

Interr. of OTT, Eugene (28 Feb. 1946)

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INTERROGATION OF

Major General Eugene Ott

Date and Time : 28 February 1946, 1400-1600 hours.

Place : Room 748, Meiji Building, Tokyo, Japan.

Present : Major General Ott
Mr. Worth E. McKinney, Interrogator
Miss Gizella Koncz, Stenographer

Questions by : Mr. McKinney

Q. General, some time ago, at my request, you handed me, I believe, fourteen names that you considered had a great deal to do with the policies of Japan in their program of expansion in Greater East Asia. I want to ask you concerning several of these men. In picking these names, you picked them from your experience that you had had here in Japan as military attache and as ambassador?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, these names that you gave me, had you had any personal contact with these different men?

A. I know them all personally.

Q. All personally. I believe I will ask you about ARAKI, Sadao. He is a General. I believe he was War Minister from 1931 to 1933. I believe this is at the time of the Mukden incident?

A. The Manchurian Incident in China.

Q. Do you know anything about, either by conversation or by any means, what his views were on the Mukden Incident and the Manchurian Incident?

A. I just consider it. I don't think we have spoken together about one of those incidents. But you could perhaps conclude his opinion about the Mukden Incident that he was very strong opponent to Bolshevistic ideas; and he may have looked upon the capture of Manchuria as a kind of defense wall against Bolshevistic infiltration. In that time when he was War

Evid. Doc. #
4185
~~361~~

(Ott, Eugene, 28 Feb, Cont'd)

Minister, I had only once a very snort formal visit, when I was presented to him as a German officer attached to the Japanese army. I was at that time Lt. Col. and not in the rank to be received for bigger exchange of ideas by the War Minister.

- Q. Did you talk to him on this visit about the war in China?
- A. No.
- Q. That wasn't mentioned? The war in China?
- A. Wasn't yet going on.
- Q. I mean the Mukden Incident.
- A. It hadn't happened.
- Q. Do you know from either reading a statement he made in the newspaper or from any method how he considered the capture of Manchuria? Was he in favor of it?
- A. I don't believe that I have seen declarations of him in this concern. But, as I told you, I think that by his general opinion very contrary to the Bolshevistic ideas, he considered the capture of Manchuria in a favorable light.
- Q. What do you base your idea on that he was in favor of capturing Manchuria?
- A. I think it right. Looking back, because later on when he was retired--it was about 1937 and 1938, maybe--I had several talks with him in a private capacity and he always was a very strong opponent of any policy of reproachment with Soviet Russia. So, for me he had been characteristic as a strong opponent of Bolshevism and this is why I think that the Manchurian Incident in his consequence was as a kind of Defense against Soviet Russia. Must have had his consent.
- Q. Do you think that he was in favor of going into China and taking the territory? You think he was in favor of the taking of Manchuko?
- A. Of Manchuko, I think so.

(OIT, Eugene, 28 Feb, Cont'd)

- Q. You think he was in favor of taking it as a guard against Bolshevism from Russia?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Then, you think that his idea was to take over the territory for the protection against Bolshevism?
- A. As a protecting territory against Bolshevism.
- Q. Did he tell you that in any conversation that you had with him?
- A. He didn't express it.
- Q. What did he say that would lead you to believe that he was in favor of taking over Manchuria?
- A. About this fact, I think, we had no conversation, but we had, I remember, two conversations with him about his anti-Bolshevistic tendency. The first one, when a German newspaper man, who is an expert of Soviet Russia, passed through Tokyo. Maybe in 1935, I am not quite sure, and his name I try to remember, maybe, until tomorrow. This newspaper man reported about his exact experiences of the Soviet building up of the State, and ARAKI made many remarks showing him as a strong anti-Bolshevist. Second time, we had, I think, a theoretical talk about a reproachment between Germany and Soviet Russia--a theoretical talk and I remember he was very strongly warning against such a policy owing to the very dangerous influences from Bolshevistic ideas upon our own interior policy.
- Q. Now, General, here ARAKI was War Minister, and the army that he was over, invaded China and took over Manchuria. Didn't he mention at any time about the army being in China?
- A. The army was in Manchuria.
- Q. Well, Manchuria. What I want to know--you say he was an important man about the Manchurian affair--I want to know why you think he was important; how you formed your opinion?
- A. Because as a War Minister and remaining the War Minister for

(OTT, Eugene, 28 Feb, Cont'd)

two years during the whole time--from the beginning to the end of the Manchurian affair, he must have been a man who agreed with these events.

