech and the blockade, the position of the Japanese Government was that they had never declared war on China, is that correct?

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A. We did not declare war on China.

Q. You did not declare war formally on China?

A. That is right, not formally.

Q. But you agree that these two incidents actually do declare a state of war to exist?

A. I was against war with China.

CAPT. PHELPS: Wait a second. Does he answer my question?

MR. SANU : In part I think he does.

A. (continuing) I was opposing war with China, declared or undeclared and I was opposed to anything which might plunge this country into war with China, but the way the army was surrounding the thing, there was nothing we really could do about it. While the Diet was in session in about February of the 13th year of SHOWA, or according to the western calendar, 1938, I told Premier KONOYE, the Navy Minister YONAI, and the Army Minister SUGIYAMA - I told them I could not discharge my duty as foreign minister under the existing conditions therefore I would rather resign than to continue under those conditions.

Q. Just a minute. May I repeat my original question, Mr. Hirota.

A. I wonder if you would allow me to continue just a little more to continue my thought. (continuing answer). I told them I wanted to resign as I said before. Premier KONOYE said to me "I want to resign also because I cannot carry on my duties. But should my cabinet collapse now while the Diet is in session while this very important matter is before them, it may not be the right thing to do". So I decided to withhold my resignation until the end of that Diet session.

Q. Well, you do agree that the declaration of a blockade, and your statement to the Diet actually are a declaration of war, although not a formal one?

A. I believe that condition could be considered as such.

Q. In Northern China, in July, 1937, it was the policy of the Japanese Government to attempt local settlement of these incidents, is that correct?

A. Yes. That is the way I maintained.

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- Q. By the end of the month, negotiations were actually being carried on with the Chinese, is that right?
- A. Yes, negotiations had already begun.
- Q. But, while negotiations were being carried on, Japanese troops occupied Peking and Tientsen, is that correct?
- A. My understanding was that some sort of a settlement was arrived at as the result of negotiations. However, I was made to know that the Chinese did not live up to the terms of that settlement.
- Q. Did you receive your reports from the Japanese Army?
- A. Yes, we had been receiving reports chiefly from the War Ministry because our councils there had no way of knowing the inside information of what the army was doing.
- Q. From the War Ministry communications, did you know that at the end of July, the army had seized the railway running between Peking and Tientsen?
- A. I would not be able to say anything about it because I do not remember in detail what took place, but it was a situation in which that type of thing would have been possible.
- Q. Do you recall that at this time the Japanese set up a government in the Chinese Province of HOPEI?
- A. Because of lack of actual knowledge about it, I have no ground to deny it.
- Q. At that time, emergency financial measures were taken in Tokyo, were they not?
- A. I believe whatever necessary amount of funds needed to carry on the war must have been appropriated.
- Q. At this time, all the Japanese Nationals in China were recalled to Japan, is that correct?
- A. At the beginning, Japanese who were colonizing in more isolated sections in the northern part of China especially in localities such as TEISHU, and TAIGEN, were instructed to prepare for evacuation to safer areas, but no instructions were given them to return to Japan. The people living in other areas along the Yangtze River were told to make appeal to Chinese authorities for proper protection, and to be extremely careful in dealing with Chinese subjects so that no further disturbance would occur. That was about the gist of our instructions to them.

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Q. But the Japanese nationals did leave North China?

A. There might have been some who returned to Japan but I do not know as to the number.

Q. I asked whether or not the Japanese Nationals left North China?

A. I think some people must have left because that area became involved. But I do not know to just what extent.

Q. If you were Chinese and knew of the clashes between your troops and the Japanese, as well as additional appropriations to the army, and saw foreign nationals leave your country, you would probably feel that war was imminent, would you not?

A. I believe I would feel that way.

Q. Why did Japan refuse to attend the conference at Brussels in November, 1937?

A. I would like to be allowed to make an explanation of the causes which lead to that conclusion.

Q. All we have time for today is the answer. Who was responsible for Japan's failure to attend this conference? You may then explain this incident at your next interview.

A. It was a demand of the army not to allow foreign nations to interfere because the problem and the trouble was between China and Japan.

Q. Who in the army expressed this view?

A. That was the general consensus of the army's view, and it requires further explanation.

Q. Probably the Council of the Big Three?

A. At the very inception I attempted to negotiate through British Ambassador Craig. To my such step the army strenuously objected so I had to abandon it for there was nothing else to do. Later the army contended that if I dealt through Germany it would be acceptable to them.

Q. Answer who in the army - the Council of the Big Three, the Supreme War Council, the War Minister or the Chief of Staff?

A. The request to deal through Germany was made by War Minister Sugiyama. The army's contention for demanding not to participate in the Brussels Conference was that if Japan participated in that conference, she

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would be placed in a defensive position as it was the case in the League of Nations conference. Therefore they preferred not to attend the Brussels Conference. Not only was that the demand of the army but the same sentiment prevailed among the Japanese people, some of the extremists even saying that the Nine Power Treaty should be scrapped.

Q. As a matter of fact they said it was already scrapped, did they not?

A. After the incident developed to the extent it did, it really amounted to the discarding of the Nine Power Treaty.

Q. To the Japanese people?

A. Well, internationally it resulted in the abandonment of the Nine Power Treaty.

Q. That will be adjudged by the Military Tribunal.

A. At least the spirit of the Nine Power Treaty was violated.

Q. One more question. How many Chinese were killed during the China Incident?

A. I think there must have been a great number of Chinese killed and I really feel badly about it.

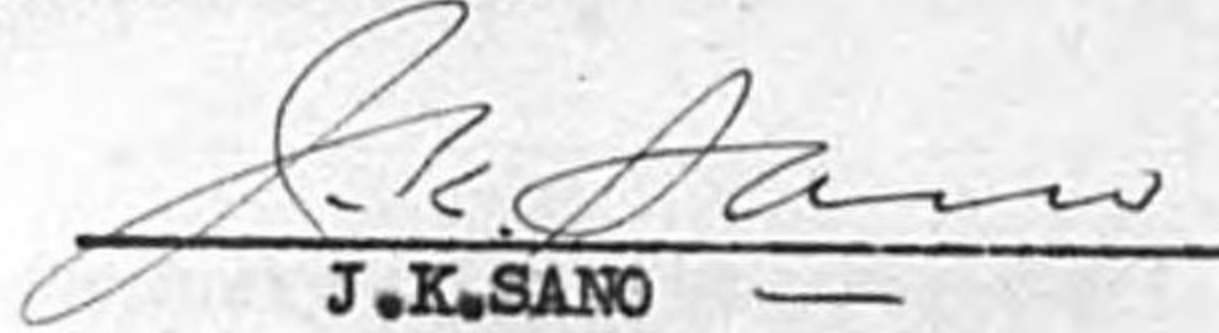
Q. We will have to conclude this interview. Capt. Sandusky will carry on the next time.

INTERROGATION ADJOURNED

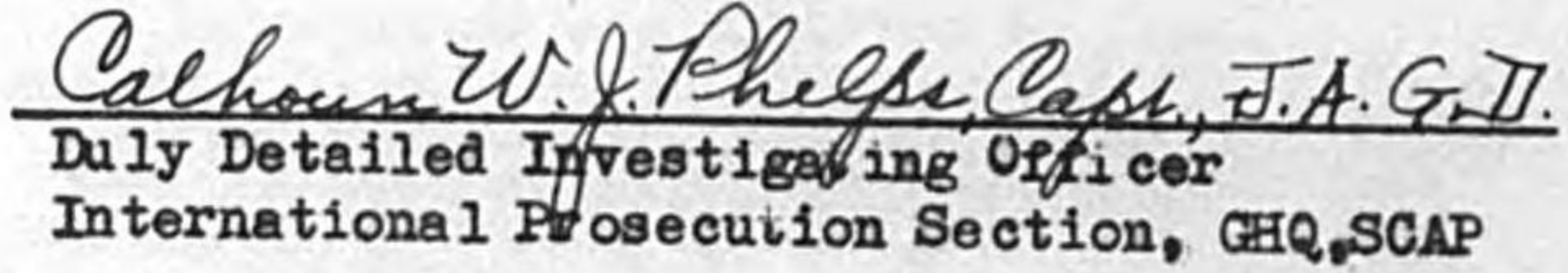
(HIROTA Feb 16 cont'd)

CERTIFICATE OF INTERPRETER

I, J. K. SANO, 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 thirteen (13) pages, are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

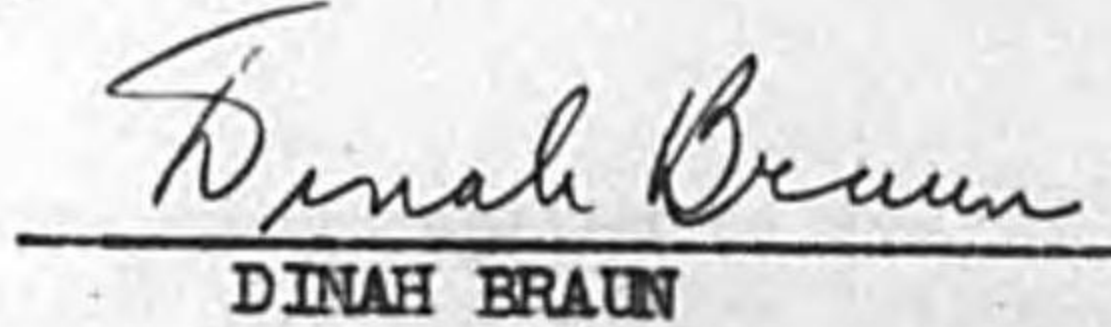

J. K. SANO

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


Duly Detailed Investigating Officer
International Prosecution Section, GHQ, SCAP

CERTIFICATE OF STENOGRAPHER

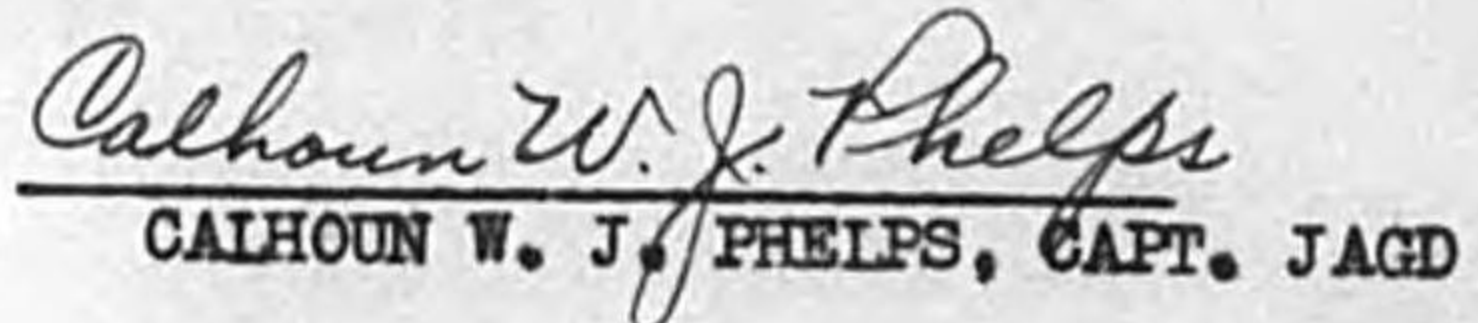
I, DINAH BRAUN, hereby certify that I acted as stenographer at the interrogation set out above, and that I transcribed the foregoing questions and answers, and that the transcription is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.


DINAH BRAUN

CERTIFICATE OF INTERROGATOR

I, CALHOUN W. J. PHELPS, CAPT. o-904367, certify that on the 16th day of February, 1946, personally appeared before me Koki HIROTA, and according to J. K. SANO, Interpreter, gave the foregoing answers to the several questions set forth therein.

TOKYO
FEBRUARY 19th, 1946.


CALHOUN W. J. PHELPS, CAPT. JAGD

INTERROGATION OF

HIROTA, Koki.

DATE AND TIME: 5 March 1946. 1400-1600 hours
PLACE : SUGAMO PRISON, Tokyo, Japan
PRESENT : HIROTA, Koki.

Capt. Arthur A. Sandusky Interrogator
Francis Suzukawa, T/3 Interpreter
Miss Dinah Braun Stenographer

Oath of Interpreter administered by Capt. Sandusky:

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?

T/3 SUZUKAWA: I do.

QUESTIONS BY : CAPT. SANDUSKY.

