

STATEMENT

Shigemitsu



I, Howell Arthur Gwynne of Mawbyns, Little Easton, Dunmow, in the County of Essex, England make this present affidavit concerning Mr. Shigemitsu, now standing his trial in Tokyo. I understand that he is charged with aiding and abetting the war party in their efforts to enlarge the area of warfare.

I was Editor of the Morning Post from 1911 to 1937 and my relations with the Japanese Embassy have always been cordial, dating as they do from the first war when Japan was fighting on the side of the allies. The incidents at Tientsin and the invasion of China were the subjects of conversation with Mr. Yoshida, recently Premier of Japan, and Mr. Shigemitsu, who succeeded him as Ambassador to London. Somewhat to my surprise, both these gentlemen expressed strong opposition to the China Invasion. They clearly expressed disapproval of the venture and equally clearly expressed their strong opposition to the War Party in Japan. Gradually, Mr. Shigemitsu gave me his confidence and suggested that I might publish occasional leading articles pointing out that the War Party was losing for Japan friendly feeling which dated from 1914-18 War. He said that from his experiences in Moscow and his contacts with Japanese diplomatists in Europe, he was convinced that Hitler at the first serious check sustained by the German Army would be swept away by the General Staff. He then went

Def. Doc. # 1983

on to express his fears lest the War Party might lose their heads and allow themselves to be infected with the world-domination germ which had already contaminated Germany. He expressed strong opposition to widening the area of hostilities and indicated that he consistently opposed the War Party in Tokyo and was doing all in his power to prevent them from further aggression.

It is well to bear in mind that these conversations covered a period of two years and I think that I might truly say that he gave me his full confidence as far as it was consistent with his duties as Ambassador. In his talks with me, he indicated that he attached more weight to the leading articles which I occasionally published than I did. He said that he believed they would appeal to the moderate men in Tokyo and enable them to put up a fight against the war mongers. I know that extracts from these articles were cabled to Tokyo and appeared in some of the Japanese press, but I confess that I saw little sign of a favourable reaction. As I have said, Mr. Shigemitsu indicated in his conversations with me that he was firmly convinced that Hitler was not going to last. His conversations indicated that he was very well informed about the German attempts to induce Japan to join in the war on her side. To this he expressed consistent opposition and opposition to every suggestion of an extension

Def. Doc. # 1983

of the war. In all my conversations, I never once found him wavering from this opinion, nor did I, throughout these conversations extending over a period of two years, recollect any statements which would cause me to doubt his good faith.

I beg to say that it has turned out that he and those of his way of thinking were right though they were unfortunately unable to avert the ruin and desolation which have stricken Japan.

Signed and sworn to by me on 17 day of July 1947,

(Signed) H. A. Gwynne

in the presence of

(Signed) Y. Floyd
Commissioner for Oaths