- Q. Then you think he approved the action of the Japanese army of capturing Manchuria?
- A. By the fact of his being War Minister and remaining on his place during the whole time.
- Q. Can you recall any incident where he made some expression, either at this time, or later, about his views concerning what happened in Manchuria?
- A. During his time as War Minister, I had no occasion to have talks with him except my formal presentation. Later on, I think we had not spoken about this question more.
- Q. Well, did you ever talk to him about the Japanese policy in Greater Asia, was that ever discussed?
- A. As far as I remember, our questions--which I have just in my view--were nearly only centered around Russian theoretical questions.
- Q. Well now, do you know of anybody that ARAKI may have talked to concerning the activities of the army in Manchuria and China? Who could probably tell me what his views were?
- A. Yes, it was a special difficulty to find a suitable interpreter for his talking because he spoke a quite outstanding Japanese language. So I eventually found as interpreter the elder General Kawabe, and he made the interpretation obviously rather painful. It was difficult for him to interpret. But he was, I think, one of the few men who could understand him. So probably he had been in other respects, in a more close contact with him.
- Q. Do you know where he lives?
- A. His last position I knew had been Commander-in-Chief in the Burma campaign. If he is still living, I don't know. Maybe his younger brother--

(OTT, Eugene, 28 Feb, Cont'd)

Q. What is his younger brother's name?

A. Kawabe too. This younger brother had been sent by the Japanese government to Manila as a first representative bringing, taking, accepting the surrender terms by General MacArthur. I think he may still be here.

Q. Was one of these two brother an interpreter for him during the time he was War Minister in 1931?

A. Only I asked him to interpret for me because he understood him so well, and this understanding was so difficult. I think it has been because they had more and personal relations to him. So they may be people of his close relationships and able to give you views about his politics.

Q. Do you know whether ARAKI made any speeches over the radio or any public speeches?

A. I think the main thing he published or made in publicity was a book "Japan's Mission in Showa."

Q. He is author of that book?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you read the book?

A. I didn't read it. I was informed about it later on.

Q. Do you know about what year that book was published?

A. No.

Q. Well, give us some idea--was it after 1931?

A. Yes.

Q. About when would you think? your best opinion?

A. Probably, I think it was published in--maybe--in 1936 or 1937, when he was retired. But sure you can get it. I don't know if it has a translation. This is the difficulty for those books.

(OTT, Eugene, 28 Feb Cont'd)

- Q. Then, after ne was War Minister, I believe you told me he retired?
- A. He retired due to illness because he didn't feel himself able to report the budget of the army in the Diet--in the Parliament--this is always a difficult task--very tiring.
- Q. Then, I believe you stated in 1938 to 1939 he was the Education Minister?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Under Konoye. Do you know why he was appointed to this Cabinet?
- A. I think he was promoted to this place because at that time the army began to influence more the education of the young people and so they were anxious to have on this place of Education Minister, a man of their own creed.
- Q. Then you would say that even in 1938 when he was in the Cabinet, he was still in favor of the army's policies?
- A. I think so.
- Q. Well, now, did you ever hear anybody say that he was in favor of the army's policies in Manchuria and China?
- A. No, about this question, I am sorry, we had no talk.
- Q. Well, did anybody else tell you about what ARAKI'S views were? Did you talk to anybody? Did you discuss it with anyone?
- A. At that time he was, in this respect, out of my interest in 1938 as Education Minister. So I met him several times in Youth Rallies and so on, where he talked in a way of admonishing the youth to be national minded and devoted to Japanese Nationalistic policies, but in a more general way.
- Q. Well now, in these talks that he made with you, didn't he say something about what the armies had done in Manchuria and China? What they intended to do?
- A. I can't remember it. His main characteristic was--aside of this anti-Boshevistic tendencies, is a leadership of the younger officers

(OTT, Eugene, 28 Feb Cont'd)

and youth of Japan to the so-called Bushido--that means correctly translated "The way of the Knight." That means the spirit of the old Japanese Samurai, of the old Japanese noble man fighting for his superior and devoting himself to a very simple life for the benefit of the nation and the Tenno.

