

Interr. - Hiranuma, Kiichiro  
(1 Feb. 46)

DOC 4123

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INTERROGATION OF

Baron Kiichiro Hiranuma

Date and Time: 1 February 1946, 0930-1100 Hours

Place : Home of Baron Hiranuma

Present : Baron Kiichiro Hiranuma  
Valentine C. Hammack, Interrogator  
D. Kildoyle, Interpreter  
Ruth F. Anderson, Stenographer  
Jimbo, Former Secretary to Baron Hiranuma

Questions by : Mr. Hammack

BY MR. HAMMACK: Mr. Kildoyle, 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?

BY MR. KIIDOYLE: I do.

Q. Baron, when we were here before you stated that the Manchurian Incident was carried on by the military, is that correct?

A. Exactly.

Q. Is it not a fact that in relation to the Manchurian Incident that the military did, however, have the support of the Japanese government?

A. As I remember it, they did not have the support of the government at the time. Originally.

Q. Will you explain, Baron, then just what was the situation. The Kwantung army in Manchuria proceeded to take certain measures and apparently either before or after they were accomplished the government did appear to go along with them. Will you please explain just that situation?

A. Actually it was a case of tacit agreement on the part of the government.

Q. In other words, Baron, it is a fact, then, is it not that as the various developments occurred in Manchuria that they were approved or accepted by the government?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it your contention, Baron, that the government was not strong enough to withstand the pressure of the military in Manchuria?

A. I think that would about explain it.

Q. The position is this, Baron, that we find ourselves in. The military will say that they were soldiers and they merely followed the orders of their government. The statesmen say that they could not prevent the actions of the military, who to a large extent acted upon their own. How do you explain the difference in statements as distinguished from the statesmen of Japan and the military leaders of Japan?

A. The prerogatives of command of the army and navy were independent of the government and Cabinet and any actions committed under this prerogative of command could not be opposed or hindered by the government.

Q. But the government, however, did approve such actions after they had occurred, did it not?

A. Yes.

Q. Baron, can you tell me who were the military leaders in the Kwantung army? General Honjo?

A. General Honjo as Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung army was the leader.

Q. And would you say, Baron, that General Honjo was primarily responsible for the Manchurian Incident?

A. Yes.

Q. Was not General Jiro Minami also commander of the Kwantung Army?

A. He was Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung army after Honjo. At the time of the outbreak of the Incident, General Minami was not in Manchoukuo, but I would say he is responsible for actions committed after he took command.

Q. Of the Kwantung army?

A. Yes, of the Kwantung army.

Q. What part did General Iwani Matsui play in connection with the Manchurian Incident, Baron?

A. I do not think General Matsui had anything to do with the Manchurian Incident as he was not active in service at the time.

Q. General Matsui was a member of the War Consulate at that time, was he not, Baron?

A. Yes, he was a member of the War Consulate.

1 Feb 1946

- Q. And as such he would be interested, would he not, in anything in connection with the Japanese army in Manchuria?
- A. The War Council was merely an advisory body, and I think actually they were not concerned with events in Manchuria.
- Q. By that, Baron, do you mean they were not actually concerned with them or that they did not actually participate in events in Manchuria?
- A. They did not participate in events in Manchuria as an advisory council.
- Q. But as an advisory council to the Emperor, were they not concerned with the events for good or evil in Manchuria?
- A. The advisory council would have no knowledge of actions to be taken by the Kwantung Army in Manchoukuo. The Kwantung Army acted independently without orders or referring to any central authority.
- Q. Do you know Lieutenant General Kuchiaki Koiso?
- A. Yes.
- Q. He was an officer of the Kwantung Army, was he not?
- A. He became Chief of the Kwantung Army, staff leader, after General Honjo left. General Muto was Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army and successor to General Honjo.
- Q. Then was General Koiso Chief of Staff to General Muto?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What part in the Kwantung Army did Lieutenant General Yoshitsugu Tatekwa play, Baron?
- A. I do not think Lieutenant General Tatekwa was attached to the Kwantung Army. I think he made an official trip to Manchuria.
- Q. My information, Baron, is that he was Tenth Divisional Commander in the Kwantung Army. Does that refresh your recollection that he may have been?
- A. I do not know this, but perhaps he was.
- Q. General Hideki Tojo was a brigade commander in the Kwantung Army, was he not, Baron?
- A. Perhaps so, I do not remember definitely.

