

R E S T R I C T E D
HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
OIL CHEMICAL AND RUBBER DIVISION
(PACIFIC)
APO 234



INTERROGATION NO. 273

PLACE: Tokyo
DATE: 8 November 1945

Division of Origin: Oil and Chemical

Subject: Control and Allocation of Oil

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

HARA, M., Captain - Navy Supply Bureau, Navy Ministry
TAKAHASHI, T., Major - Military Affairs Bureau, Army Ministry
KIMURA, Hideo - General Mobilization Bureau of Munitions Ministry
DOI, S. - Japanese Interpreter
TANABE, T. :

- 1935: Attached to the Military Academy as a guidance officer to students. (First Lieutenant)
- 1936: Entered Military College
- 1938: Graduated from Military College; promoted to Captain; became staff member of the 17th Division.
- 1939: Member, Preparation Bureau of the Army Ministry.
- 1942: Promoted to Major; became staff member of the 25th Army.
- 1943: Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel; became investigation officer of the Cabinet Planning Board.
- 1943: (November) Appointed Chief of Material Mobilization Division, General Mobilization Bureau of the Munitions Ministry.
- 1945: Investigation Officer of Cabinet Investigation Bureau.

Where interviewed: Room 548, Meiji Building

Interrogator: Lieutenant Commander G. M. Williams

Interpreters: Rie, William, and Yoshihashi, T.

Allied Officers Present: Mr. E. W. Gard

Summary:

The Army and Navy controlled the southern sources of oil, imports from which there amounted from three to five times the local production. The Army and Navy Oil Committee gave the civilians the amount of southern oil necessary with local production to meet essential civilian requirements. The General Mobilization Bureau tried to get as much of the southern oil as it could from the Army and the Navy and controlled the allocation of all oil to civilian uses and gave the Army and the Navy what they required of domestic production. The General Mobilization Bureau and the Cabinet itself did not know in advance the planned imports of the Army and the Navy, but the General Mobilization Bureau knew of the actual shipments arriving in Japan.

R E S T R I C T E D

Interrogation Number 273 - page 2

Comdr. Williams: This meeting was arranged by rear Admiral YAMAMOTO in order to bring together the Army and Navy and civilian people interested in oil so as to determine the influence of each in the allocation of oil during the war.

Mr. Yamamoto is ill and cannot come.

Comdr. Williams: Have these four gentlemen ever met together as a committee to allocate oil?

Captain Hara: Some of them met together, but not all of them.

Comdr. Williams: Which of these four did meet together?

Captain Hara: All the persons interested in oil met together daily, but they were not always the same.

Comdr. Williams: (Addresses several of the Japanese, asking how long they have worked on the committee to allocate oil.) Addressing Mr. KIMURA, he asks: You have worked on this committee from 1942 to 1945, have you not?

Mr. Kimura: Yes

Captain Hara: Since January of 1945.

Major Takahashi: 1941 to 1945.

Comdr. Williams: Kimura and Takahashi met together. Since January, 1945, Takahashi, Hara, and Kimura met together.

Comdr. Williams: When you got together, what was the purpose of your meetings? Explain the procedure. Did anybody sit in on these meetings? Of the fuel department? Let us imagine that you gentlemen are meeting for the allocation of oil for the last quarter of 1944. Who would be chairman of the meeting?

Interpreter: They just met without officially deciding who was the chairman.

Comdr. Williams: Who sat at the head of the table, and kept things moving? (no answer). Think back to that meeting--was Captain Hara there at that time?

Captain Hara: The allocation of oil was not decided at one meeting; it was decided after many meetings.

Comdr. Williams: One was the honorary head at meetings.

Captain Hara: Neither was the honorary head at meetings.

Comdr. Williams: Was Captain Hara present at the meeting when they allocated the oil for the last quarter of 1944?

Interpreter: Yes, he was present.

Comdr. Williams: Now, at this time, when did the allocation-of-oil question first come up for the last quarter of 1944?

Interpreter: About October.

Comdr. Williams: How did it come up in October? Who brought the matter up?

Interpreter: Mr. Kimura

Mr. Kimura: (asked by Comdr. Williams) - What did you say when you brought up the supply of oil for the next quarter?

Mr. Kimura: I obtained the information from the other sources and collected the information and presented it to the meeting.

- R E S T R I C T E D -

R E S T R I C T E D

Interrogation Number 273 - page 3

Comdr. Williams: What sources were they?

Comdr. Willaims (Summary of replies): At this meeting in October, Mr.. Kimura had figures of the Fuel Bureau (saida), indicating what the home production is, the alcohol and the synthetic production for the quarter, which would be from January 1945 to March 1945. As regards the oil which was to be received in Japan from the South Seas, he knew that 330,000 kl would arrive at the port from July 1944 to March 1945.

Interpreter: 330,000 kl was not the expected import; rather the allocation to civilian use.

Comdr. Williams: When and by whom was that allocation made?