Q. Well now, General, you mean that in all these speeches and teachings that he never mentioned what the army had been doing in Manchuria or in China?

A. Probably he mentioned it but I personally can't remember that I had heard such a speech. He made many speeches, of course, in his capacity as War Minister and Education Minister, but in the inner circles where no military attache was present.

Q. You never had any translation of his speeches or utterances he made?

A. No.

Q. Well, do you know of anyone that has?

A. May I just have the yearbook? You have a list attached to your notes. The Vice-chief of the general staff during the main developments of the Manchurian incident was General Mazaki. If ARAKI made speeches about the Manchurian incident it may be that in the documents of the Vice-chief of the general staff you could find it. Perhaps you could try it. I personally don't remember having heard personally, or having heard about it.

Q. Now, I believe, ARAKI was a member of the Hiranuma Cabinet. Was he Educational Minister too?

A. Education Minister.

Q. Carried over into that cabinet?

A. Yes, his leadership for Bushido gave him a very important role behind the screen of the Japanese Army's revolution on the 26th of February 1936. It was generally supposed that this revolution had been the consequences of his exciting the younger officers to a new kind of revolutionary spirit; and that those young officers

(OTT, Eugene, 28 Feb Cont'd)

made only the first step of revolution--that means, abolish the former circles around the Emperor. They couldn't make a second step--that means, the building up of a program because ARAKI didn't appear as the leader he ought to do after having excited these people and then let them become guilty. This event damaged for some time his personal prestige and you see that it took four years until 1938 until he again appeared in a public big position as Education Minister. And for us this role of ARAKI as a kind of leader of a new spirit in the young people was the main thing we always had in mind more than his role for Manchuria, and as Education Minister.

- Q. You think that he was responsible for inspiring the younger officers in carrying on the policy that the army had set out in Japan and Manchuria and China?
- A. Maybe.
- Q. Well--
- A. (Interrupting) I may say not in the direct lines of this policy, but in the spirit.
- Q. What do you mean by the spirit?
- A. This inter-relation to increased activity. The younger officers became activists by his influence to go ahead and attack the existing conditions interiorally and maybe abroad too.
- Q. Didn't the younger officers, didn't they plan and execute along with the aid of others, the war of aggression and expansion in Manchuria and China and on down to Singapore and right on?
- A. Probably the main driving power had been this so-called Gumbu. That means the activist group of younger officers of the army and navy composed chiefly of captains to Lt. Colonels and Colonels. A kind of anonymous group.
- Q. Well now, General, do you think that ARAKI was in sympathy with what they were doing and aided them?
- A. Yes.

(OTT, Eugene, 26 Feb Cont'd)

- Q. Do you?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Well now, if you think that, what do you base your estimation on; what evidence do you have that he did do it?
- A. I beg your pardon?
- Q. What information or evidence do you have knowledge of that he did do this? That is what I am wanting to get. What I am driving at is this: You say that he was in sympathy with them and aided them. I want to know what you know that he did do to assist them?
- A. He had been generally considered as the man of the Busnido spirit of the young army and many times you could hear that ARAKI is a kind of idol of the young officers as the leader of this new activistic movement.
- Q. Where did you hear that? From talking to people?
- A. From talking to young officers and talking to political people. But, he has not been sent to trial after the February incident, only Mazaki, so it could be proved that they couldn't find evidence against him but it was considered everywhere that the real responsible man had been ARAKI, without having a complete evidence.
- Q. Then you say that through talking to the young officers, politicians, and different people that they all expressed the opinion that he was the man that was responsible for the February out-break and also for the advancement of the Japanese army in Manchuria and China-- that he encouraged that?
- A. The last two things had not been mentioned in this way, but for the February incident. But I once more would like to stress that he had not been sent to trial.
- Q. I want to ask you about KOISO, Kuniaki; did you know him personally?
- A. Yes, I met him for the first time when he was Chief of the General Staff of the Japanese forces in Manchuria in 1933.