Note: Mr. HIROTA, without prompting replied to the first question in English and the entire interrogation proceeded by direct interrogation, all the answers being given in English by Mr. Hirota.

- Q. Mr. Hirota, I would like to retrace our steps a little and refer again to the three points or three principles that were announced while you were, I believe, Foreign Minister. It is not quite clear in the interrogation what these points were. I wonder if I may read a statement, an English translation of that, and have you check to see if it is substantially correct?
- A. I will try.
- Q. Or perhaps you would prefer to read it yourself?
- A. Yes.

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(Note: Capt. Sandusky handed paper to Mr. Hirota, copy of which is incorporated herein and made a part of this interrogation)

"HIROTA DOCTRINE - Statement of Japanese policy re China presented to British Ambassador Sir Francis Lindley on 25 April 1934 following unofficial statement of policy by Mr. Eiji Amai, spokesman for Foreign Office on 17 April 1934:

1. Japan has not infringed upon China's independence or interests, nor has she the slightest intention to do so. In fact, she sincerely desires the preservation of territorial integrity of China and her unification and prosperity. These ends should, fundamentally speaking, be attained by China herself through her self awakening and voluntary efforts.
2. Japan has no intention to trespass upon the rights of other powers in China. Their bona-fide financial and commercial activities will rebound to the benefit of China which is quite welcome to Japan. She, of course, subscribes to the principles of the Open Door and Equal Opportunity in China. She is observing scrupulously all existing treaties and agreements concerning that country.
3. However, Japan cannot remain indifferent to anyone's taking action under any pretext, which is prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order in East Asia for which she, if only in view of her geographic position, has the most vital concern. Consequently, she cannot afford to have questions of China exploited by any third party for the execution of a selfish policy which does not take into consideration the above circumstances.

(HIROTA 3-5-46 cont'd)

- A. I do not memorize very well and in the foreign office they have the documents. My memory is not very correct. If you would like to know the exact meaning of the three principles you can get a duplicate from the foreign office.
- Q. This would simply be to see whether it is a generally correct statement. We will get the exact translation from your government but for present purposes I just wanted to check this with you. Would you care to read this translation in English and see if it is substantially the same?
- A. Yes, I will read it. (After reading Mr. Hirota continued as follows): No, it is not. This is an explanation of the so called AMAU statement and that is not to be confused with the principles.
- Q. Not to be confused with the principles you announced in a speech in the Diet?
- A. It is quite a different one. After the statement by Mr. AMAU, who was spokesman for the foreign office at this time, and that statement was not the decision of the foreign office or the government. It was a spontaneous statement, an unofficial statement. So after that statement there were many protests from foreign countries so we expressed the true meaning of our ideas about China. This (pointing to the aforesaid paper) is the explanation of the position of Japan.
- Q. Would you say that that is substantially correct as an explanation?
- A. I think so. But it is not the so-called Hirota Principles.
- Q. I see.
- A. Of course that is the fundamental principle of Japan toward China.
- Q. Would you say that the third point there is an official rejection of intervention on the part of third powers?
- A. No, it is not.
- Q. Only if such third powers do not recognize the peculiar position of Japan's relations with China?
- A. I think this means Japan is quite near to China. Japanese prosperity depended upon China and besides that, as a race we are quite near so we Japanese must be put in consideration by other countries in dealing with the Asiatic question. For instance, at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, Russia was so aggressive that Japan tried to

(HIROTA 3-5-46 cont'd)

(answer cont'd)

help China from the annexation by Czarist Russia and we made a war with China, and at the time of the world war, the first world war, Japan made a treaty with United States with regard to Manchuria.

Q. That is right.

A. In that treaty is also expressed the ideas that Japan has a peculiar special interest in Manchuria from the geographical propinquity.

Q. The Nine Power Treaty also took into consideration that Japan had special interests there?

A. Yes. That is the meaning of that sentence. (Pointing to paper aforesaid)

Q. I have another statement here and I wonder if this reflects your three principles or if it is simply another statement of your comment on the AMAU statement. The first point is as follows: (Reading)

"China shall not utilize the influence of Europe and America to embarrass or make things difficult for Japan".

A. No, I think that is too much to say. (Taking the paper and reading). I think there is a Chinese explanation - a very old saying in China (turning to Interpreter and handing him paper with Chinese characters thereon, original of which is attached and made part of this record)

CAPT. SANDUSKY: Can you read that, Sergeant?

T/S Sazukawa: No they are old Chinese characters.

A. (continued) It is rather difficult to translate - they are old Chinese characters. You see, for instance, China and Japan are friendly so there is no need for China to utilize other countries to stand against Japan. China has some feeling against Japan, then China utilizes other powers to stand against Japan. That is the meaning of this sentence. So we don't like China to do such a thing - to call for outside help. That is the general meaning of the intercourse between China and Japan.

Q. So that as a basis for adjusting the whole China Affair, Japan would insist that China agree not to call in outside help but to deal only with Japan in the adjustment?

A. We don't mean that China must be friendly with Japan only. - that is the best thing for both of us but then China may also

(HIROTA 3-5-46 cont'd)

be friendly with other countries. That is quite all right.

Q. But not to the extent of joining with them against Japan?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you say that was one of your principles?

A. Yes, that was the principle of Japan always.

Q. The second point made here is: (Reading)

"Relations between China, Japan and Manchuria or Manchukuo shall be adjusted. China shall recognize Manchukuo and promote cooperation with Japan and Manchukuo".

Did Japan insist upon the recognition by China of Manchukuo?

A. No.

Q. As a basis for adjusting the affair?

A. No, we did not demand to recognize Manchukuo - never. I did not.

Q. The third point is as follows: (Reading)

"China and Japan shall cooperate in defense against communism and especially along the northern border of China."

A. Yes, that is so. There was such a policy in Japan. In that sentence what do you mean by "communism".

Q. I don't think it refers to Russia as a nation but rather to the principles of communism.

A. But chiefly it meant communism in China.

(HIROTA 3-5-46 cont'd)

- Q. In other words that China should do all in its power to combat communism within China?
- A. Yes.
- (Note for the Record: The foregoing points were listed as the Hirota principles in "KODO'S "WAY OF THE EMPEROR" by MARY A. NOURSE)
- A. (continuing) I am not certain these are the so-called three principles.
- Q. Well we will determine them more exactly at a later date when we get an official translation. I referred to these because I found them in a book discussing activities during that period and I simply wanted to check the authenticity of them with you.
- A. But I did not ask China to recognize Manchukuo.
- Q. We have that in the record. You did not insist upon Chinese recognition of Manchukuo.
- A. Not while I was foreign minister, but at the last moment, eventually ---
- Q. (Interrupting) Eventually Japan did insist on that?
- A. Yes because the army forced us to do that.
- Q. Referring again to the statement of Eiji AMAU of 17 April, 1934, your statement to the British Ambassador modified Mr. Amau's statement very much, did it not?
- A. Yes.
- Q. As I recall it, AMAU specifically warned the Chinese Government against soliciting alliance or armaments from any third power?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What do you think was the basis of Mr. Amu's statement? He appeared to be a man of authority on foreign affairs and was recognized as a spokesman for the foreign office. Is it not a little peculiar that he would be so mistaken in his statement of foreign office policy?
- A. Did you hear anything about it from Mr. AMAU?
- Q. No, we have not yet discussed it with Mr. AMAU.
- A. I think he will explain it.

(HIRATO Cont'd 3-4-46)

- A. I saw his statement in the paper one day - -
- Q. The statement was made at a press conference, I believe.
- A. And the morning of the following day, I read it in the paper and I was quite astonished. I did not know about it at all so I went to the foreign office and asked how it came to make such a statement.
- Q. I see, and shortly after that the British Ambassador called on you?
- A. Yes.
- Q. To ask for an explanation?
- A. Yes. So I explained it through the meaning of my idea.
- Q. Was that your personal attitude?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Or let me say it this way - do you think that Mr. AMAU reflected or expressed the viewpoint of most of the people in the foreign ministry even though he did not express your personal views?
- A. My personal views means the official view of the foreign office, you see there was no such opinion established in the foreign office at all. Of course I was head of the foreign office and I must take all the responsibility for what was done by the members of the foreign office. I know that but I do not know how that statement came to appear in the paper.
- Q. Would you say that Mr. AMAU's statement reflected the kind of foreign policy that the army wanted?
- A. Perhaps.
- Q. It did coincide very closely, did it not?
- A. I had some suspicion.
- Q. That is what I was going to ask you. Did it occur to you then or even at a later date that perhaps the army had something to do with his making so definite a statement without first consulting you? That is a very important policy announcement to make without clearing it with the foreign minister.
- A. On that point I think you can get a clearer explanation from Hourinouchi. He was once our ambassador to the United States.

(HIRATO Cont'd 3-5-46)

- Q. What was his connection or position at that time?
- A. At that time he was in the foreign office, but afterwards he became my vice-minister for foreign affairs.
- Q. You think he may know of any possible connection between AMAU and the army?
- A. No, not that, but how that statement came to appear in the paper.
- Q. Would he know anything about a possible connection between the statement and any army activity - that is any army influence brought to bear to bring about the publication of the statement?
- A. I can say clearly really I do not know how it came to appear in the paper Mr. Horinouchi may know better than me because he took the position of vice-foreign minister under me.
- Q. After you were obliged to modify Mr. AMAU's statement was there any reaction on the part of the army, that is, did any representative of the army discuss with you the need for issuing a statement in modification of Mr. AMAU's statement. Did the army like what you had done?
- A. I don't know but perhaps not.
- Q. If they did not, they did not tell you about it, is that right?
- A. That is right. You see my principle is the true principle of the Japanese Government toward China you see, so no one can impose that principle if I make that statement. That is a rather direct question so it is better that it is explained by a third person rather than by me.
- Q. Do you know if Mr. AMAU is in Tokyo and if so where he is?
- A. He is here now, in Sugamo Prison.
- Q. I don't believe he has been interviewed as yet but we will do so very shortly.
- A. I beg your pardon, what did you say?
- Q. I don't think he has been questioned as yet. Now, I would like to go back again to the time of the formation of your cabinet?
- A. Yes.

(HIROTA 3-5-46)

- Q. On the 9th day of February you explained in detail the difficulties you had in trying to form a cabinet during the week or ten days after you received the imperial order on the 9th of March, 1936. You said specifically that you desired to appoint OHARA as Justice Minister?
- A. Yes, that is right.
- Q. And YOSHIDA as foreign minister?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And SHIMOMURA, Hiroshi, as Communication minister, but that you were unable to do so because of objections from the army?
- A. Yes.
- Q. I would like to go through the list of your cabinet and have you indicate which ones were your original choices and which ones you had any difficulty on with the army, if you don't mind? As foreign minister you wanted YOSHIDA?
- A. Yes.
- Q. But the army insisted upon ARITA?
- A. No, I selected ARITA myself.
- Q. That was after the army had indicated its objection to YOSHIDA?
- A. Yes, they were strongly opposed to him.
- Q. But ARITA was your second choice?
- A. Yes.
- Q. For Home Minister, you originally wanted KAWASAKI?
- A. No, that is not correct, not quite correct. I thought he might be able to become home minister because he was an official of that department formerly.
- Q. Did you suggest his appointment?
- A. No, I did not.
- Q. Was USHIO your choice or was he designated by the army for Home Minister?

(HIROTA 3-5-46 cont'd)

- A. USHIO - I selected him.
- Q. You selected him?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was Eiichi BABA your first choice for Finance Minister?
- A. His name was mentioned in the document which was given to me from Prince KONOYE.
- Q. As a possible selection for a cabinet member?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did that document propose a complete cabinet?
- A. No, just four or five names.
- Q. Previously you mentioned as being on that list BABA and YUKI for Finance Ministers.
- A. Yes.
- Q. KAWASAKI - what was he designated for?
- A. On the document?
- Q. Yes.
- A. No particular position.
- Q. Another one was MAEDA, Yonezo.
- A. He was one of the principal members of SEIYUKAI.
- Q. Were these the only names on the list.
- A. Yes. And Prince KONOYE told me to make consultation with both parties through those two men - KAWASAKI and MAEDA.
- Q. All of the men on the list were eventually given cabinet positions, were they not?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Except YUKI?
- A. I asked Yuki to become overseas department minister but he did not accept.

