

No. 3128

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ET AL

vs.

ARAKI, SADAQ, ET AL

Affidavit of

ADMIRAL YONAI, Mitsumasa

I was a member of various Japanese Governments over a period of years and since 1937 I held the following positions:

1. Navy Minister for the Cabinets of HAYASHI, KONOE (1st Cabinet), HIRANUMA and SUZUKI.
2. Prime Minister from January 16, 1940, to July 21, 1940.

When the Incident of the Marco Polo Bridge broke out on July 7, 1937, I was the Navy Minister in the 1st Konoé Cabinet. Just at this time General Hata was the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Forces on the Island of Formosa (Taiwan) and it is needless to say that neither the forces in Formosa, nor General Hata had any connection whatsoever with this Incident either in its beginning or later. It was not until February 1938 that General Hata first went to China, when he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Forces in Central China.

During the period from January 16, 1940, to July 21, 1940, when I was the Prime Minister, General Hata Shunroku was the War Minister at the time. With respect to the Tri-Partite Pact with the Axis countries, my Cabinet was completely opposed to it and for this reason this question did not even once come up in our Cabinet conferences.

It appeared that there was an atmosphere and a feeling in army circles to make good use of Germany in settling the China Incident, but in my Cabinet, no attention was paid to this at all. The Cabinet was simply disregarding such a possibility.

Coming to this question and to General Hata who was my War Minister, he earnestly cooperated with my Cabinet's policy and, of course, naturally was opposed to the Pact. And so, as my Cabinet opposed and excluded such a pact with Germany and also because it was not pro-German, a desire to overthrow my Cabinet came into being.

Those who opposed my Cabinet were endeavoring to kill two birds with one stone; that is, to have General Hata, who was opposed to the Tri-Partite Pact, resign from the government and simultaneously to overthrow the Cabinet. Eventually, their plan was carried out and their objective was obtained - two birds killed with one stone. When General Hata resigned, I believed and felt that his resignation was not of his own free will but that he was forced to resign by elements he was powerless to fight and today I am more convinced than ever that my beliefs then were correct.

I asked Hata to recommend someone to be the next War Minister. Hata immediately went out saying that the successor would be decided in the Three Chief's Conference. This Conference was composed of the Chief of Staff, the Inspector General of Military Education, and the War Minister. It was their duty to name the new War Minister. He returned in the evening looking very worried and said there was no man who would be the successor to the post. His face looked very pensive because he was conscious that this lack of the successor would become the cause of the fall of the Cabinet - consequently he

himself would be the cause. I read this feeling in his face, and after the general resignation of the Cabinet, called Hata to my room and said, as nearly as I can remember: "I can understand your situation - you have suffered very much. As for me, however, I do not blame you at all. I understand. Take it easy and do not worry." I shook his hand and Hata smiled a sad smile - a smile of resignation, peculiar to a Japanese. His situation was indeed a pitiful one.

General Hata, as far as I know, never was a member of any clique, association, brotherhood, society or other jingoistic or ultra-militaristic group either in the army or in politics. In fact, Hata at all times severely avoided politics. He was first and last a soldier, a conservative soldier, and diligently devoted himself to his duty always in accordance with army regulations, never according to political considerations.

OATH

In accordance with my conscience, I swear to tell the whole truth withholding nothing and adding nothing.

YONAI, Mitsumasa (Seal)

On this 7 day of August, 1947, at Tokyo

Deponent: YONAI, Mitsumasa (Seal)

I, IMANARI, Taitaro, hereby certify that the above statement was sworn to by the Deponent, who affixed his signature and seal thereto in the presence of this Witness.

On the same date,
at Tokyo

Witness: IMANARI, Taitaro (Seal)