1 Feb 1946

- Q. Is it not a fact, Baron, that General Hideki Tojo was one of the military leaders connected with the military activities in Manchuria?
- A. I do not know if this is so.
- Q. Do you know whether or not to your knowledge General Tojo was a general or an officer of the Kwantung Army at one time?
- A. He was commander of the Gendarmerie under the command of the Kwantung Army.
- Q. Now, General Seishiro Itagaki, he too was an officer of the Kwantung Army, was he not, Baron?
- A. When General Tojo was Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army, Itagaki was a staff officer.
- Q. As a matter of fact, Baron, is it not true that General Itagaki was one of the military leaders who was most active in the Manchurian Incident and later in the China Incident?
- A. As a staff officer during the Manchurian Incident, I believe he was very active, but I do not know if he was active during the China Incident.
- Q. But General Itagaki, as Minister of War in your Cabinet, supported the policy of the military in connection with the China Incident, did he not, Baron?
- A. After the outbreak of the Chinese Incident, he was War Minister, not at the time of the outbreak. As War Minister, he would naturally be active in matters pertaining to the military.
- Q. Who in the military, Baron, in your opinion and from your knowledge of the China Incident, was most responsible for the Japan-China Incident?
- A. I believe the persons most responsible were the officers responsible for the Marco Polo Bridge Incident.
- Q. Do you know the names of the officers, Baron, who were responsible for the Marco Polo Bridge Incident?
- A. No, I do not know.
- Q. General Iwani Matsui was a commanding general in China, was he not, Baron?
- A. He was a commander in 1937.
- Q. He was commander of the Japanese army at Nanking, was he not?
- A. Yes.

1 Feb 1946

Q. And in which occurred what is historically known as, or called, the rape of Nanking, is that correct, Baron?

A. I do not know who was responsible for this. As a matter of fact, I did not know that there was a massacre at Nanking.

Q. General Matsui was Japanese military commander in Nanking, was he not, in 1937 or later?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know Colonel Kingoro Hashimoto, Baron?

A. Yes, I know him.

Q. He was a famous person, was he not, Baron?

A. Yes.

Q. Was he not active in the Manchurian affair and later in the Chinese affair?

A. I do not know if he was actually active, but I think he was the type of person with inclinations in this direction.

Q. You know, do you not, Baron, that Colonel Hashimoto was responsible for the machine gunning or bombing of the American ship "Pana"?

A. I have heard of Colonel Hashimoto in connection with the Pana Incident.

Q. Would you say, Baron, that Colonel Hashimoto would be properly classified under the term of a "hot head"? Put it this way. Would you say, from your knowledge of Colonel Hashimoto, that he was reckless in his actions and reckless in regard to the possible consequence of the same?

A. I do not know for certain if he was.

Q. But would not his history indicate that to be so?

A. Although I know him, I really do not know what type of person he is, and I am not able to judge his character.

Q. Would you say, Baron, that Colonel Hashimoto's actions in general in connection with the Pana Incident and other incidents, however, did contribute to strain relations between Japan and the United States at that time and thereafter?