(HIROTA 3-5-46 - cont'd)

- Q. The other cabinet positions then were filled to the satisfaction of the Army - that is they did not object to your choice, other than those that we have discussed.
- A. Mr. SHIMAMURA was objected to by the Army. I asked him to become Minister for communication but the army opposed it.
- Q. And it was necessary to get the agreement of the army because otherwise you would have difficulty in getting a War Minister, is that right?
- A. Yes. Besides that I liked to get two persons from each party. They opposed that. So it took some time.
- Q. In the end, Mr. Hirota, was there any one proposed by the army for a cabinet position that you did not accept?
- A. No, I don't think so.
- Q. So that you were in agreement when your cabinet was finally formed?
- A. Yes.
- Q. I would like to discuss again the change in regulation - let me see - the Imperial Order which was passed while you were Premier, requiring that the War Minister must be a General or a Lt. General on the Active Service List. Later on in the day you indicated that if a Premier could not find a proper person on the active list, that it would be possible to recall to active service an officer on the reserve and thereby make him eligible for appointment as War Minister?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And you said that was done in the case of Admiral YONAI in the ABE Cabinet?
- A. Maybe.
- Q. What procedure would the premier follow in order to recall a man to active service. Would he have to go through the army to do it.
- A.8 Yes, the army only.
- Q. To do that the Premier would have to have the agreement of the Chief of Staff or other army authorities, would he not? In other words, the Premier himself could not call a military man back to active service but would have to do it through the army?
- A. He would ask the Emperor to do that.

(HIROTA - 4-5-46)

(Answer continued)

- A. If there is no proper person on the existing list and the Prime Minister likes to appoint a retired general, then he may ask the Emperor to do that.
- Q. But to your knowledge that was done only once, in the case of YONAI?
- A. No. SAITO became Governor of Korea. He was made active service.
- Q. Was that a result of a request by the Premier to the Emperor, do you know?
- A. I am not sure, but I think so. That was some years before.
- Q. In spite of that possibility of recalling a man from active service, the regulation passed during your term of office did in fact make it difficult to form later cabinets, did it not?
- A. I think so.
- Q. The army used that provision to coerce or force prime ministers to select men for cabinet posts who were agreeable to the army?
- A. I think so.
- Q. You are aware, are you not, that many authors or writers in discussing events in Japan, and the rise of the power of the army, refer to that regulation as a turning point because it gave the army so much control?
- A. Yes, quite so. I know that, but that idea came from some of the retired generals. You see they were excepted from the possibility of becoming war ministers. So they were quite angry. They were excepted from appointments.
- Q. That is, unless they would be recalled back to active service?
- A. Yes. And besides that, you must always remember that all kinds of ideas appear in the magazines and they come from certain sources.
- Q. That is right.
- A. For instance with Mr. YUGAKI - when he was asked to be premier he wanted to select a war minister but the army refused to recommend any one to the cabinet, so perhaps he liked to appoint a retired general but the army opposed that also so he was put in a difficult position and so he failed to make a cabinet. But the real cause of his failure is not that point, I suppose.

- Q. They simply used that as a means of defeating his formation of a cabinet?
- A. Yes, but there was another reason for that. So you must pay attention to the statements written in magazines or newspapers - where that information comes from.
- Q. In view of the ability of the premier to request the Emperor to call a man from inactive duty to active duty, the influence of the army on cabinet selections can actually be controlled to a greater extent than many people think, is that true? That the army's control over the cabinet is more limited than many people suppose?
- A. But in the case of Admiral YONAI, the premier succeeded.
- Q. There is nothing in the imperial order to indicate that a man may be recalled to active service?
- A. No, in the order it is regulated that only the active service generals must be appointed.
- Q. And the answer to that is to request the Emperor to put your selection back to active service?
- A. Yes that was the practice.
- Q. The army could not refuse to reinstate into active service an officer who had been returned to active duty by the emperor, could they? That is, if the Emperor returns a man to active duty, the army could not refuse to accept him?
- A. I don't know the army regulation - I don't know the procedure of that practice.
- Q. That is a point we will have to find out. In any event, an officer selected for the War Ministry by that means would have a hard time getting along with the army?
- A. I think so - that is quite true.
- Q. In an interrogation last month of Baron ARAKI, he stated that he did not know of any basic reason for the resignation of your cabinet and he spoke of quarrels between you and the War Minister Gen. TERAUCHI over trivial matters and he said that he suspected there was a scheme on the part of the army to force the fall of your cabinet. He mentioned a man named MUTO, Akira who he thought although he was not sure, was chairman of the Military Affairs Bureau, as possibly having something to do with that.

(HIROTA -4-5-46)

- A. Maybe but I don't know.
- Q. Did you suspect any such thing?
- A. Maybe, but I did not quarrel with General TERAUCHI at all.
- Q. Your relations were always cordial?
- A. Always quite smooth but he did make a quarrel with a member of the Diet.
- Q. I wanted to ask you about that. I believe that took place during the Diet Session of January 21, 1937?
- A. Yes. A Mr. KUMMATSU ---
- Q. (Interrupting) Who was he?
- A. He was a member of the SEIYUKAI and a member of the Diet.
- Q. Did he have any other official capacity?
- A. No.
- Q. What was he in private life? Was he an industrialist?
- A. No, I think he was a politician.
- Q. What was the nature of his quarrel with Gen. TERAUCHI?
- A. I do not remember in detail, but he attacked the army in general.
- Q. Did he not suggest that the army was apparently heading toward a kind of dictatorship, or excessive control by the Army?
- A. No, in some measure he attacked that kind of attitude of the army, but after the so-called 2.26 Incident the people were very angry with the army so he attacked the army, but Gen. TERAUCHI at that time was trying very hard to reform the army - he was exerting himself for that purpose.
- Q. Was he trying to eliminate some of the leaders responsible for that Incident?
- A. Yes. And I think he expected to be rather praised by the Diet by doing that but that member of the Diet criticized very severely the attitude of the Army.
- Q. And Mr. TERAUCHI was angry and disappointed?
- A. Yes.

(HIROTA 4-5-46)

- Q. That was pretty bad.
- A. So the members of the army pressed General TERAUCHI to dissolve the Diet.
- Q. That was what Gen. TERAUCHI wanted to do?
- A. No, he asked me to do that.
- Q. TERAUCHI did?
- A. Yes, to dissolve the Diet.
- Q. In order to quiet any opposition?
- A. Maybe. But I opposed it and resigned myself.
- Q. Well, why did you feel it was necessary to resign on that account, Mr. Hirota. That was after all a trivial quarrel was it not; was that not an insignificant reason to bring about the fall of the cabinet?
- A. You see at that time the army demanded to dissolve the Diet but the Navy opposed that. The opinions of the army and navy were different - quite opposite. So I was put in a difficult position. Besides that, I did not like to remain Prime Minister any longer.
- Q. Well, the army actually handed in the resignation of Gen. TERAUCHI as War Minister, did they not?
- A. No.
- Q. Or threatened to?
- A. No, I suppose I guessed that.
- Q. You anticipated that?
- A. No, not anticipated. I had such an idea that such a thing might happen and so I decided myself to resign.
- Q. As we say in America, you beat them to the draw?
- A. I did not like to remain as Prime Minister any longer and by my resignation I cancelled all the measures made in my cabinet.
- Q. What do you mean you cancelled them?
- A. They came to nothing. I resigned, my cabinet resigned, so all measures - anything in process came to nothing.

(HIROTA 4-5-46)

- Q. You were convinced at that time that you could not continue any longer without giving in too much to the army?
- A. Yes, quite so.
- Q. If you had not resigned, the army would have handed in Gen. TERAUCHI's resignation and would have refused to name another man?
- A. Yes. Then I must fail in making a new member of the army...
- Q. And that would bring about the fall of the cabinet?
- A. Yes, so I made up my mind to resign.
- Q. And the only way you could have stayed on would be to accede to the army's desire to dissolve the Diet?
- A. Yes.
- Q. If you had done that, you could have continued in office in all probability. If you had dissolved the Diet there would not have been need for you to resign?
- A. But I did not like to do that at that time. I got a letter from Mr. OSAKI.
- Q. Who was he? What was his position?
- A. He was a leader of a political party at that time.
- Q. Which one?
- A. Just a small group party.
- Q. Not one of the two leading ones?
- A. No, but he is a very famous statesman and is still living. He is very old. I knew him quite well for many many years you see. He did not like me to dissolve the Diet for the sake of the army so he wrote me a letter. I did not like to dissolve the Diet for the sake of the prolongation of the cabinet, you see. Rather I liked to stop all the measures made in my cabinet. I really did not like some of them.
- Q. Can you think of any one particularly that you took exception to or objected to?
- A. The Finance measures - too much money for the army. I did not

like that so I rather stopped it by the resignation of the cabinet.

- Q. As a result of that was a budget passed by that session of the Diet?
- A. No, I resigned, so the new cabinet was made by Gen. HAYASHI and he made new measures independently of the former cabinet.
- Q. The money desired by the army was approved?
- A. Not approved in my cabinet.
- Q. By the HAYASHI cabinet?
- A. Perhaps. At that time the finance minister was YUKI - in the HAYASHI Cabinet.
- Q. Well, this occurs to me, Mr. Hirota, if the army had handed in the resignation of Gen. TERAUCHI and had refused to name anyone else for the position, the only way you could form - the only way you could get a War Minister would be to go to the Emperor and get someone from inactive service. Is that right. Could you have done that?
- A. That is only a supposition. I had no such idea - to remain in the cabinet.
- Q. You felt in any event you would not be able to get along agreeably with the army?
- A. Such a position may take place you see, but in Japan, if the Emperor cannot get a proper war minister, he cannot make any administration. He cannot govern the country. He cannot administer the country. He must resign.
- Q. Do you mean that his inability to get a war minister acceptable to the army would cause the popular support to fail?
- A. No, I don't think so. You see in Japan the so-called public support is done only by political parties. You see I had no political party - no friends among politicians, so if anyone cannot get a proper war minister, he must resign. You see the army was so powerful at that time.
- Q. I think that is perhaps enough on that point - I think I understand the situation. - One other point came up just the other day that I thought you would be interested in. We have just put into custody a MR. SATOMI - the first name is Hajime.
- A. I don't know him.
- Q. He was head of the opium monopoly in Shanghai in 1938. In the

(question continued)

course of interviewing him he told us that when he was in Shanghai in March, 1938, there were forty tons of opium in the warehouse at Shanghai and that it had been brought from Persia by the MITSUI BUSSAN KAISHA, to be sold through the monopoly. He also pointed out that opium could not be loaded on MITSUI boats in Persia without a permit from the foreign ministry in Tokyo, and I believe you were the foreign minister at that time. That was March, 1938. He also stated -

- A. March, 1938?
- Q. I believe you were foreign minister from June, 1937 to May, 1938. He also stated that the opium could not be unloaded in Shanghai without a permit from the war ministry and that he had been unable at first to dispose of the opium because the foreign ministry and the war ministry could not agree on a price, but that eventually he was able to sell it as a result of a conference in Tokyo and an agreement as to price among the foreign ministry and the war ministry and MITSUI BUSSAN KAISHI. I wonder if you would tell me something about the set-up?
- A. I don't know anything at all. I don't remember.
- Q. Is it true that he would have to have a permit from the foreign ministry in order to load opium on Japanese ships - he indicated that it was necessary to have a permit from the foreign ministry.
- A. We have some regulation in China, in the Japanese Consulate to deal with opium. There is a rule to prohibit to deal with opium so if he wanted to do that, he must get the permission perhaps.
- Q. To your knowledge, does the foreign ministry also participate in setting a price?
- A. I don't know.
- Q. Do you have any personal knowledge?
- A. I have no knowledge at all in that matter. I think you had better ask the foreign office.
- Q. Would the foreign office, or the foreign ministry appoint the head of the opium monopoly?
- A. No, I don't think so.
- Q. Do you know under what direction from Tokyo such a monopoly would operate and who in Tokyo would direct the opium monopoly?

(HIROTA 4-5-46)

- A. I think the Army, or the Welfare Department. All kinds of medicine are under the control of them.
- Q. Why would that come under the army?
- A. Because the army occupied the District of Shanghai.
- Q. Do you know anything about the disposal of money from this source?
- A. No, I do not.
- Q. You don't know whether it would go into a general fund, or a special army fund?
- A. I think that is a very important point.
- Q. Yes, I think so too.
- A. I think those moneys were used in Japan for the purpose of political purposes - or some other purpose.
- Q. Well, we have information from some source that funds or proceeds from these sales were used by the army in such a way that they did not go through your general funds and your finance minister and even the cabinet was not aware that that money was available to the army and of course we are anxious to know how the army operated.
- A. You must get through that question.
- Q. Can you suggest any particular official that might have information on that?
- A. It depends upon the time of that fund.
- Q. This particular one was March, 1938.
- A. March - I did not know anything about that.
- Q. Our information is that in 1938 and 1939 the Japanese took every ounce of opium that was produced in Persia so that it was a very large operation.
- A. After my resignation, there was made an Eastern Department under the government.
- Q. And they took over many of the functions of the foreign office?
- A. Yes, and I think that department may know.