(UIT, Eugene, 20 Feb Cont'd)

Q. Did you talk to him about the activities of the Japanese army in Manchuria?

A. He had a short talk with me, welcoming me as being sent to Manchuria for a visit. I had an idea by his talk that he was very fond of the success of the Japanese army and he invited me to join a reconnaissance flight of his first staff officer of the Kwantung army into the new conquered province of Jehol to give me a chance; first, of an intimate contact for some days with an intelligent experienced member of his staff; and secondly to join this flight over unknown territory.

Q. Well now, did he discuss with you why they were taking over this territory?

A. KOISO, in his talk, not. But his staff officer explained to me in long talks we had during the three-day flight his idea of having a territory of raw materials and a territory for immigration of the surplus of their people and mainly having a model state of planned economic establishment which would include the interest and maybe even the adherence of the neighboring provinces.

Q. Who did he say formed this plan to set up this state and to expand and have the economic and raw materials and the place for the Japanese to immigrate to? Who formed that plan?

A. About the originator he didn't speak but it seemed to me at that time that KOISO, himself, had probably a leading role in it, especially in the question of a state-controlled economy.

Q. Well now, this young officer--what was his name?

A. I try to find it out. It may be Fugimura--it may be.

Q. Even though he didn't tell you who formed the plan, he did tell you that there was such a plan in existence?

A. Yes.

Q. And that plan was for the Japanese army to take over this new territory for raw materials and a place for the Japanese to immigrate to?

A. And as a model state for planned economy; and I heard later on

(OTT, Eugene, 28 Feb Cont'd)

I don't know on which occasions, several times, that KOISO, himself, had been considered as a kind of initiator of this first Japanese experiment of a state-controlled economy.

Q. That is, in Manchuria?

A. In Manchuria.

Q. Where did you hear that, General?

A. I think here in some talks with industrial people, I can't remember.

Q. You can't give me the names of who talked to you?

A. It was during the time--sometimes it had been mentioned to me, but I can't give the names.

Q. Do you remember whether it was industrialists or politicians or army men?

A. I think it was industrial people, which were to a certain extent, sorry about this experiments because it was against private enterprise.

Q. Can't you tell me what industrialists they were? What type of business they were in?

A. I think he tried to have a very strong army or government influence upon the South Manchurian Railway which had been before the Manchurian incident a company completely dominating the economical life of Manchuria.

Q. My question is this: From what individuals or what company you gained the information that ARAKI was the initiator of the plan?

A. This, I don't know.

Q. That was my question.

A. I don't know. I met KOISO a second time as Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese forces in Korea in the winter of 1935. At that time he was very much interested to hear from me my personal opinions and experiences about the development of the military

(OTT, Eugene, 28 Feb Cont'd)

system and defense in Manchukuo. It was mainly pure military interest. I had a long talk with him in his residence in Keijo in Korea.

Q. Well, did he discuss with you at that time the developments that the Japanese army had made, the advances they made in Manchukuo and different places?

A. He asked my opinion and my experiences. I had the idea that it was his old interest of the former chief-of-staff having been away from this development and hearing a foreign military attache's opinion about his former "child"--if I may say so.

Q. Did he tell you why the Japanese army was advancing and taking over new territory?

A. It was not made at that time. It was only established.

Q. That was just Manchukuo?

A. Since the first time there were no expansion more. It was only the establishment of the whole system in the same territory.

Q. The same territory? That was prior to the other advancements that they made?

A. To the Chinese? It had nothing to do with China.

Q. Did he discuss with you at that time any plan that they had to take over more territory?

A. Nothing. So, in my note, I mentioned him as probably a man of experience in the question of state-controlled economy, out of my personal experience.

Q. Then you think that KOISO was one of the main leaders in the Japanese army taking over Manchuria?

A. Yes, as I believe I have heard so that he had been the commander of one of the main fighting forces and owing to his personal attitude he became chief of the general staff. So he must have been a leading man in the Manchurian incident.