A. His actions might have contributed, but I do not think that his actions alone were responsible.

- Q. I realize, of course, Baron, that that is true, that it was not only the action of Colonel Hashimoto, but you do agree with me do you not that, beginning with the Manchurian affair, followed by the China Incident and other trends of world affairs, that inevitable war would result as a result of the actions of Japan with the United States and Britain?
- A. I did not think so.
- Q. However, Baron, as a statesman, did not the possibility of that worry you at times?
- A. I was concerned with the fact that if negotiations did not proceed satisfactorily there was the danger of the outbreak of war even before the China Incident.
- Q. Now, do you know Colonel Chiaki Higuchi, Baron?
- A. Yes, I know him.
- Q. He was an officer of the Kwantung army, was he not?
- A. I believe he was at one time in the Kwantung army.
- Q. And was he not also an officer in the Japanese army in connection with the Chinese Incident?
- A. I know he was in China at the time of the China Incident.
- Q. Do you know what position he occupied?
- A. I am not certain, but I think he was commander of a regiment.
- Q. Do you know Colonel Kotoku Sato?
- A. He was also in the Japanese army in China.
- Q. Major Isama Cho?
- A. I do not know.
- Q. Major Ysumasu Kagesa?
- A. I know that Major Kagesa was in China.
- Q. He was attache to the China Nanking Government, was he not, Baron?
- A. Yes, I know that.

- Q. Was that before your time as Premier or after, Baron?
- A. When I was Premier. He was in China. He was at one time military attache to China.
- Q. Do you know General Doihara, Baron?
- A. Yes.
- Q. He, too, was a famous person, was he not, Baron?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was General Doihara, as a young officer, as colonel, he was active in the Manchurian Incident, was he not, Baron?
- A. I do not know. I have never heard that he was very active in the Manchurian Incident.
- Q. Baron, we have information which would indicate that General Doihara then either Major or Colonel Doihara, was very active in the Manchurian Incident?
- A. I do not know this.
- Q. Have you not heard, Baron, that Major Doihara, that he was the one who engineered the original outbreak of hostilities between the Kwantung army and the Chinese in Manchuria?
- A. No, I have not heard of this.
- Q. Did you ever, Baron, read the written report pertaining to the Manchurian Incident?
- A. I have read nothing special in this connection.
- Q. What was General Iraka's participation in the Manchurian Incident, Baron?
- A. General Iraka became War Minister after the Manchurian Incident.
- Q. About what year was Iraka War Minister?
- A. He was War Minister in the Inukai Cabinet in 1936.
- Q. Was he War Minister in the Inukai Cabinet at the outbreak of hostilities in China in 1937, Baron?
- A. He was not War Minister at the time of the outbreak of the China Incident.
- Q. Baron, you say, in connection with the China Incident that, too, was brought



1 Feb 1946

on by the military? Will you tell me who in your opinion of the military was primarily responsible for the China Incident and continuation of the same thereafter.

- A. The outbreak and the continuation of the war are two different problems. The persons responsible for the outbreak are those Japanese forces at the scene of the outbreak.
- Q. Was not General Matsui in command of the Japanese forces at the scene of the outbreak?
- A. I do not think he was there at the time of the outbreak. He became commander later.
- Q. I don't understand the answer. Do you mean General Matsui was in command of the Japanese army at the time of the outbreak, but was not personally there, is that your answer?
- A. No, he was not in command at the time of the outbreak.
- Q. Do you know who was in command at the time of the outbreak, Baron?
- A. I can not recall at the moment.
- Q. Of course, I realize, Baron, that this is a matter of record. I can find out. I realize you may be unable to recall it all right. I am just trying to get these things tied up. Baron, you have stated that the Manchurian Incident, as well as the China Incident were undertaken independently of the government by the military. Will you explain the reasons why the military should do this and what was the motive behind their actions both in Manchuria and in China?
- A. I would say that the military were motivated by a desire to bring Manchuria within the sphere of the influence of Japan.
- Q. Would that also be true of China?
- A. I do not think there was a desire to bring China within the sphere of influence of Japan.
- Q. Was it not the continued policy of the government, however, Baron, in the development of a greater East Asia, to bring Manchuria, China, and other Asiatic nations within the sphere of Japanese influence?
- A. There was definitely no desire to bring China and other Far Eastern countries within the sphere of Japanese influence in connection with the development of Greater East Asia, however, collaboration between nations of the Far East was desired.