Major Takahashi: It was decided after consultation among the Army, Navy, and Munitions Ministry.

Comdr. Williams: Who were the individuals?

Major Takahashi: The allocation was originally made by the committee, Army-Navy, and afterwards 310,000 kl were allocated by the Army and Navy. At the time of the discussion, we expected 750,000 kl to be imported from the South because the shipment of oil had become very difficult. Of 750,000 kl, 330,000 kl was given to civilian use as a minimum amount.

Comdr. Williams: When was the meeting when that allocation was made?

Major Takahashi: June or July, 1944.

Comdr. Williams: That was the meeting of the Army-Navy Oil Committee?

Major Takahashi: Yes.

Comdr. Williams: Were you present? Who else was present?

Major Takahashi: I was present and so was Capt SAKAI who co-operated with me.

Comdr. Williams: Who represented the Navy?

Major Takahashi: Comdr ICHIYOSHI, now at Singapore.

Comdr. Williams: In that meeting, they decided to allocate 310,000 kl of your expected 750,000 kl of imports for the next six months. Mr. Kimura, when did you find out about this allocation of 310,000 kl?

Mr. Kimura: In July.

Comdr. Williams: Who was present when you heard about that?

Mr. Kimura: The Army-Navy joint committee informed me.

Major Takahashi: I telephoned him.

Comdr. Williams: What did you tell him?

Interpreter: He made an approximation based on Army and Navy amounts. Also, the amount of oil necessary for civilian use for the second quarter. If he had received only 310,000 kl, the navigation of all the civilian ships would have been stopped, so he requested more oil.

Comdr. Williams: Mr..Kimura, try to recall what Major Takahashi told you on the telephone--all of it.

273

- 3 -

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

Interrogation Number 273, page 4a

Interpreter: He was only informed about the amount, which came to 300,000 kl. Yes, that is all the conversation.

Comdr. Williams: There must have been more than that.

Mr. Kimura: That's all.

Comdr. Williams: Mr. Kimura, were you curious at that time as to how much the Army and Navy expected to import from the South?

Interpreter: He expected, according to the past imports, 750,000 kl every month for civilian use--that amount had been received before that. When told 300,000 kl he was very surprised. Until that time he was receiving 750,000 kl.

Comdr. Williams: Was he curious as to how much the Army and Navy would import?

Interpreter: Yes, he was very curious.

Comdr. Williams: Now, what did he do about it?

Interpreter: When he was assigned allocation, he knew how much was imported from the South and how much was allocated to civilian use, but the Army and Navy imports he did not know. He did not know because he was not informed.

Comdr. Williams: Mr. Kimura, did you work with or under Mr. Tanabe?

Mr. Kimura: Yes.

Mr. Tanabe: Were you not curious at that time?

Interpreter: He did not attend the Army-Navy Oil Committee when the committee decided the allocation, so he did not know at that time.

Comdr. Williams: Did any member of the General Mobilization Bureau attend at that time?

Interpreter: No officer of the General Mobilization Bureau attended the committee meeting when it decided the allocation.

Comdr. Williams: Captain Hara, did you ever tell any member of the General Mobilization Bureau how much oil the Army and Navy decided to import from July 1944 to March 1945?

Captain Hara: No.

Comdr. Williams: Major Takahashi?

Major Takahashi: No.

Comdr. Williams: At any previous time did you ever tell what the imports were going to be, or any subsequent quarter?

Interpreter: Sometimes yes, sometimes no.

Comdr. Williams: Who - names. (Indicating Capt Hara)?

Interpreter: He was not there.

273

- 4a -

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

Interrogation Number 273 - page 4b

Comdr. Williams: Major Takahashi, did you ever tell what the Army and Navy expected to import to any member of the General Mobilization Bureau?

Major Takahashi: No.

Comdr. Williams: Was there anyone else who might have been told?

Interpreter: Perhaps someone told unofficially, but he does not know who.

Comdr. Williams: (To Capt Hara and Major Takahashi) Why was the figure given for the period July 1944 to March 1945 instead of for the coming quarter as is usually done?

Captain Hara: In July 1944 many tankers were sunk by attack so we could not anticipate how much would be imported from the South. Therefore, the approximate estimate of imported oil was set at 750,000 kl. For civilian use a test of 300,000 kl was to be allocated, if the total amount of 750,000 kl was not imported. It was very difficult to estimate, but 310,000 kl should be allocated to civilian use. We thought this was the last import from the South.

R E S T R I C T E D

Interrogation Number 273 - page 5

Major Takahashi: I showed you a memorandum sheet which was presented to me by Mr. Kimura, and it represented the actual supply for the coming quarter and the allocation to the Army, Navy, and civilians.

Comdr. Williams: Was any other figure than the one appearing on the sheet presented to the General Mobilization Bureau of the Munitions Ministry?

Major Takahashi: That's all.

Comdr. Williams: Was any figure other than that appearing on each of these sheets for imports to the South presented to the Cabinet?