Q. I see. Next, I want to ask you about ITAGAKI, Seishiro. Did you know him?

(UFI, Eugene, 28 Feb Cont'd)

- A. I know him.
- Q. When did you get acquainted with him?
- A. I met him for the first time as Chief of the General Staff of the Kwantung Army.
- Q. What time was that?
- A. In the winter of 1935 to 1936.
- Q. Did you talk to him at that time?
- A. I had a chance in this winter to make an interesting reconnoitering flight on the Russian border south of Harbin and alongside the Sungari River in the strongest winter time. I had asked for this flight in order to win personally an experience about the fighting conditions in Manchuria in winter time which lasts for about six months and coming back from this flight I suggested to ITAGAKI to make a kind of speech to his staff about my experiences in order to stop a little the growing activity among that army which I felt during my trip for some conflict with Russia.
- Q. Let me ask you now--to interrupt you there--what did you feel about the army? What did you notice about the army there?
- A. I noticed in the army a certain activity and a certain tension to have, or to like a conflict with Russia on the border line. It was a kind of strong tension. So, I had the idea it would be useful to stop, as I could do it, this tension to a certain extent because I considered it would be a very bad thing to have a conflict with Russia because the Japanese army seemed to be not to be able to go to war. So ITAGAKI asked me to make this speech and seemed to be very satisfied with the tendency of my speech. "Stop your activity and improve your conditions first."
- Q. What did ITAGAKI say in regard to the activities of the Japanese army up to that time in Manchuria, in China and these places?
- A. He mainly asked my experiences about my trip and discussed my opinion about the necessity of consolidating the defense system.
- Q. What did you mean by "defense system?"
- A. Defense system? I found on several places I considered the system as a whole not very effective owing to many military

(OTT, Eugene, 20 Feb Cont'd)

details, for instance--

Q. I don't believe you understood my question. Why was it necessary for defense and defense against what?

A. Border defense against Russia. I mean the defense system--every country has their permanent defense system--it wasn't especially necessary-----

Q. Were they expecting Russia to attack?

A. They didn't say, but every country had to build up a permanent defense system.

Q. What was said about the defense they were using in China and Manchuria at that time?

A. Beg your pardon?

Q. Did you discuss the defense of Manchuria?

A. Manchuria only. Because my trip was limited to a part of Manchuria.

Q. I see.

A. In a purely military way this discussion. Later on, I met ITAGAKI a second time as a War Minister when I came back from Berlin in 1938 to begin my Ambassadorship in Tokyo. Then I asked him about his opinion of the development of the China conflict at that time; because, as I mentioned on another occasion, I tried to stop the danger of a German-English conflict in that time. So when I heard from him that the Japanese army has developed in the meantime during my absence a fighting of life and death in China, I reported to my government that at the present time the Japanese are unable to do anything else than to occupy themselves with their fighting in China.

Q. Now, what did ITAGAKI say about their advances there? Did he talk to you about what was happening there?

A. He gave me only a common general aspect that in the meantime

(OTT, Eugene, 20 Feb Cont'd)

they had advanced further on. At present time I don't know the names of the places.

Q. Why did he say they had advanced? For what reason?

A. In order to accomplish the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek.

Q. Did he tell you that was the aim--to defeat Chiang Kai-shek?

A. To win the war.

Q. To win the war?

A. This war had in the meantime developed to a fighting of death and life.

Q. Did he say that he was in favor of the Japanese going ahead and winning the war against China? What was his attitude?

A. He was War Minister,-----

Q. I know that. What did he say?

A. He was War Minister, so of course he told me, "Now we are fighting for death and life. We have to win this war in a complete engagement of our forces."

Q. Then he told you that the Japanese intended to use all their resources and power to win the war?

A. Yes.

Q. And that he was in favor of them going ahead?

A. Probably.

Q. Did he say that?

A. He didn't tell this exactly.

Q. From what he said to you?

A. I had to conclude it.

(OTT, Eugene, 28 Feb Cont'd)

Q. Yes. Well, did you say anything to him about stopping the war in China?

A. This I couldn't say, no.

Q. You didn't?

A. No. May I add? My main interest at that time was to hear and report to Germany that Japan wasn't able to go on any other adventure against another country; she is limited to her aims or purposes.