(HIROTA 4-5-46)

Q. We will look into it further then with officials of that bureau.

A. Yes, that would be better.

INTERROGATION ADJOURNED

INTERROGATION OF

HIROTA, Koki

DATE AND TIME:

8 March, 1946. 1400-1630. hours.

PLACE

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Interrogator
Interpreter
Stenographer

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CAPT. SANDUSKY:

discussing matters
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today, and if there are any times when you feel that you could express yourself better in Japanese, we can use the interpreter.

MR. HIROTA :

Yes, but sometimes I have a little difficulty finding the right words.

CAPT. SANDUSKY:

I want you to feel that you are expressing yourself fully and adequately. It makes it a little easier for me and speeds it up. I want you to feel quite sure of expressing yourself adequately and if there is any question we can have Mr. Hoshimiya translate it.

MR. HIROTA :

Yes.

Note for the Record: The interrogation proceeded by direct questioning in English.

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INTERROGATION OF

HIROTA, Koki

DATE AND TIME: 8 March, 1946. 1400-1630. hours.
PLACE : SUGAMO PRISON, TOKYO, JAPAN.
PRESENT : HIROTA, Koki.

Capt. Arthur A. Sandusky Interrogator
Dave HOSHIMIYA, T/4 Interpreter
Miss Dinah Braun Stenographer

Oath of Interpreter administered by Capt. Sandusky:

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?

T/4 HOSHIMIYA: I do.

CAPT. SANDUSKY: We got along so well last time discussing matters in English, I wonder if you would like to do that today, and if there are any times when you feel that you could express yourself better in Japanese, we can use the interpreter.

MR. HIROTA : Yes, but sometimes I have a little difficulty finding the right words.

CAPT. SANDUSKY: I want you to feel that you are expressing yourself fully and adequately. It makes it a little easier for me and speeds it up. I want you to feel quite sure of expressing yourself adequately and if there is any question we can have Mr. Hoshimiya translate it.

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(HIROTA 4-8-46)

QUESTIONS BY: CAPT. SANDUSKY.

- Q. I have a few loose ends to discuss today, just odds and ends.
- A. Yes.
- Q. First of all, a question has come up as to the duties and functions of the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal. I would appreciate it if you would tell me something about that position.
- A. I have no experience with that position.
- Q. No, I realize that so --
- A. So I cannot tell you exactly what it is. But, anyhow, he keeps the privy seal, all kinds of important seals of the nation and when necessary he will affix the seal on the national documents. Besides that he is always attending to the Emperor and giving him advice.
- Q. Well, that was the point I was particularly interested in. Would you say that he was perhaps the closest advisor of the Emperor?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Is that function established by law, or is it a matter of tradition?
- A. I think it is a part of the regulations of the Household Department. You will find that function in the Household Department regulations.
- Q. That he should give advice to the Emperor?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Can he offer advice to the Emperor or must he wait to be asked by the Emperor?
- A. On any political matters he must advise - always.
- Q. He does not have to wait for the Emperor to ask his opinion?
- A. No, I don't think so.
- Q. So he would be free in a matter of importance --
- A. (Interrupting) Political importance.
- Q. (continuing) to offer his opinion and advise to the Emperor?
- A. Yes, he may do that. It is a very important position.

(HIROTA 4-8-46)

- Q. It is considered a very powerful position?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How does he get his appointment?
- A. I am not sure but he may be appointed by the Household Minister. Officially he is under the Secretary of the Emperor Household Department. He is under him administratively so the Privy Seal Keeper must be appointed by the Minister for the Household Department.
- Q. Normally does the Emperor actually select the man?
- A. That point I do not know.
- Q. But he must be acceptable to the Emperor?
- A. Yes, of course, and some years ago I was informed that the Privy Seal may be recommended by the former privy seal. The recommendation of course. The appointment must however be done by the Minister for the Household. But it is not a regulation.
- Q. It is traditional?
- A. Traditional for some years - not many years.
- Q. Does the Emperor have anything to do with the appointment of the Keeper of the Privy Seal?
- A. That point I do not know. May be he may be consulted, but I am not sure.
- Q. Well, there was a change in that position while you were premier, was there not?
- A. No.
- Q. Did not YUASA, Kurahei die?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did he succeed ICHIKI, Kitokuro?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was that while you were premier?
- A. No before that I think.
- Q. Does the advice of the cabinet reach the premier through the Keeper of the Privy Seal?
- A. No, direct to the Emperor.

(HIROTA 2-8-46)

- Q. And presumably he would ask the opinion of the Keeper of the Privy Seal?
- A. Yes, I think so - No, do you mean the prime minister?
- Q. No, the Emperor.
- A. Yes.
- Q. So that in effect the Keeper of the Privy Seal had an opportunity to express himself to the Emperor on all important matters passed or decided by the cabinet?
- A. I suppose so. I think that may be his chief duty.
- Q. Would he ever attend cabinet meetings?
- A. No - he is quite different.
- Q. What was his relation to the Privy Council?
- A. Quite independent.
- Q. He was not a member of the Privy Council?
- A. No.
- Q. Would he attend their meetings?
- A. No, in Japan the Household Department is quite outside of the cabinet, quite independent. The Household Minister does not interfere with the politics at all. Only the Keeper of the Privy Seal has that duty.
- Q. Well now, is it not also a function of the Privy Council to give advice to the Emperor.
- A. Yes. In that case the Emperor first asks the opinion of the Privy Seal.
- Q. So you might say that the Privy Council is the official adviser to the Emperor, and the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal is more or less of a personal adviser?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And he has access to the Emperor and can express himself when he wants?
- A. Yes.
- Q. That would seem to give him a great deal of influence?
- A. Yes, it is a most important position I think. But not officially or formally.
- Q. Not by law?

(HIROTA 4-8-46)

- Q. Not by law.
- A. No, not by law.
- Q. But actually it would work out that way?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Well then, Marquis Kido was recognized as having a great deal of influence with the Emperor because of his position?
- A. I think so.
- Q. In view of the ability of the Keeper of the Privy Seal to advise the Emperor when he deemed it necessary, and in view of his great influence, could it not be said that he would bear a certain responsibility for any decision made by the Emperor, unless it could be shown that the Emperor did not accept his advice?
- A. Yes. He always gives advice to the Emperor so he must assume the responsibility for that advice.
- Q. Unless it would be shown that the Emperor took somebody else's advice?
- A. Yes. You know, when a certain cabinet resigned, for the appointment of the next prime minister the Emperor asked the opinion of the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal.
- Q. So that he was actually able many times to name the prime minister?
- A. Yes, but according to the latest tradition he asked the opinions of the ex-premiers.
- Q. That policy of asking for the advice of former premiers had^{not} been going on very long, had it?
- A. You mean -
- Q. The practice of gathering former premiers together to give advice to the Emperor was a recent development?
- A. Yes, four or five years. But ex-premiers only give their own opinion and there is no group decision - just personal advice.
- Q. I want to go back for a moment to the regulation we discussed at our last meeting - the one requiring Ministers of the War and Navy to be in active service. What form did that change take? Was it a change in army regulations or was it an imperial order?
- A. Regulations of the constitution for each department - there are

regulations for the organization of each department.

- Q. Does the department itself make those regulations?
- A. No, they are issued by an imperial order.
- Q. Is that approved then by the Diet?
- A. No -not a law, but an imperial order.
- Q. And this change that we are speaking about was made by an imperial order, is that correct?
- A. It was issued by an imperial order but the government makes up the imperial order or ordnance or regulation. There is a regulation for each department and in that regulation the functions of each minister of the department is mentioned. There was then in the regulation for the army and navy department, s, the limit of the appointment - formerly it was limited to general and sub-general in active service and retired service and in the new regulation the retired service was taken away. If you find the regulation for the army and navy department you will find out at the beginning of the regulation it is written.
- Q. Was it necessary to get the approval of the whole cabinet for a change of that kind?
- A. Oh, yes.
- Q. Would the emperor have to approve it?
- A. It would be decided in the cabinet and then ask for the sanction of the Emperor.
- Q. Do you recall if he asked any questions about this particular change, if he inquired what it was necessary for anything like that?
- A. Yes.
- Q. He did inquire about it?
- A. He did.
- Q. And the explanation given to him was the one that you gave to Capt. Phelps and to me - that is, to prevent officers involved in the 2.26 Incident -
- A. Not only that - all undesirable generals -
- Q. From coming into power later?
- A. Yes.

(HIROTA 3-8-46)

- Q. Then after the explanation to the Emperor, the Emperor asks the opinion of the Privy Council?
- A. Oh, not, the regulation for the organization of each department must be accepted by the Privy Council so I had to go to a conference of the Privy Council and explain all the reasons for the change..
- Q. Were any of the privy councillors afraid that this would put too much power in the hands of the army?
- A. I think, I do not know, but I think one or two members opposed it - they came from the political party. But all others accepted it because it is the measurer to exclude the undesirable generals coming into power in the army or navy.
- Q. But they did not foresee that that regulation would make it possible for the Chief of Staff and the Inspector General of Military Education and the previous war minister to prevent the formation of a cabinet. They did not foresee that the regulation would make that possible?
- A. I believe that they did not foresee that - even as I.
- Q. As a matter of fact the regulation worked that way after the fall of your cabinet, when General UGAKI tried to form a cabinet, did it not? Is it not true that he was unable to form a cabinet because he could not find anyone on the active list and whom the army would permit to serve as war minister?
- A. As I explained last time there were particular reasons for the opposition against his appointment as prime minister.
- Q. Yes, I remember you did and they used this as a device - it was not the sole reason?
- A. Yes, that is right.
- Q. When we talked about this before, you stated that when you discussed the change with the war minister and the navy minister, you were reluctant to approve the change?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And finally did approve of it on the condition that whoever received an order from the Emperor to form a cabinet would reserve the right to select anyone he chooses from the rank of General or Lt. General?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Uninfluenced by anyone else?
- A. Yes, quite so.

(HIROTA -3-8-46)

- Q. Just as he would have the right to select any other member of his cabinet?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You gave it as a quotation of what you had said?
- A. Yes, I got that assurance from both the minister of the army and navy.
- Q. How did you think that the premier would be able to reserve that right? How would it be possible for the premier to reserve that right to himself if it were not specifically stated in the regulation?
- A. It is not a thing to be regulated - that is a power of the Emperor. The Emperor has a full right of free appointment and that power is given to the candidate for prime minister. So he must select anyone whom he likes.
- Q. But as events worked out, or as things came to pass, there was not much a premier could do if the army would not name somebody to accept the portfolio, is that not true? Unless the army agreed to the premier's choice, the premier could not formulate his cabinet?
- A. But in the case of the navy, it was different.
- Q. Well, you did not have the same trouble with the navy?
- A. No.
- Q. That trouble was only with the army?
- A. Well, generally -
- Q. Generally speaking, the navy was not in favor of expansion into China is not that true - that the expansionists were mostly army people?
- A. Generally speaking, it may be so but without the concensus of opinion between the army and navy no military measures can be taken. The army cannot work alone. And I think this is a point to be considered particularly.
- Q. You think it should be investigated further?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Well, most of the people who write about this period in Japan's politics and government confine themselves pretty much to the army and one gets the impression that the navy was not in favor of the army's plans.
- A. They may not have been in favor particularly but without the consent of the navy the army cannot do that. You see the army and navy have

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the duty of defending Japan together, not separately.

Q. But the original desire to expand into Manchuria in 1931 and set up an independent or quasi-independent country was pretty exclusively the army plan, was it not?

A. It may be because at that time I suppose it was only an Incident. In that kind of a matter it is not previously consulted with anybody.

Q. It would follow along afterwards?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, I would like to discuss a little more the events surrounding the beginning of the China Incident around July 1937, shortly after you became foreign minister for the second time. You have given us some details of that and as I recall you stated that you had no suspicion or previous notice that the fighting was to be extended to the extent that it was.