- Q. Is it not a fact, however, Baron, that in the development of the program by Japan of a Greater East Asia, the military and the government of Japan walked hand in hand?
- A. After the formulation of the plans for the development of Greater East Asia, there was cooperation between the government and the army, but there was never any designs to bring other nations within the Japanese sphere of influence.
- Q. Then, Baron, if it was the desire only of the Japanese government to develop trade relations and good will with China, why was the Japanese army sent to China and continued to remain there?
- A. If the Chinese government had cooperated with the Japanese government, there would have been no necessity for the continuation of the China Incident. Anti-Japanese feeling was rampant and China's efforts to expel the Japanese were all factors contributing to the trouble.
- Q. But was it not a fact, Baron, historically speaking, that the Anti-Japanese feeling on the part of the Chinese resulted from the twenty-one demands of 1919 and later the sending of Japanese troops to China?
- A. Yes, but then Japan dropped the twenty-one demands.
- Q. Baron, will you answer me this. In view of the Nine-Power Treaty as it applied to China, what justification can you, as a statesman advance to justify the actions of Japan in China in disregard of the Nine-Power Treaty?
- A. Whether it is good or bad is beside the question, but I think that the object of the people on the support at the outbreak was the oppression of Anti-Japanese activities by the Chinese. At the time of the Marco Polo Incident, this was one of the causes.
- Q. With the result, Baron, however, is it not, that what started in a small beginning in time reached the proportions of a full scale war, is that not correct?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And the Japanese government supporting the Japanese army in China, is that not correct?
- A. There is a declaration by Prince Konoye on this point.
- Q. Would you say, Baron, that the declaration of Prince Konoye on this point was the unanimous policy of the Japanese government?
- A. It became the policy of the Japanese government.
- Q. And the declaration of Prince Konoye relating to the China Incident was also your own personal believe and policy, was it not Baron?

1 Feb 1946

- A. This having become the national policy of Japan, I was not in a position to oppose it. Personally I was not in agreement with this policy.
- Q. However, Baron, you did not do anything to oppose it, is that not correct?
- A. No.
- Q. Baron, is it not a fact, however, that the result of the activities of the Kwantung army, beginning with 1931 and continuing down to and including the China Incident was that the military - although it is condemned by certain government officials of Japan - that the military acted independently without the authority and outside the control of the government, but is it not a fact, however, that the net result of the actions of the military and whatever advantages were obtained thereby, that Japan did accept the fruits as such of the actions of the military?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was not Japan, then, Baron, in this position, for example. One steals from another and then the government said, while I did not participate in the theft, yet since it has been done I will, however, share with you that which was taken? Is that not the result thereof, Baron?
- A. I think this is a very severe condemnation. I think it is too severe and unsparing a condemnation. It is true that the government took advantage of the results of all these operations.
- Q. That will be all for this time. I would like to see you again next Wednesday at 10;00 o'clock.
- A. All right.

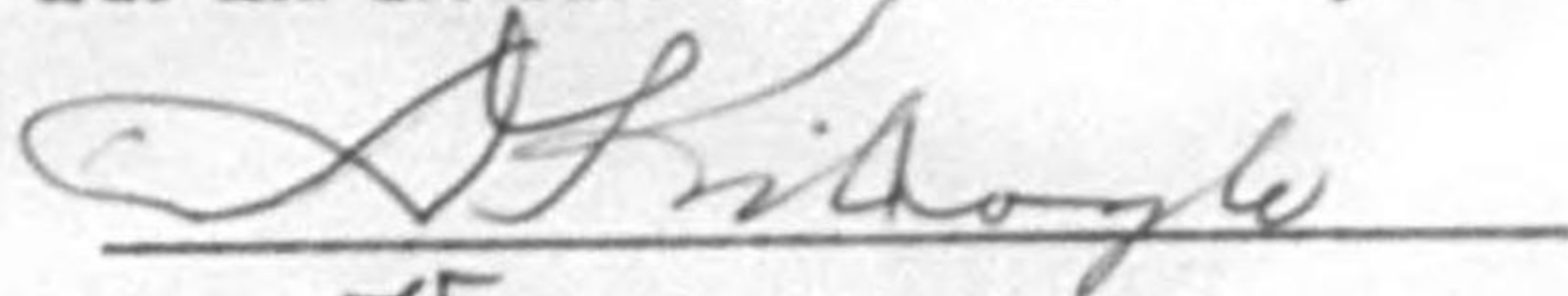
Certificate of Interpreter

I, D. Kildoyle, a civilian, being sworn on oath, state that I truly translated the questions and answers given from English to Japanese and from Japanese to

