

Inter T&J (6 Feb. 46)

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE**  
**WASHINGTON**



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



CONTINUED INTERROGATION OF

General Hideki Tojo

Date and Time: 6 February 1946, 1400-1630 hours.

Place : Sugamo Prison, Tokyo, Japan.

Present : General Hideki Tojo  
Mr. John W. Fihelly, Interrogator  
Commander Yale Maxon, USNR, Interpreter  
Miss Myrtle B. Mills, Stenographer

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Q: What was the nature of the records kept of the cabinet meetings?

A: There were no records kept. It was like this. Each Minister of State brought with him copies of important matters which he wished to present. These were freely circulated at the cabinet meetings, but there was no secretary taking minutes or any written account of who had what view or who voted how on each question. However, each minister noted down things which he wished to bring before his subordinates, and when he got back to his own department, would call a conference of bureau heads /kyokuchō/ and inform them of any important matters that had come up and what views or decisions had been taken.

Q: Was there any written record kept of these intra-departmental proceedings?

A: No. This is probably very different from the custom in other countries, but these matters were not recorded.

Q: But where were the official proposals of the various ministers kept after they had been presented at a cabinet meeting?

A: They were kept at the official residence of the Prime Minister.

I can explain a little more about the structure of the cabinet. Basically, the Prime Minister and the other ministers were the ones who composed the cabinet. They were the only ones who had the right to speak. However, three other officials always attended cabinet meetings and a fourth sometimes attended. The three who always attended were the Cabinet Secretary /Shoki Kancho/, the President of the Cabinet Planning Board /Kikakuin Sosai/, and the Director of the Bureau of Legislation /Hosei Kyoku Chokan/. The fourth official who attended on certain occasions was the President of the Cabinet Information Board /Johō Kyoku Sosai/.



- Q.: Was this last named official the one who released matters to the press, or did he also collect intelligence from the police, and so forth, and report to the cabinet?
- A.: Most of his duties involved the dissemination of information to the press. However, sometimes he did perform the other function also.
- Q.: Then only the Prime Minister and the other ministers had the right to vote?
- A.: There was no voting. Each matter was discussed until there was unanimous agreement upon it. If there was opposition upon an important matter, either the minister or ministers who opposed it would resign or there would be a mass resignation of the cabinet. Of course, as I stated before, this concerned only the Premier and the Ministers of State. It did not concern the four individuals who attended cabinet meetings in an advisory capacity. I have said that the cabinet meetings required unanimous agreement on all measures. This is because the cabinet members attended these meetings not in the capacity of administrative heads of their several departments but in the capacity of Ministers of State /Kokumu Daijin/. In this latter capacity, they were jointly responsible for advising the Throne.
- Q.: On important matters, how was the Emperor advised of the cabinet's decision?
- A.: There were several methods. One was a report to the Throne /hōkoku/. When a decision had been made, either the Prime Minister or the minister concerned would inform the Emperor in person on the matters decided upon. A second method was that of securing permission /kyōka/. The proposal or bill was in this case given to the Grand Chamberlain /Jijūchō/ who would then take it up with the Emperor. After the matter had been presented to the Emperor, he would usually discuss it with the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal /Naidaijin/ before the Imperial Seal was affixed.
- Q.: Were these two the Emperor's main advisors?
- A.: Besides the Grand Chamberlain and the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, there was a third important advisor to the Emperor; the Minister of the Imperial Household /Kunaidaijin/. However, his functions had to do with the Imperial property and he was not concerned in legislative matters.



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Q.: Did the Emperor ever attend cabinet meetings?

A.: No.

Q.: Did he ever attend any meetings with members of the cabinet present?

A.: Yes. Imperial Conferences /Gozen Kaigi/ were held with important Ministers of State, depending on the problem to be discussed. In cases involving the prerogative of military command, the Army and Navy Chiefs of Staff also attended; also the President of the Privy Council.

Q.: How often were these held during a year?

