

D. D # 2963.

OPENING STATEMENT

on behalf of TŌGŌ SHIGENORI

I NOW OPEN THE EVIDENCE on behalf of Tōgō Shigenori. We have chosen so far as possible to present it, for the Tribunal's greater convenience, under a few general divisions: Connection with German affairs, and with Russian; British and American relations and the Pacific War; war-time diplomacy; the ending of the war. The division will be very imperfect, since a witness often testifies to a diversity of matters. As to each of these divisions, evidence will be offered to establish substantially the following state of facts.

Toward Japanese-German relations Mr Tōgō's attitude was always that they should not be such as to damage Japan's relations with other countries--specifically the U S S R, the United States and the British Empire. Unsympathetic to the Anti-Comintern Pact from its conception, and laboring to weaken and soften it; so obstinately opposed to a tripartite alliance that for his opposition he was transferred from his Ambassadorship in Berlin; he was the Cassandra of the Nazi decade.

With the Soviet Union he always maintained that cordial relations was of prime importance; and the accident of his career gave him opportunity to see carried out almost completely the policy which he early formulated and for which he unceasingly worked. He successfully managed the negotiations for the sale to Manchukuo of the Soviet interest in the Chinese Eastern Railway; he attained, for the first time in the history of Soviet-Japanese relations, a beginning of border-demarkation; and his work as Ambassador in Moscow had all but resulted in the conclusion of a non-aggression pact when he was recalled. Throughout the Pacific War, when he was in office, he stressed the cardinal importance of maintaining the Soviet-Japanese peace and friendly relations.

With British and American affairs Mr Tōgō had little direct connection prior to becoming Foreign Minister in October 1941. When he had opportunity, he worked for improvement of those relations--he had for example persuaded the authorities to negotiate for an agreement with Britain concurrently with execution of the Anti-Comintern Pact; he had opposed the Japanese Navy's stand on naval disarmament as likely to impair good relations with America and Britain; and he became Foreign Minister with the hope of salvaging those wrecked relations. Concerning his connection with the Pacific War through his service in the Tōjō Cabinet--which may readily be conceived to be intended as the gravamen of the charge against Mr Tōgō here--it will appear that, being in no governmental position, he was called upon by the new Premier whom he knew but casually to accept the post of Foreign Minister. This post he accepted only after having obtained the unequivocal commitment that the new cabinet could work sincerely for the success of the Japanese-American negotiations, and that the Army would acquiesce. Thereafter he labored under conditions of extreme difficulty at a double task: on the one hand attempting to save the Japanese-American negotiations and relations, long since strained almost irretrievably; on the other, persuading the military High Commands, in the Liaison Conference where the matter was managed and where their voice was predominant, to permit him to make the attempt.

It proved an impossible task. The United States, unwilling to accept the concessions which it had been possible to make, served in the form of its note of 26 November that all Japanese concerned regarded as an ultimatum. The choice was between surrender of the national position as a power, perhaps endangering the national existence, and war in self-defence. That was the choice; and it was no choice. War was decided upon; Foreign Minister Tōgō, having opposed war to the last, was compelled to agree that arms must be taken up in self-defence.

When the question arose of the formalities for commencement of war, Mr Tōgō again had to overcome High Command opposition, to insist that the usual

procedure of notification be followed. He was authorized by the Liaison Conference to serve upon the United States Government a notification of termination of negotiations. The question of the time for serving it was settled by the High Commands, who assured the Foreign Minister that the time proposed would allow a sufficient interval before the initiation of hostilities. It was thus agreed, and orders went out for notification in Washington at 1 P.M. of 7 December; through mismanagement in Washington, however, the notice was in fact served more than an hour late, and well after the attacks on American and British territories were under way.

With war in progress, there was little for diplomacy to do; from that little, much was subtracted by creation of the Greater East Asia Ministry. As a result of differences of opinion on this and other basic policies, Foreign Minister Tōgō resigned from the cabinet on 1 September 1942, less than eleven months after entering it. Already before that he had been planning how to bring about an end to the war. The opportunity came when in April 1945 he was recalled from retirement by the Premier-Designate, Admiral Suzuki, and was again offered the foreign affairs portfolio--and again he imposed conditions, this time, that the cabinet should be the one to end the war. His efforts throughout the short life of the Suzuki cabinet were devoted to that end, which was achieved primarily through those efforts on 15 August 1945.

It is submitted that this proof will demonstrate that the role of Tōgō Shigenori, so far from being that of a conspirator for aggression, has throughout his career been that of opposition to militarism and to the consequences which he foresaw would result from it.