Interrogation of Kiichiro Hiranuma

1 Feb 1946

English respectively, and that the above transcription of such questions and answers, consisting of ten pages, are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.



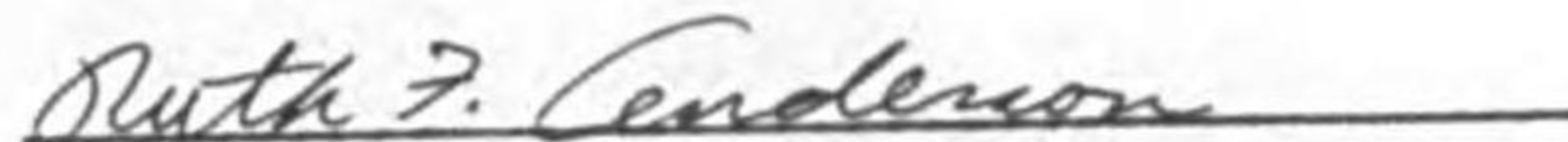
Subscribed and sworn to before me this 5<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1946.



Valentine C. Hammack, Civilian  
Duly Detailed Investigating Officer  
International Prosecution Section, GHQ, SCAP

Certificate of Stenographer

I, Ruth F. Anderson, a civilian, 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.

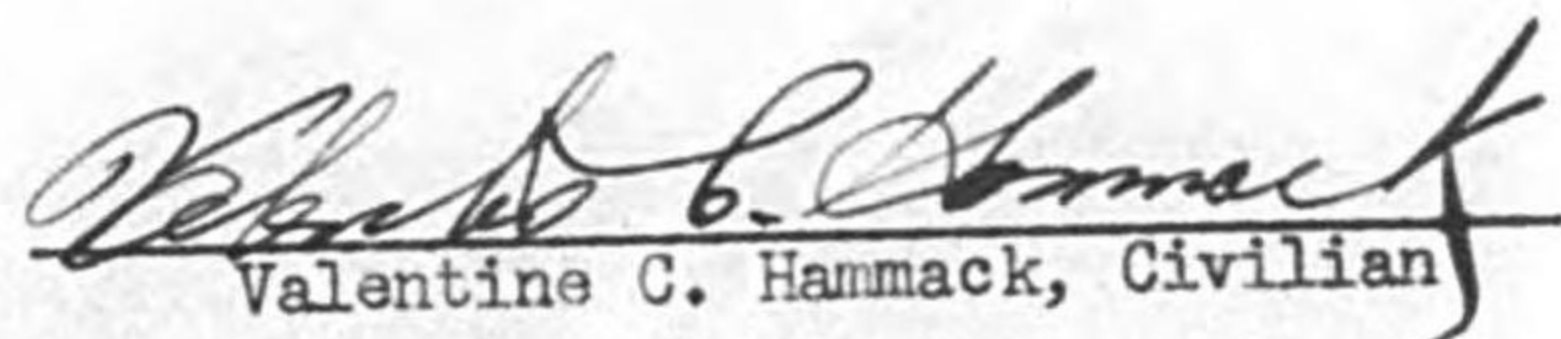


Certificate of Interrogator

I, Valentine C. Hammack, a civilian, certify that on the 1st day of February, 1946, personally appeared before me Kiichiro Hiranuma, and according to D. Kildoyle, Interpreter, gave the foregoing answers to the several questions set forth therein.

Tokyo, Japan

2 February 1946

  
Valentine C. Hammack, Civilian