A.: Some years there were none. On years when important matters had to be decided, sometimes there were two or three.

Q.: Was there any provision in the constitution or in the laws authorizing these to be held?

A.: No.

Q.: Then they were only a matter of custom?

A.: Yes, when some important matter had to be decided. The Imperial Conferences, however, had no responsibility as such. Those who attended, the Chiefs of Staff, the Cabinet Ministers, President of the Privy Council, each had responsibility in his capacity of Chief of Staff, Cabinet member, or President of the Privy Council but not in his capacity as a member of the Imperial Conference.

Q.: How long had this custom existed?

A.: For a long time back - since the Russo-Japanese War, I suppose. It was a gathering of individuals holding positions of responsibility to effect an interchange of views.

Q.: Who called these Imperial Conferences?



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A.: They could be requested of the Emperor by one of the Chiefs of Staff, or by the Prime Minister, or by any other Minister of State if the matter were important enough. The Imperial Conferences theoretically had no presiding officer but in fact the Prime Minister acted as presiding officer. Of course matters were not officially decided here. After discussion they were again brought up at the cabinet meeting where official action was taken. The Emperor, although he attended, did not officially approve or disapprove or order the actions taken.

Q.: Does the Emperor participate actively in these conferences?

A.: He rarely said anything at all, that is, during my experience. Before that, I don't know. One time I remember he did. That was during the Japanese-American negotiations. If a decision was not reached, the matter would go back to the cabinet for a decision or to the Army or Navy for a decision in matters of command, after which it was again presented directly to the Emperor. The responsibility for advice to the Throne I have explained before. It was the responsibility of the Ministers of State to advise the Emperor on matters within their cognizance and the responsibility of the Chiefs of Staff to advise the Emperor on matters of military command.

Q.: How many Imperial Conferences were held in 1941?

A.: Two or three.

Q.: We would like to know exactly how many, if possible.

A.: There was one on December 1st or 2nd, and another one on September 6, I believe. I don't remember for sure whether or when there was a third, but there were two or three during that year.

Q.: Who called those two?

A.: The Army Chief of Staff requested the December 1st one. That was Field Marshal SUGIYAMA. No, I am mistaken. It was Field Marshal Shishin NAGANO. The one on September 6th was requested by the Army Chief of Staff, I am sure. I believe it was Prince KAN-IN /Kan-in No Miya/. There were meetings from time to time of a Liaison Conference /Renraku Kaigi/. These Liaison Conference meetings were attended by the Chiefs of Staff, important cabinet officials (such as the Premier, the Foreign Minister, and the Finance Minister, and the President of the Cabinet Planning Board) and other Ministers of State as appropriate.



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The request for an Imperial Conference would be brought up at this Liaison Conference. The actual request to the Emperor may have come from the cabinet, although I am not certain about that. These matters of procedure and just how these things were handled, I am not actually certain of. Matters of procedure would be best known to the Chief Secretary of the Cabinet, Mr. HOSHINO.

Q.: Was there not an Imperial Conference in July 1941?

A.: I think there was, but I am not certain of it.

Q.: But you do remember two during your own cabinet in 1941?

A.: Yes.

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Certificate of Interpreter

I, Yale Maxon, Cmdr., USNR, 11-35-72  
(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, consisting of 5 pages, is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Yale Maxon  
Yale Maxon, Cmdr., USNR

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 12 day of August, 1946.

John W. Fihelly  
John W. Fihelly

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

Certificate of Stenographer

I, Myrtle B. Mills, 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.

Myrtle B. Mills  
Myrtle B. Mills

Certificate of Interrogator

I, John W. Fihelly, certify that on 6  
day of Feb., 1946, personally appeared before me TOJO  
Hideki, and according to Commander Yale Maxon, USNR,

Interpreter, gave the foregoing answers to the several questions set forth therein.

John W. Fihelly  
John W. Fihelly

TOKYO  
(Place)

12 August 46  
(Date)