Interpreter: By cabinet what do you mean? Explain. (Explanation made). He is not sure.

Comdr. Williams: Do you know of any other figure that was given to the cabinet? - Did they supply figures to the Cabinet?

Interpreter: The Army and Navy supplied imported oil from the South, and submitted information to the cabinet.

Comdr. Williams: How many times?

Interpreter: One or two. This information was presented daily to the Prime Minister alone; Tojo requested it.

Captain Hara: Same regarding the Navy. He (Hara) was not then in that office but he thinks it was the same.

Comdr. Williams: What is your impression of this situation?

Mr. Tanabe: (Interpreter) He was interested; he was very curious; he did not know about it at all--the figures on the sheet. He knew about how much was allocated to Army, Navy, and civilian use --all except oil.

Comdr. Williams: Mr. Tanabe, was it possible for you to find out what oil shipments arrived from the South?

Mr. Tanabe: I knew each month's imports, but the prospect of the future was in doubt.

Comdr. Williams: You actually knew that each month the Army and Navy imported much more oil than appeared on these sheets we have been talking about.

Mr. Tanabe: I do not understand.

Comdr. Williams: After you examined the total amt. of oil imported into Japan each month, did you find that that total exceeded the amount quoted to you by the Army and Navy and appearing on these allocation charts?

Mr. Tanabe: Yes

Comdr. Williams: When you checked the shipping figures in, were you able to find this much was imported?

Mr. Kimura: I cannot tell.

Comdr. Williams: The chart was made with the idea of the total imports in mind; however, Mr. Kimura did not know about it.

Comdr. Williams: Major Takahashi, as I understand your explanation of this chart is to the effect that while the Army and Navy only reported a figure of approximately one fifth of their imports, likewise their request amounted to only one fifth of their needs. While you reported only one third, your requests were also only a part of your requirements. Is it correct?

273

- 3 -

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

Interrogation Number 273 - page 6

Major Takahashi: Yes.

Comdr. Williams: The Army and Navy took their cut, then gave some to the Munitions, then they obtained a further cut out of the remainder. The Army and Navy made their first allotment so as not to let anyone else know so as to keep secret the movements of their ships. Mr. Tanabe, by checking the shipping received, were you able to find out how much the Army and Navy received.

Mr. Tanabe: I was able to find out how much was imported - roughly.

Comdr. Williams: Were you able to find out that they imported 1,500,000 K. L. during 1944?

Mr. Tanabe: I went to the Army and Navy to find out, and later found that figure.

Comdr. Williams: Mr. Tanabe, did you ever receive from Major Takahashi a report of the actual amount of oil received each month?

Mr. Tanabe: The Fuel Bureau received a report each month. I received a report when I attended the committee meeting.

Comdr. Williams: Did the Fuel Bureau know in advance the amount expected to be imported?

Major Takahashi: The Fuel Bureau also did not know in advance--No.

Comdr. Williams: Did you tell anyone in the Bureau? No. Do you know of anyone else who did? No.

Comdr. Williams: Mr. Tanabe, did you have any notification when the tankers arrived in Japan, stating how much oil it had, and to whom it was assigned?

Comdr. Williams: Mr. Tanabe, did you know how much oil was on board and to whom it was allocated.

Mr. Tanabe: Yes, when the tankers came in this committee had information and reported how much was loading and to be distributed.

Comdr. Williams: How long after the tanker arrived was that?

Mr. Tanabe: Before the tanker came in they had a meeting about the allocation.

Comdr. Williams: How long before the tanker came in, and by what means, were they informed?

Mr. Tanabe: By telegram.

Comdr. Williams: Did you have anything to say about the allocation?

Mr. Tanabe: Yes, I had much to say.

Comdr. Williams: And what did he have to say? Did he control where the allocation went?

Mr. Tanabe: I fought for the civilian portion of the allocation, but my opinion did not always prevail.

Comdr. Williams: Do you feel that the General Mobilization Bureau of the Munitions Ministry controlled the allocation of oil during the war?

Mr. Tanabe: The General Mobilization Bureau had control only over the civilian oil allocated, and the Army and Navy made their allocation before the General Mobilization Bureau had anything to say about the matter.

R E S T R I C T E D

Interrogation Number 273 - page 7

Comdr. Williams: Captain Hara, who do you think controlled the allocation of oil?

Captain Hara: The Army and Navy oil committee first decided how much was needed for civilian use, and then took everything else.

Comdr. Williams: Major Takahashi, that means you are the man who controlled oil!

Major Takahashi: Prior to the war, the war contractors and Industry Ministry controlled the allocation of oil. After the outbreak of war only the Army and Navy had stock piles of oil and so began to allocate oil, thereby establishing precedence, and the control gradually moved into Army and Navy hands.

Comdr. Williams: How did they determine what the amount of oil was that the civilian needs required?

Major Takahashi: With the past records and with the aid of the Munitions Ministry.

Comdr. Williams: That closes our meeting.