A. Yes. Of course I did not foresee that at all so I tried to check the expansion of that Incident. I tried to solve it locally.

Q. Your policy was one of settlement?

A. Yes, local settlement and in the following Diet I made a speech on that opinion.

Q. That was in January, 1938?

A. It was at an extraordinary session of the diet. I think it was in August or September 1937 - twice there were extraordinary sessions.

Q. Called because of the China Incident?

A. Yes. The army demanded to send the army so we must get the expenditures.

Q. To authorize the expenditures to send the army?

A. Yes.

Q. And it was approved?

A. Yes at that special session I made known my opinion to check the expansion of the Incident - that it must be settled locally.

Q. When expenditure of money to send troops to China was approved, were any restrictions placed on it - that is restrictions for the local settlement. Was the army instructed as to how far they would go.

A. Yes, I think the army gave instructions to the soldiers on that point.

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- Q. Did the Chief of Staff issue instructions to the Army?
- A. Maybe - of course.
- Q. But these instructions were ignored eventually, were they not?
- A. May be.
- Q. At least the fighting did extend beyond the local stages? *Ad.*
- A. At first on the spot they tried to make an agreement between Japan and China. Once or twice they tried but they failed.
- Q. I wanted to ask you about that, Mr. Hirota. It is reported that at a cabinet meeting shortly after the outbreak of the Incident the Minister of Overseas Affairs asked the war minister SUGIYAMA, how far the Incident was to go, and it is stated that General SUGIYAMA became very angry and said "such things should not be talked about here." Do you recall that?
- A. No. I do not remember it but I read that story in the document left by Prince Konoye.
- Q. But you don't recall it yourself?
- A. No, I do not recall it.
- Q. Well, I wonder if that could mean that at that time Gen. SUGIYAMA knew that the Incident was to be extended.
- A. I don't remember - that was not the cabinet conference.
- Q. It was stated to be at a cabinet meeting I think.
- A. I do not remember.
- Q. I assumed that you must have been present?
- A. I do not remember. After some time of the Incident there was made a special meeting of army and navy members of the Headquarters of the Army and Navy and some chief members of the cabinet. It was not a cabinet meeting but another kind of meeting was held and it was at that meeting that this statement was supposed to have been made, maybe.
- Q. Is that where he (Konoye) said it had happened?
- A. Maybe, but it was not at the beginning of the Incident, it was later on. You see at first I tried to stop the Incident as soon as possible and so the army and headquarters - both of them made instructions to the army on the spot - I think they tried to make an agreement with the Chinese Army.

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Q. Well, do you think there were any influential people in the Army who desired to extend the Incident and have it continue?

A. Maybe, I am not sure of course.

Q. At almost any time after that, it would have been possible to limit the activities of the Army by cutting off the finances, would it not?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. When subsequent or following authorizations of money were passed, do you think that that amounted to an approval of the actions of the army in continuing on in spite of the instructions to keep the situation localized?

A. The first budget was passed in the Diet only for the purpose of stopping the Incident - to help the Japanese colonies in Japan. For that purpose that expenditure was passed by the Diet at the first special session.

Q. But after that they kept on and kept on - don't you think it became evident that the situation would not be localized unless Japan were willing to withdraw?

A. Yes, the fact is as you say.

Q. I can see why at first they must protect the people, but then I think when they kept growing and growing, it seems that the men in control of the government should have been able to see that it was bound to lead to a conflict with other powers?

A. You see the fighting of both armies - the Chinese and Japanese Armies grew and grew so during that time I tried to stop such a thing by the help of foreign countries.

Q. I believe you mentioned you wanted to deal through the British Ambassador and the Army opposed it?

A. Yes.

Q. How did they express their position. Did the War Minister threaten to resign?

A. No, General KAWASHIMA was at that time a member of the Army's Generals' Conference and he told me that all military men didn't like to make England their intermediary.

Q. But it was agreeable if you would make Germany the intermediary?

A. Yes. After some months the military side asked me to use Germany

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as an Intermediary.

Q. Did you do anything about that?

A. Yes, I asked VON DUZAN

Q. What was his position?

A. The German Ambassador.

Q. How far did you go in that matter?

A. I showed our demands to China to him and he sent those Japanese demands to the German Ambassador in China, Mr. Trautman.

Q. Was that the German Ambassador to Chiang-Kai-shek's government in Chungking?

A. Yes.

Q. And what happened then?

A. The demands were rather severe.

Q. Had the army framed those demands?

A. Yes.

Q. And they were approved by the entire cabinet?

A. Yes.

Q. What was your personal opinion on the demands?

A. My opinion as I have said before was that they were too severe so I did not expect the success of the negotiations and because one of the demands, the first point, was the recognition of Manchukuo, I thought that was impossible for China - and a special organization of the

Q. (Interrupting) The five northern provinces?

A. Yes. And the other severe condition was the payment of the military expenditures by China. Of course these severe demands - it was impossible to make China agree.

Q. In many respects, it really was not an honest peace offer because the terms were too severe and even in offering them you knew they could not be met?

A. So at that time, I must tell you one thing - at that time Mr. - who was the British Ambassador?

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Q. Craig?

A. Oh, yes. He came to see me and told me that even though Japan asked Germany as intermediary, Chiang Kai-shek will not react favorably so if Japan would like to succeed in that negotiation, Japan must ask England and United States to come together with Germany, then Chiang Kai-shek will move. So I told Mr. Craig I entirely agree with your opinion, so if England and United States like to be intermediaries, you must first ask the opinion of the German Government - if the German Government agrees to join with England and United States, of course I am quite pleased to accept, but they had to agree.

Q. What time did this take place - about when?

A. About the end of 1937. Afterward Mr. Craig came to see me and told me that he asked the opinion of Van Duzan the German Ambassador and the German Ambassador perhaps asked the opinion of his home government, but it was not accepted by Germany.

Q. Do you mean then that it never got to the point of actually asking the United States and England...

A. That is right because Germany refused.

Q. About this same time - this was the time that Japan refused to attend the Brussels conference?

A. Yes, quite so, because the army and the general opinion of the people did not like to be called that conference, because that conference came from the League of Nations.

Q. I must ask you this. What was the army's attitude toward asking the United States and Britain to meet with Germany?

A. That was my own judgment.

Q. In other words, if Mr. Craig said that to you, you did not then consult with the army about it - you did not get the army's permission?

A. I do not remember quite well but that was my opinion, if Germany accepted...

Q. If Germany would accept....

A. Then I would address the army.

Q. But you wanted to get Germany's reaction before you discussed it with the army?

A. Yes.

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Q. Did you think it was likely that the army would approve of your action in that?

A. I think so.

Q. If the army opposed Japan's participation in the Brussels' Conference where the United States and England would be involved, they would probably oppose dealing with the United States and Britain in this case.

A. But the army had asked Germany first to be intermediary, to become the bridge over between Japan and China so if they liked to succeed in that way to settle the Chinese question, they must not refuse the help of United States and England -

Q. If it was agreeable to Germany, you felt that they would have to accept?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it true that on or about the 16th of January, 1938, the KONOYE Cabinet issued a statement announcing that it would not deal with the KOUMINTANG Government? And demanded the extermination of that government?

A. That is only part of the declaration published by the government. The true meaning of that was this -

Q. First let me ask you this. Was that a Cabinet statement?

A. Yes, it was.

Q. Was it ever discussed at an Imperial Conference?

A. Yes, I think so- certainly.

Q. There was an Imperial Conference on it before the statement was announced?

A. Yes, as I said before our demands were too severe so I thought it was impossible to make China accept them. Then at that time the army made known their opinions as to future policy with China.

Q. To you or to the cabinet?

A. To the cabinet and of course to me. (continuing) It is impossible to continue the negotiations so it is better to stop the negotiations with the KOUMINTANG Government.

Q. Was that the army's idea?

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- A. Yes, and to help the new government at that time in the making.
- Q. That is, the North China Government?
- A. Yes, to help them; to make an agreement with that new government, and if Chiang Kai-shek comes to an agreement with Japan to put the Chiang Kai-shek government under a new government. If Chiang Kai-shek continued fighting with Japan, Japan will fight with her. That was the real meaning of the statement.
- Q. In other words, the situation was this: Up to that point, Japan had recognized Chiang Kai-shek's government as the legitimate government in China. But because the KOU-MIN-TANG would not accept the Japanese demands and because Japan was not willing to modify the demands, it was therefore necessary to find another government in China to deal with.
- A. Yes, that was the true meaning of that statement.
- Q. Is it true that policy was drawn up by OZAKI who was cabinet adviser on Chinese affairs?
- A. I don't know him. I have never met him.
- Q. It is also reported that Mr. MUTO who was in the Bureau of Military Affairs had a hand in this?
- A. I do not know. I have not much knowledge on the internal affairs of the army.
- Q. As far as you know, it was presented by the army through the War Minister?
- A. No, at the conference between the Foreign Office officials and the army and navy and headquarters of both the army and navy.
- Q. The group you referred to a while ago?
- A. Yes.
- Q. I believe it was in February of 1938, while you were still foreign minister, that Britain and France and the United States asked Japan what her naval building program was, do you recall that?
- A. I do not remember quite well, maybe.
- Q. Well, the fact was that such a request was made and Japan refused

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to reveal any plans. Can you recall anything about that - whether there were those in the cabinet at that time who foresaw possible hostilities with Britain and the United States.

- A. I don't know that. That is a matter of the navy so the foreign office would transmit the information.
- Q. Would not a matter of that nature come before the whole cabinet for discussion?
- A. I think so - on such important matters.
- Q. But you don't have any personal recollection of it now?
- A. No. I think on such matters you had better ask Admiral YUNAI. He was the navy minister at that time.
- Q. Do you have any notes showing the date of that Imperial Conference - when it was decided not to deal with the KOUMINTANG Government any longer? Was it on the 11th of January or the 5th of January?
- A. No, but of course some days before the statement there was an Imperial Conference. But I found out the negotiations with China were impossible to continue so we came to the last measure, that is, the statement on the 16th of January.
- Q. Well, at this conference, or at any of the meetings at this point, was there any group that favored withdrawing from China and trying to adjust by inviting the intervention of other powers?
- A. I think in some part of the army there was always such a group who opposed the extension of the fighting, but you see in some meaning, that statement means a stoppage of the fighting in the limits of the occupied district. Some men of the army liked to continue the war to the last but some of them liked to stop and limit the fighting to a certain part of China.
- Q. In one of the previous meetings you mentioned a meeting of former premiers to discuss the tri-partite pact, the pact between Germany, Italy and Japan. You wanted to add something further to what you said.
- A. Yes.
- Q. You said when the tri-partite treaty was entered into, MATSUOKA, TOJO and KONOYE made a report on the treaty to a gathering of former premiers. You said since the details of that meeting were not asked you at that time you would omit them. Would you like to tell us more

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about that meeting now?

- A. Well, you see I was always against the military alliance of Japan with any European country so when that alliance was made I asked the reason for such a military alliance and why it was being made at that time. It was explained by MATSUOKA and Prince KONOYE and they asked us to give our opinions. I asked the reason why such an alliance was made with Germany and Italy.
- Q. What answer did you get?
- A. I do not remember in detail. I think MATSUOKA will remember it quite well, but the chief point of my question to his explanation was "What was the use of that alliance for the solution of the dispute between Japan and China".
- Q. Well, did it not occur to you that if the army wanted such a military alliance, that some groups in the army must have had in mind that their actions in China would eventually lead to a conflict with Britain and the United States which would make a military alliance a valuable thing.
- A. Yes, maybe, But you see the most important question at that time was for Japan to settle the China Question. If we made such an agreement with Germany, as if we were against the United States and England, Chiang Kai-shek will be put in a more favorable position than before.
- Q. In fact, was not one of the purposes of the treaty to try to keep the United States from entering the European war?
- A. Maybe. Such an explanation was made by Mr. MATSUOKA.
- Q. It was generally accepted throughout the world that was the purpose.
- A. But such a measure cannot help the solution of the Chinese question at all.
- Q. Did you recommend against such a pact?
- A. Yes. That point was one of the reasons why I opposed that pact. It would not help the solution of the Chinese question at all and besides that the Japanese economical development chiefly depended upon the importation of material from the United States and England.
- Q. TOJO was of course speaking in favor of it?
- A. He was always silent. He did not say anything at all. Mr. MATSUOKA expressed it. But to my question about the future economical development nobody could answer that.