Q. Did he tell you at that time what the aims of Japan were?

A. Only winning this Chinese war.

Q. Chinese war? He didn't mention going to Singapore?

A. No, no, nothing. A third role of ITAGAKI, which I didn't talk over with him, personally, was his influence upon the negotiations of a military alliance between Germany, Japan and Italy in 1939. I think he was War Minister at that time. These negotiations eventually failed. After my impression, the army was to a certain extent and probably ITAGAKI personally, in favor of such an alliance, but eventually followed the idea of the navy. It would be not possible for them to engage in an alliance without obligation to act automatically in case of a conflict because they were not advanced enough in the building up of their fighting forces. But I had no personal talk with ITAGAKI about those questions. It is my impression. He retired when the Hiranuma cabinet retired owing to the conclusion of the German-Russo treaty. Generally spoken, ITAGAKI belongs to the most intelligent and able leading army men of Japan.

Q. Then you think he had strong influence with the army, and with the cabinets, and the politicians of Japan?

A. I am not quite sure. He may be too limited in his profession as a soldier. May be.

Q. I want to ask you about MINAMI, Jiro. Did you know him? I believe he was War Minister in 1931 when the Manchurian incident occurred.

(OTT, Eugene, 28 Feb Cont'd)

- A. Only in the beginning I think. At that time I didn't know him. I wasn't in Japan. I knew him first as Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese army in Manchuria, I think in 1935.
- Q. From what you know of him--
- A. (Interrupting) No, in--was it 1935?
- Q. Yes, it was in 1935--1934 and 1935. What kind of a man was he, General, in your opinion?
- A. I think a little busybody man. A man of a certain activity to get political positions. Sometimes, when a cabinet crisis occurred he always appeared in the capitol obviously to present himself for a position, but he never succeeded in this respect. In his capacity as Commander-in-Chief in Manchuria, I have only purely formal talks with him.
- Q. From the talks you had with him, was he in favor of Japan's policy of aggression in Manchukuo and in China?
- A. At that time when he was Commander-in-Chief, the aggression in Manchukuo was finished, so he talked about his work in building up Manchukuo.
- Q. Did he say they had a plan to build up Manchukuo?
- A. I don't think that I spoke with him exactly about special plans.
- Q. What did he tell you?
- A. It was somewhat formal talk without especial interest. Later on I met him as Governor-General of Korea. And on that occasion--this was in 1939, he invited me for a long talk and spoke about the industrial development of Korea as a kind of industrial supply center for Japan and how he tried to develop the mining business, the water supply for electrical purposes, the agriculture and presented to me in the evening a very impressive movie about the work of establishing industrial development in Korea. He, himself, appeared in this movie several times as a working man among the people with a certain ambition. He seemed at that time to be a good pioneer of Japanese commercial and industrial interests in Korea, which I think during the war played a rather important role. This is probably, to a certain extent, due to the ability and energy of MINAMI as Governor-General. After his retirement

(GIT, Eugene, 28 Feb Cont'd)

as Governor-General I invited him sometimes to the German Embassy in Tokyo out of our respect and gratefulness because he treated the small German people in Korea with peculiar kindness, especially our Catholic missions. We had a very well-equipped Catholic Benedictine Mission, a kind of model mission for the Far East. The honorable Bishop was a friend of MINAMI, and this was the main reason, as Ambassador to pay my respect and thankfulness.

Q. On these visits to the Embassy, did you discuss the position of Japan in Manchukuo and China? What did he say about that?

A. In 1939 he spoke, if he came to me--he spoke mainly--it was later on-----

Q. Any time.

A. He spoke mainly about his work in Korea and sometimes about his idea that Korea has two qualities. The one quality, as a supply center for Japan and the other as a reserve territory for Manchuria and China.

Q. Then, his idea was that Japan could use the raw materials and develop it?

A. Yes.

Q. And also that Japan could use it for immigration purposes for the Japanese people?

A. And that they could as a reserve territory. That means to supply the troops there in China from the side of Korea as a recruit depot. It was nearly all we talked about. He may be of value for you if you are interested in certain questions of the economical development of Korea. He is an expert about those things.

Q. The next one is MAZAKI, Jinzaburo. When did you get acquainted with him? He was in 1932 to 1933 Vice-chief of the General Staff during the main developments of the Manchurian campaign.