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- Q. Was Marquis Kido at this meeting?
- A. No, he was not, only the former premiers.
- Q. Was the cabinet present at this meeting?
- A. No, just KONOYE, TOJO and MATSUOKA and one or two others.
- Q. Former premiers?
- A. No, from the government side.
- Q. You were the only former premier there?
- A. No, all of us were present, also WAKATSUKI and SHIRAMUNA. TOJO was prime minister at that time. KONOYE, YONAI, perhaps ABE and HAYASHI, and perhaps OKADA.
- Q. There is one other meeting I would like to ask you about. Previously you mentioned another meeting of former premiers held, you thought, November 28th or November 29th, 1941. Are you sure of these dates?
- A. Yes.
- Q. We have information about an Imperial Conference on December 2, and I wondered if that was the same meeting.
- A. No, it was quite a different meeting.
- Q. At the meeting of the 28th or 29th, you did see the Emperor, I believe, in the afternoon?
- A. Yes, after lunch he asked us to come before the Emperor.
- Q. And that was the 28th or 29th of November?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Then there was an Imperial Conference on December 2nd.
- A. I did not know that - not even today.
- Q. Would you call the meeting of November the 28th or 29th an Imperial Conference?
- A. No, it was not really. As I explained in detail before we were asked to come to the residence of the Prime Minister, but afterwards it was changed and we were asked to come to the Imperial Palace. There the Prime Minister and other ministers explained their determination to make war.

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- Q. Do you remember who was present at that meeting?
- A. It was just a round table meeting. It was not a regular conference. We were just asked to hear the report of the government.
- Q. Well, do you remember who attended that with you?
- A. All of the ex-premiers.
- Q. Were you asked to give advice at that time or were you simply being told?
- A. We were simply being told the report.
- Q. You did not have an opportunity to express your opinions? They did ask for your opinions didn't they?
- A. No, only a report but it was a very important matter for Japan.
- Q. Did TOJO present the plan?
- A. Yes, he chiefly explained the plan.
- Q. As nearly as you remember was there any talk at that meeting of using a surprise attack to start the hostilities?
- A. No, never. Such matters are military secrets.
- Q. Then as far as you knew there would be no hostilities until war had been declared?
- A. Quite so.
- Q. Then after this you were invited to appear before the Emperor?
- A. Yes, I proposed to settle the dispute between Japan and the United States by negotiation.
- Q. You wanted to reopen negotiations, or continue them?
- A. To continue them. I did not know what kind of negotiations were going on between Japan and the United States. We did not know anything at all.
- Q. At that time were you aware that at a meeting of September 6th TOJO had said that the deadline for negotiations would be about mid-October? I believe he stated that unless negotiations were concluded favorably by Mid-October, that a decision would have to be made to go to war?
- A. At that time I did not know that at all. As I said before, they

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had never made known the procedure of the negotiations between the United States and Japan. They were not told to us.

Q. So that at this meeting on the 28th or 29th of November you proposed to the Emperor that negotiations continue?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, did you learn then that negotiations had been concluded - that it was too late for negotiations?

A. I did not know that.

Q. Were you advised that it was so - were you given any reason to believe that there would be further negotiations?

A. I thought so because at that time I knew that some kind of negotiations were going on, so in the presence of the Emperor, I said "I think the negotiations will succeed because United States will never prepare war against Japan for the sake of the settlement of the Chinese question. The Emperor always nodded in this way (nodding head) --

Q. Without speaking?

A. Without speaking. I think the Emperor entirely agreed to my proposal. But I don't know whether the negotiations were continued after that or not. Even at present I do not know. But after a few days a man came to me - some member of the head party pro-war group, preparing to attack my residence because I was going to stop the war.

Q. When was that?

A. Just a few days after that. Then some policemen came to my house - perhaps for protection of me I think.

Q. Did the Emperor ask questions?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember the kind of questions, or do you remember any specific question?

A. No, he asked the opinion on the explanation of the report of the government.

Q. Were you gathered in a group before the Emperor or did you see him separately?

A. We were gathered.

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- Q. What opinions were voiced?
- A. The government report was accepted by the military men.
- Q. Which would mean that they were willing to go to war because that was the government report?
- A. Nearly all of the others were against it.
- Q. Did anybody besides you oppose the decision about going to war?
- A. Yonai was against it.
- Q. Did he express himself that way to the Emperor?
- A. Yes, I think so. Prince Konoye did not express any opinion. He said he did not know the present situation since his resignation.
- Q. But you got no indication of how the Emperor felt except that he nodded when you expressed your opinion? He made no statement at all?
- A. No, but when I explained my opinion he always nodded his head so I suppose he agreed with my opinion.
- Q. Did TOJO express himself again in front of the Emperor.
- A. Yes.
- Q. After you opposed it, did he undertake to defend the position of the government?
- A. He showed his determination to go ahead. I don't know whether that was the opinion of the government as a whole or not, but he expressed his determination.
- Q. Did you attend any other meetings or hear anything further about the situation until the actual attack was made?
- A. No, never.
- Q. What caused you to resign as foreign minister in May, 1938?
- A. I could not check the extension of the fighting and besides that the army tried to take away some business from the foreign office and to make a new organization for dealing with Chinese matters - political or economical matters.
- Q. Was that the Greater East Asia Board?
- A. Yes.

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- Q. But it was established in spite of your opposition?
- A. Not while I was foreign minister. I checked it. After my resignation General UGAKI became foreign minister and then the board was made.
- Q. Did you occupy any position in the government after that?
- A. No, except that I became the adviser to the YONAI Cabinet.
- Q. When did you succeed YUKI, Toyotaro as Chairman of the Planning Board?
- A. At the beginning of the first KONOYE Cabinet. At that time the home minister was BABA, Eiichi. There was a rumor he would be appointed to be chairman of that board but there was some opposition to him because he was too extreme - too pro-army, so I was asked to become chairman because my position and character were always rather mild and moderate.
- Q. At that time you were foreign minister?
- A. Yes. I opposed that appointment because I was foreign minister and I had no knowledge of such things but KONOYE asked me to become the chairman for the time being instead of BABA.
- Q. Your relations with KONOYE were always quite close and agreeable, were they not?
- A. Yes, at the beginning, but later on I did not agree with him.
- Q. Why?
- A. He was not firm enough and besides that because of his close political advisers.
- Q. This Cabinet Planning Board was a very powerful organization, was it not?
- A. Maybe but not at that time. I was the chairman but I had no knowledge of such matters so after a month I was opposed by a member of the board openly. I don't know how long I kept that position, perhaps a month or two, but quite soon I was opposed by one of the members of the board because I was not properly equipped to keep such a position. At a conference I was opposed so I resigned at once because I did not like to be chairman of that board from the beginning.
- Q. Then you were not associated with the board during the time it was formulating the National Mobilization Law?
- A. No.

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- Q. This will conclude our interrogation for today. You have been very frank and I appreciate it.
- A. Well it is a very confused situation.
- Q. Yes, and your experience and the prominent positions you occupied during critical periods put you in a position to give us information that is not readily available in other ways.
- A. Yes.
- Q. We recognize that newspapers are not always entirely correct.
- A. Yes, I will tell you everything I know but you must not think that I am making explanations for my punishment. I don't like that. If there is anything I have done I must be punished.
- Q. I remember earlier you said you were willing to accept responsibility.
- A. Yes, on things that may be determined to be wrong I will accept responsibility.
- Q. It may have been an honest mistake - many mistakes were made we know that some were honest and some were fully aware of what they were doing. I think you will agree there were groups in the army that knew beforehand where they were going and they gave bad advice to the Emperor or incorrect reports.
- A. But I know I have made no mistake in my advice to the Emperor.
- Q. You always gave him your honest opinion?
- A. Yes, always.
- Q. Meanwhile, if there is anything that occurs to you that you would like to make a statement on, and on which we have not touched, please feel free to make such a statement and call it to my attention and we will be glad to get it into the record.
- A. But as I said just now, I don't like to make any explanation for the sake of my punishment - I hate it -
- Q. You don't like to be put in a position of defending yourself.
- A. No, I don't like to defend at all.

INTERROGATION OF

HIROTA, Koki

TIME AND DATE: 23 March 1946. 1400-1630 hours
PLACE : Sugamo Prison, Tokyo, Japan
PRESENT : HIROTA, Koki
Capt. Arthur A. Sandusky Interrogator
Lt. Curtis Interpreter
Miss Dinah Braun Stenographer

Oath of Interpreter, administered by Capt. Sandusky:

Capt. Sandusky: 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?

Lt. Curtis : I do.

Questions by : Capt. Sandusky.

NOTE : The examination proceeded in English, by direct questioning. Answers were in English except in the two or three instances noted below, translated through Lt. Curtis).

Q. Mr. Hirota, I would like to touch again on the meeting of the ex-Premiers held on Nov 28 or 29. Do you recall that, when TOJO presented the government war plans?

A. Yes.

Q. And then later in the afternoon you appeared in an audience before the Emperor on the same day?

A. Yes, in the afternoon.

Q. You told us that the opinion of each man present was requested by the Emperor?

A. Yes.

Q. We have a report that there was a group decision, is that correct?

A. No.

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- Q. I understood you to say there was no voting?
- A. Yes there was no voting.
- Q. It was just a personal expression on the part of each man?
- A. Yes.
- Q. As nearly as you can recall will you tell me the opinions expressed by each man there?
- A. I don't remember them very well.
- Q. I will give you the names. Let me know those you can recall?
- A. Yes.
- Q. WAKATSUKI?
- A. He was reluctant.
- Q. OKADA?
- A. He too was reluctant.
- Q. KONOYE?
- A. He refrained from stating an opinion.
- Q. Was that permissible in an audience before the Emperor?
- A. He said he did not know the actual situation since he had resigned and said he did not feel qualified to express any opinion. He said so but I don't know whether it was quite right or not. All other persons who were there did not know the exact situation at all - nobody knew it.
- Q. HIRANUMA?
- A. He also did not express a clear opinion.
- Q. You have already indicated your opinion as you expressed it.
- A. I expressed my diplomatic opinion in dealing with Europe and particularly America and England and I said in my opinion the question must be settled with negotiations.

(HIROTA- 23 Mar cont'd)

Q. Are you familiar with Marquis KIDO's account in his diary of your expression on that day. Have you read that?

A. No.

Q. You might be interested. He indicates that you expressed the following opinion: (Reading) "The diplomatic condition was approaching a serious crisis but we should have iron nerves in order to reach a true solution of the problems, nerves which could meet courageously a crisis twice or thrice at least. We should be able to seize an opportunity to solve the pending problems between the two countries even after the declaration of war if we are sincere enough in our diplomatic effort".

(Hands document to Mr. Hirota who reads the same and after reading comments as follows:)

A. No - oh, no, not at all.

Q. That is what Marquis Kido said.

A. Oh, no, not at all.

Q. I wondered what you meant by iron nerves - that would seem to indicate that you anticipated a clash that would require iron nerves.

A. No, that is quite a wrong expression of my answer to the Emperor. I worked with America and England and other countries so I tried to read the Japanese people at the time when I was chief of the Intelligence Bureau.

Q. That was before you became foreign minister?

A. Yes. In that way I was always keeping in touch with Baron Shidehara for the same purpose. When he was foreign minister I was the Chief of the European and American Bureau. In that way when I became foreign minister I had the same policy towards those countries so I said from those experiences we must always be very careful to deal with America and England. I said from my own experience, America would never prepare for war with Japan on the question of Chinese affairs. Therefore I believed the negotiations would settle the question between the two countries. That was my opinion. That (pointing to diary) is quite wrong. But, to that opinion, General Tojo said his determination cannot be changed. He expressed that in a very frank tone.

Q. Of course he knew that some of the naval forces had already been despatched?

A. Yes, so after that the government expressed the determination of the future policy.

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Q. After this meeting?

A. No.

Q. Was that the substance of your statement to the Emperor?

A. Yes.

Q. This part is correct is it not - that even if war should come to pass you felt that ---

A. (Interrupting) No. You see all other persons said if war continues long Japan will fail. That was the opinion of the people who were there.

Q. How long did they think Japan could continue?

A. I don't know. So naturally you see, the government had already made up its mind and they were already carrying out their plans so everybody liked to settle the question as soon as possible with the United States and with England. That was the opinion of the people who were there.

Q. It is further stated in the diary that WAKATSUKI said the war should be fought to the last even if there was no chance to win because it is a defensive war for the national expansion.

A. Yes.

Q. (Reading) "But we should avoid the war if we intend to realize our ideals such as the "Asiatic Co-Prosperity Sphere" or the "Stabilizing Power in Asia", because such a war would be very dangerous". Is that about what he said?

A. I do not remember quite well what his answer was. As I said, he was reluctant. But my opinion was much more clearly expressed. I proposed to settle the affairs with negotiations. That was my opinion.

Q. At this meeting, Mr. Hirota, did Mr. Tojo acquaint all of those present with the contents of Secretary Hull's note of November 26th?

A. No.

Q. Did you know of such a note - that it had been received?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Did you know that it rejected Japan's proposal?

A. I did not know the Japanese answer or the Japanese proposal.

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Q. You remember the November 26th note is the one that many people here refer to as an "ultimatum".

A. Yes, the government explained it that way but that was false. It is written on the top of the paper Confidential, Tentative or something like that was noted on the top of the paper - I was informed. I got such information.

Q. On Mr. Hull's note?

A. Yes, I thought it was not a final answer from your government.

Q. Did Mr. TOJO refer to it that day as an ultimatum?

A. I do not remember, perhaps - I am not sure.

Q. Was there any discussion of the next note that Japan would send to the United States?

A. No.

Q. You know the next one was the note that was delivered by KURUSU on December 7th an hour or so after the word of the attack on Pearl Harbor had reached Washington. Was there any discussion at this meeting of November 28th or 29th as to what kind of a note TOJO planned to send to the United States?

A. No such detail was mentioned at that time. As I said some days ago, I did not know- even at present I do not know, whether the negotiations were continued after our meeting or not. I did not know whether an answer was sent to your government or not, but I proposed to settle by negotiation. That was my proposal - and if it was effective the negotiations must have been continued.

Q. You do not, even at this time, know what was in the note that was delivered on December 7th?

A. No.

Q. Well, in substance, it broke off all negotiations - it rejected the proposal in Mr. Hull's note of November 26th and of course the question has arisen as to whether or not that constituted a declaration of war. Our government of course looks upon it as simply an ending of negotiations. I would like to have your opinion as to whether or not that note that was delivered December 7th constituted a declaration of war?

A. I am not familiar with it.

Q. Did you ever hear any discussion of that note that arrived in Washington after the war had started?

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- A. No.
- Q. Was it well known at the time that there had not in fact been a declaration of war before the attack at Pearl Harbor?
- A. I don't know anything about this procedure.
- Q. You mean there was no talk along these lines among high government circles - that Japan had started the war without a declaration of war?
- A. I don't know. I think at that time I thought Japan would begin the war after the declaration of war - but in fact the declaration was made on the morning of the 8th.
- Q. That was the one announcing it to the Japanese people but there was no declaration ever delivered to the American government, only that note saying that "we cannot accept your proposal of November 26 and there is no basis for further negotiation" - that was the last word. There was never a declaration of war. There is one other point in Marquis Kido's diary I would like to discuss with you. Previously you said that you had approved the nomination of TOJO to be premier at a meeting of October 17th, 1941 because Prince KONOYE had recommended him and you indicated that you had met him (TOJO) only once or twice before; that you did not know anything about him?
- A. Yes.
- Q. KIDO says "I offered the TOJO cabinet as a solution of these problems. I met no objection to my proposal. Mr. HIROTA, General ABE, Mr. OHARA giving me positive approval." That would indicate to me that you did more than just agree to Gen. TOJO. It indicates that you actively supported his nomination.
- A. No, oh, no. You see I did not know the character of General TOJO - I only met him once or twice. Even at that meeting I did not remember him quite well.
- Q. You knew about his war-like character did you not?
- A. No.
- Q. We had read about it in the United States.
- A. I had no knowledge of the government situation so I asked, what kind of a man is Mr. TOJO. Then Mr. KIDO said (turns to interpreter and speaks in Japanese). (Interpreter translates) I had only met TOJO once or twice so I had no special knowledge or information about him. And when I said this Mr. KIDO he said "I have had talks with GEN. TOJO AND if TOJO and I were to talk about these different

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problems we would probably agree about them." So I thought, when Mr. Kido said this, that probably General Tojo's opinions concerning these problems were like Mr. Kido's. So I did not oppose the proposal about TOJO.

- Q. That is substantially what you told me before - that you had said that to the Emperor?
- A. Yes.
- Q. There is another entry that I want to discuss with you. It refers to a meeting of the former premiers about July 17, 1941 to select the cabinet to succeed Prince KONOYE's second cabinet. KIDO states that Gen. ABE stressed the necessity of having Prince KONOYE as premier to form another cabinet. That Admiral OKADA also recommended KONOYE and that Gen. HAYASHI and Mr. OHARA also recommended KONOYE. He says "Mr. Hirota laid particular stress upon the reinforcement of GHQ and the formation of a military cabinet but he consented to the opinion of the rest (that is, the appointment of KONOYE) upon my explanation of the establishment of GHQ".
- A. I will tell you the meaning of this. After the resignation of Admiral YONAI's cabinet, we were for the first time called to the Imperial Palace.
- Q. That was the first meeting of ex-premiers to help form the new cabinet?
- A. Yes, that was the first time. On the day of the meeting Prince KONOYE called me on the phone and told me that he was going to be appointed next premier. But he said he did not like to become the premier so he asked me to object to the appointment. So at that meeting I said that KONOYE was not the proper person who has the real strength..
- Q. You mean strength with the military?
- A. Not military only, but as a politician also. At the time the army or navy were very strong so those people must take the responsibility to settle the question. But the persons who were present at that meeting asked KONOYE to become the next premier. So I could not stop his appointment. That was the true story of that meeting.
- Q. Did you just say that or did you really think it would have been better to have someone who occupied a strong position with regard to the army and navy.
- A. I thought the army or navy men would be better to take such a position because of their position - other politicians cannot take the responsibility with no ability and no qualifications to lead the country.
- Q. You really believed that and it was not exclusively a matter of doing a favor for KONOYE by opposing his nomination just because he

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- Q. (cont'd) asked you to?
- A. (Through interpreter). When KONOYE said he did not want to become premier, I was perfectly willing to agree with him and to have someone else rather than KONOYE himself, but if KONOYE had not asked me to propose someone else to become premier I would have thought that KONOYE would have been a good premier. It was because KONOYE asked me that I said this. After the meeting I met on that day with Prince KONOYE and asked him whether he would agree to become premier or not. He said he did not like to become premier. When I asked him whether he would agree to his appointment he said he did not like to become a robot again but all the other people suggested him as the next premier so I said to him "You cannot reject it again this time because all the people recommend you. If you make a cabinet who will you select as foreign minister". Then he said that a career diplomat would be opposed by some parties so this time perhaps other people would become foreign minister. I asked him who that would be and he said the military men recommended MATSUOKA. So I told him that was very dangerous.
- Q. You knew MATSUOKA?
- A. I knew him quite well.
- Q. You knew his attitude towards the direction Japan had been traveling in military expansion?
- A. Yes. So I told him that and said that a career diplomat would be better for that post.
- Q. I think that covers that point.
- A. At that time there was a very strong attitude among the army people so the premier must be a person who has real ability and real strength to check the movement of the military people, you see. So I agreed to the opinion of Prince KONOYE.
- Q. Can you tell me what you know of YOKAYAMA, Yuji?
- A. We were born in the same district so I knew him from childhood.
- Q. Did you continue to know him in Tokyo?
- A. Yes, but I have been in foreign countries for many years so I did not meet him very often. When I was foreign minister I did not meet him at all.
- Q. You were both active in GEN YOSHA about the same time, were you not?
- A. No.

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- Q. He was an active member of GEN YOSHA was he not?
- A. I don't think so. That was only a local society, of our district.
- Q. It is reported that he was very active in it.
- A. No, I don't think so.
- Q. What do you think of his character and reputation?
- A. Rather not good.
- Q. He was in quite a lot of trouble practically all of the time?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Is it true that during the war he lived over here at the Imperial Hotel?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And spent quite a large amount of money?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did you ever have any financial dealings with him?
- A. No.
- Q. There is a report that you received twenty thousand yen from him?
- A. No, never.
- Q. There is another report that you obtained an eight thousand yen loan from him?
- A. No, never, ask Mr. YOKAYAMA, he will explain it. All those reports are quite false.
- Q. The newspaper story on YOKAYAMA's biography states that he was a close intimate of yours - that you had many close associations.
- A. As I told you I knew him from childhood.
- Q. Did you ever take his part or defend him when he was in trouble with the police or being investigated by the government?
- A. No.
- Q. Is it true that he was investigated several times but that the

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investigations were always discontinued because of influence on the part of some high official of the government?

A. I don't think so.

Q. We have a report saying that you got him out of trouble several times.

A. No never.

Q. And that whenever he wanted to get some proposal across to the government that you did it for him.

A. No, No.

Q. There is one other incident that happened while you were foreign minister the second time on which I would like to have your version. That is the firing upon the British Gun Boat and the American vessel "PANAY" December 12, 1937. Did you conduct any investigation into that incident as a matter affecting foreign relations?

A. The army and navy ministers explained it to me.

Q. Did they tell you that HASHIMOTO knew that it was an American vessel and that he intended to fire on it?

A. No. I don't remember that, but anyhow such an event took place so I hastened to apologize to America and England. (To Interpreter) I did not have any connection with these people and do not want to have any connection with them now. I would prefer to discuss bigger problems rather than discuss these small affairs concerning these men.

Q. All this fits into a large picture. If YOKAYAMA were to say that he had loaned you money, he would be telling an untruth?

A. Yes. There never was such a thing - never. He knows my character quite well and that I am quite exceptional and have never taken any money from any person.

Q. Did you attend any imperial conferences after you left the cabinet at any time after May, 1938?

A. No/

Q. Did you ever get reports on what went on at these Imperial conferences?

A. No.

Q. So that you were never told about the Imperial Conference on 5 October, 1940? When Prince KONOYE said that he could foresee war with the

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United States unless conditions were changed- you were never told about that?

A. No. I did not know that but when Prince KONOYE resigned we were called to the Imperial Palace to select the next premier.

Q. That was July 17th? When TOJO was selected?

A. Yes. At that time Mr. KIDO read the paper explaining why KONOYE resigned.

Q. Were any meetings called of ex-premiers during 1941 to discuss the various proposals that were being exchanged between the United States and Japan?

A. No.

Q. They never called on you for advice?

A. No.

Q. Were you ever told anything about the Imperial Conference of September 6th 1941 when TOJO insisted that war would be necessary if negotiations were not favorable by the middle of October?

A. No.

Q. It seems a little strange they would call the ex-premiers together to pick a new cabinet if they did not keep the ex-premiers advised as to what was happening.

A. Yes, that is quite funny.

Q. It seems quite strange since you were trying to pick the man to meet problems that you were not aware of.

A. Yes it is quite strange. We cannot select any person without knowledge of the actual situation.

Q. Did any of the other ex-premiers have more information than you did?

A. I think so. As I told you before there are many grades of ex-premiers. Some of them are always treated after their resignation with the same rank of the premier but I was not treated in the same way as premier - only as a minister.

Q. I would like you to tell me a little about your activities from the middle of 1938.

A. After my resignation as foreign minister in the first KONOYE

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Cabinet?

Q. I would like you to tell me anything you did of a public nature.

A. I became adviser to the YONAI Cabinet and after some time - no after two or three years I was asked to go to Thailand on a special mission, to return thanks for General Pahun's visit to Japan.

Q. That was after the war had started?

A. Yes. For a week or ten days I was in Thailand and then came back.

Q. Was that the only special mission you performed for the government?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you keep in pretty close touch with the political or government activities. Were you meeting with government leaders and discussing problems?

A. No, nothing like that. From the time of the 2nd KONOYE Cabinet, all ex-premiers were asked to come to the premier's residence.

Q. Were those meetings frequent?

A. Once a month.

Q. That was the second KONOYE Cabinet?

A. Yes.

Q. And that continued on during the war?

A. Yes. Besides that I had no connection with the government at all.

Q. It is reported that there was talk of some sort of peace about 1944 and that you were mentioned as one who could handle some of the negotiations.

A. Yes, that is true.

Q. Would you tell me about that?

A. My opinion was to propose peace through Soviet Russia.

Q. When did you make this proposal?

A. I did not make any proposal, but the government asked me to work for that purpose - that was at the time of the KOISO

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government, I think.

Q. When was that?

A. In 1944. I think Foreign Minister Shigemitsu asked me to go to Russia but I did not like to go there but he persuaded me earnestly so I told him if Russia would welcome my visit there I might go. Then he asked the opinion of Soviet Russia and Soviet Russia refused it so I did not go. And at the time of the SUZUKI cabinet, foreign minister TOGO again asked me to go to Soviet Russia but I was not inclined to go and Premier SUZUKI also asked me but still I refused.

Q. Why did you refuse, did you feel it would be useless?

A. The government attitude was not quite clear. They were not clear on the peace terms they were willing to offer. I did not know whether they had really made up their mind to make peace or not you see but they asked me so often so I told them I have nothing to do in Tokyo. So TOGO inquired the opinion of the Russian Ambassador - then I talked with him.

Q. Did he advise his government of your talk with him?

A. Perhaps, I don't know. But I could not get any definite answer from Soviet Russia. So nothing was ever done about it. Then the termination of the war came. My opinion was always to end the war as soon as possible, even after the declaration of war Japan must take the quickest opportunity to end the war.

Q. I would like to refer to previous conversations we had about the time when you were foreign minister from 1933 to 1936, and also when you were premier. You have indicated that the army was constantly increasing its control over the government and that it had become very difficult for you to shape a foreign policy.

A. Yes.

Q. That in fact the army was pretty much dictating the policy.

A. Yes.

Q. During this time you were kept pretty well advised of what the army was doing, were you not?

A. No.

Q. You knew what they were doing?

A. No.

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- Q. You had some word of their plans, did you not?
- A. No. General SUGIYAMA always explained the happening of the things.
- Q. I have a few cables here that I want to discuss with you. I am going to quote from Cable #331.1 (document 724, p 5) dispatched October 2nd, 1935, while you were foreign minister, by WAKASUGI, Secretary Gen. of the Japanese Embassy in Peking, and addressed to you as foreign minister:

"To sum up the latest development of the situation in this area, we may say that the basic idea of our Army is likely to eventually develop a federal autonomous state (virtually an independent state), which embraces the five provinces in North China, politically and economically separated from the bondage of the Nanking Government in consideration of the reasons connected with the national defense and also for bringing forth an economic block of Japan, Manchu and North China".

It seems to me that such information coming to you gave you pretty good notice of what was going on and of what the army was contemplating doing. In fact, this autonomous government in North China was not set up until March, 1940, that is five years later, so it would appear from one of your own cables that five years before the event actually happened, you knew it was what the army had in mind.

- A. Yes.
- Q. I would like to quote from cable 331.2 (Document 724) also despatched on 2 October by the same man and addressed to Foreign Minister HIROTA:

".....the maneuvering for control over Mongolia by the Kwantung Army is now making a positive progress as the Consul in Kalgan and I myself reported to you repeatedly..... Further, to expedite the extension and the strengthening of Japan's economic influence in inner Mongolia, the OKURA-GUMI CO., in compliance with the idea of the Kwantung Army recently established a sister company..... This I take as another step designed for helping the aforementioned maneuvering for control. As I have pointed out above, the far-reaching plan of the Army has been put into action and is now making a positive progress. We believe that this is the situation worthy of our closest scrutiny in order that we may be in a position to step forward in a consistent manner to meet whatever development it may assume in relation to the diplomacy of Japan over the whole area of China and also other territories as the Army's action develops further along its plan".

There again it seems that it was well known in your office and in government circles here that the Kwantung Army had a long-range program of aggression in China, and that this was known some years

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beforehand. For example this last cable refers to the penetration of Mongolia and it is dated 1935. Well, that was two years before Japan sponsored the autonomous government for Mongolia, which was announced in October 1937. What I am interested in knowing is this: Having this information at your disposal you must have been aware that your personal policy of local settlement of small incidents here and there would not fit into this plan. Further, it must have appeared to you that the Emperor was not receiving correct advice when he was being told that the extensions of the incidents in Manchuria and in China were necessary as defensive measures, because as early as this cable in 1935, you had personal knowledge that the army knew what it was doing and what it planned to do.

- A. Of course there was such a rumor. I remember at the beginning of this examination here I told you you must know the actual plan of the army and from that plan what difficulty they had and what kind of persons were connected with those things. Then you will understand the real situation of the army.
- Q. Mr.Hirota we have other men working on the army side of these plans.
- A. Of course I remember such a rumor or such plans are going on.
- Q. Do you have any recollection of receiving these particular cables?
- A. I don't remember but these rumors were quite prevalent.
- Q. This is much more than a rumor - it was a telegram that you actually received.
- A. Yes, WAKASUGI got that information in Peking perhaps from the military men, I think, but such plan was not the plan of the government.
- Q. But if the government did not take steps to stop such a plan then it became the government plan.
- A. I always tried to check such a movement.
- Q. Was the Emperor ever advised by the premier as to this?
- A. I don't think so. That was a plan of some of the army men. It was not a plan of the army itself.
- Q. As the cabinet member responsible for foreign relations, would it not have been your responsibility to go to the Prime Minister when you received this information and point out that he was responsible to the Emperor for the entire conduct of the government?
- A. Yes.

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- Q. And he should therefore advise the Emperor what actually was taking place so that the Emperor would have full knowledge of conditions in China. Don't you think you should have done that - that you should have gone to the Prime Minister and discussed these things with him and tried to get him to tell the Emperor what was actually happening?
- A. The Prime Minister and myself tried to check such a plan - that was my business at that time. As I told you before, Chiang Kai-Shek sent a message to me. He asked me to check such a movement. That means the Manchurian Question had taken place already so it must be put aside for the time being, but if the Japanese Army makes any plan to go to China or Mongolia he cannot be indifferent. He must take a strong policy against such a movement. So I made that idea the foundation of my foreign policy toward China. I always tried to check the furthering of that plan.
- Q. What could you do to check it? You did not have any control over the army?
- A. No, only the Army Minister.
- Q. You knew he probably supported the army plan.
- A. I don't know.
- Q. If he did not they would not have let him continue as War Minister.
- A. That point you must know the real movement inside the army. That is a very delicate point. Some group of the army was always planning to do something.
- Q. Were you trying to check it by working with some groups in the army that opposed this expansion?
- A. Yes, but never in connection with the military men - only I would tell the Army Minister or the Keeper of the Privy Seal.
- Q. In other words, there was not much you could do because you did not have influence with the army.
- A. No, I did not have any influence at all.
- Q. I don't understand why it would not have been possible to get the one person in Japan who could control the army, namely, the Emperor, and tell him what he was entitled to know.
- A. But you must know the Emperor often told the Army Minister, very often I think but SUGIYAMA was powerless to do anything, really powerless, so I thought a strong army or military man must take the responsibility.

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Q. You were aware during this time of what was going on. You may not have known all but you had a general idea of what the army had in mind, as appeared in these cables.

A. Yes, of course, such a rumor was prevalent in Japan even.

Q. Did you mean you had discussed with the Keeper of the Privy Seal these army plans?

A. Only once - I told YUASA, who died, when he was Keeper of the Privy Seal. Once he told me that one of the members of the General Staff, perhaps it was General ISHIHARA, was against the movement in China.

Q. ISHIHARA was in favor of the southern movement, was he not?

A. I don't know. But he was against it, and I told YUASA to make a strong attitude against such a plan.

Q. I want to quote from Cable 409, classified as Strictly Confidential (Document 724) dispatched May 7, 1936, by Ambassador UYEDA and addressed to Foreign Minister ARITA. In this cable he refers to a pact for mutual aid between Manchukuo and Inner Mongolia.

Q. From whom is the cable?

Q. From Ambassador UYEDA.

A. Ambassador to what country?

Q. I take it he was ambassador to China or Manchukuo.

A. Manchukuo. He was the commander of the Kwantang Army.

Q. He addresses this cable to your foreign minister.

A. Yes, my foreign minister, ARITA. UYEDA was ambassador to Manchukuo but was also commander of the Kwantang Army.

Q. He is discussing the pact for mutual aid between Manchukuo and Inner Mongolia and he says:

"We have to watch carefully how this pact when it comes into being would affect our international relations. As you are aware, the Army's maneuvering for control is being carried out secretly with strict care to check leakage."

Now, in view of that kind of information coming in to the foreign office and in view of information that I quoted from the other cables, I cannot understand how the foreign office a year later could issue

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a statement, as they did, on October 9, 1937, saying that action in China was in no way a violation of any treaties. That was a public statement issued in October 1937. You see the point I am making, Mr. Hirota. It looks like bad faith on the part of the foreign office or the Japanese government because they announced to the world that nothing they were doing in China was a violation of any treaty. "Any little squabble we have we are obliged to do it as a defensive measure." Yet at the same time the foreign office and the government has knowledge of these secret plans and maneuvering for the control of huge portions of China. We cannot look on that as anything less than bad faith because your government asked our government to rely on that statement that nothing was being done to affect China's integrity as a sovereign nation. Do you see our position on that?

- A. Yes, I understand your position but I did not know such a thing.
- Q. Of course, that is only one example; there were numerous statements on the part of the Japanese Government claiming that their actions in China were not aggressive. That pact was between Japan and Manchukuo.
- A. It was still the Kwantang Army.
- Q. The Kwantang Army was behind the scenes arranging this, and as a student of law, you know that is a violation of China's sovereignty...
- A. By the Kwantang Army.
- Q. To be negotiating for and setting up autonomous governments in territory that had always been a part of China.
- A. I don't remember such a thing at all.
- Q. Well, it is only another example of the same kind of dealing found in all the refusals of Japan to submit the China-Japan difficulties to either the League of Nations or the Nine Power Brussels Conference. I know you have explained the army did not want to participate because they felt that Japan would be going in as a defendant. But I am sure that you and many others here recognize that if you did ~~not~~ participate in the Brussels conference, all other nations in the world would say that you were violating treaties.
- A. Yes.
- Q. In other words, you did recognize, and everybody else in the world did, that you were committing aggressive acts ...
- A. Yes.

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- Q. But there was always a denial on the part of the government that anything illegal or anything in violation of treaties was being done.
- A. In what case was such an explanation made - on what occasion?
- Q. I think every time you were invited to participate in the settlement of the China-Japan difficulties Japan always insisted that Japan was not violating any treaties by its actions in China.
- A. I was always hesitating to say.
- Q. Because you felt in your own mind it was probably a violation?
- A. Yes. I always tried to check the violation of the treaty.
- Q. I have been thinking about this point: Why you agreed to accept a second term in the position of foreign minister, when you knew from your experience from 1933 to 1936, and also from your experience as prime minister, that you would have to accept army dictation.
- A. I explained that point to you.
- Q. You explained the factual situation, but did you really think you could check the control exercised by the army?
- A. It might have been very difficult but I was asked by Prince SAIONJI to become foreign minister under Prince KONOYE. A telephone call came to my house and I was asked to be foreign minister. I did not know the reason but I was asked by Prince SAIONJI to become the foreign minister, and as foreign minister to continue my policy - that means to check the movement of the army - so I accepted.
- Q. In your own mind, did you think you could check that?
- A. That was rather doubtful, but who can do that? But I was particularly asked by Prince SAIONJI. He recommended me and the prime minister. So I accepted that position. It was my mistake, of course. Now I think it was a great mistake. What is the use for me to become foreign minister again - foreign minister after a Prime Minister. I sacrificed myself rather.
- Q. Yes, I think so, because it looks as though you knew what you would be up against and were willing to accept army control.
- A. Yes. He agreed with my foreign diplomacy so perhaps he wanted me to help Prince KONOYE who was becoming prime minister for the first time. But now, I think it was a great mistake for me. I sacrificed myself.

Certificate of Interpreter

I, CURTIS LT., 0-934860
(name) (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~~, **as indicated in the above transcription**, consisting of 19 pages, is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

John A. Curtis

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 26th day of March, 1946.

Arthur A. Sandusky, Capt. JAGD
(Name and Rank)

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

Certificate of Stenographer

I, DINAH BRAUN 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.

Dinah Braun

Certificate of Interrogator.

I, (~~AA~~) ARTHUR A. SANDUSKY, CAPT, _____,

AAA _____,

certify that on 23rd day of March, 1946, personally appeared before me AAA HIROTA, Koki, Interpreter, and according to LT. CURTIS, gave the foregoing answers to the several questions set forth therein, of that part of the transcription conducted through an interpreter, as indicated in the foregoing transcription.

TOKYO
Place

MARCH 26th, 1946.
Date

Arthur A. Sandusky

Captain. JAGD