A. I didn't meet him in official positions because when I met him, he was already retired.

Q. Did you discuss with him, or hear him discuss, the Japanese occupation of Manchukuo or China?

(OTT, Eugene, 28 Feb Cont'd)

A. I met him only two or three times very shortly without talking any special question with him. I mentioned him here in these notes as the man who had been sent for trial as responsible for the February incident and later on he had been acquitted. But the public opinion had been that he had been, after ARAKI, probably the second man responsible for the exciting of the young officers to act in such a way. This is the only reason why I mentioned him here.

Q. You don't know his views then on the occupation of Manchuria?

A. I don't know, but probably he had been always considered as a very fanatical extremist. He was considered as such. I personally didn't hear a word about the things on his side. I can only give the public opinion.

Q. How did you hear that? From the general public or from what class?

A. From general officers, from politicians, from industrialists, from the low people which all spoke about MAZAKI as the man who is now on trial for this terrible event and people thought it would be the right man for the trial.

Q. And the general opinion was that the reason this February incident happened was because the cabinet didn't go along with the army on the China incidence?

A. No. It had been one reason but the public opinion had been that it was the outbursts of dissatisfaction of the younger officers with the social conditions and the lack of energy from the side of the men around the Emperor to find a remedy for those interior distresses. I believe this interior reason had been, but the people considered in the first place as the main reason for the incident .

Q. Next one I want to ask you about is HATA, Shunroku. What do you know about him?

A. I met him in his time as War Minister. I think in informal occasions so I had no chance to have talks about detailed questions with him. I had the experience that he was called to the War Minister place in a time when the Japanese politics became more moderate after the Hiranuma cabinet. I think he became war minister in the Yonai and Abe cabinets. Those

(OTT, Eugene, 20 Feb Cont'd)

cabinets were characteristic for their endeavor to better the relations to the Anglo-Saxon nations and HATA seemed to be the man called for to bring the army to the same line. So he was considered as an opponent of an expansion policy of the Japanese army. He was close to the throne. This, too, proved his moderate character at that time. Later on, after my retirement, I met him occasionally in Nanking on a private visit to a friend of mine.

HATA invited me hearing that I am in Nanking, owing to our former acquaintance and at that time it was in, I think, in October 1943, he spoke in a very moderate way about the Japanese politics in China. He expressed the hope--I can't give you the exact term of his speaking--the hope to find soon an agreement of reconciliation with the Chungking government.

- Q. Was he in favor of the Japanese retreating and getting out of China or just signing a treaty and remaining and holding what they had?
- A. I had the impression that he was in favor of giving large concessions to the Chinese in order to become rid of the China conflict.
- Q. Do you mean he was willing to give everything up?
- A. This I can't tell you.
- Q. He didn't say?
- A. Anyhow he expressed himself in the way that I had the impression that he is a very moderate peace-looking man in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese forces in China.
- Q. Would you say that he was willing to concede territory to stop the war?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did he ever discuss with you whether or not he was in agreement with the policy that the Japanese had in going into Manchukuo and China?
- A. Never. But, as I told you, being a war minister of the moderate cabinets, if I may say so, he probably was opposed to every

(OTT, Eugene, 28 Feb Cont'd)

expansion politics. I considered him as a very intelligent and decidedly moderate man.

(The attached Japanese notes were dictated by General Ott as men he stated were responsible for the Japanese war of aggression against Manchukuo and China.)

(Interrogation adjourned)

"Extract from Interrogation of Major General Eugene Att, 28 Feb. 1946
1400-1600 Hrs, pp. 12 to 16."

- Q. I see. Next, I want to ask you about ITAGAKI, Seishiro. Did you know him?
- A. I know him.
- Q. When did you get acquainted with him?
- A. I met him for the first time as Chief of the General Staff of the Kwantung Army.
- Q. What time was that?
- A. In the winter of 1935 to 1936.
- Q. Did you talk to him at that time?
- A. I had a chance in this winter to make an interesting reconnoitering flight on the Russian border south of Harbin and alongside the Sungari River in the strongest winter time. I had asked for this flight in order to win personally an experience about the fighting conditions in Manchuria in winter time which lasts for about six months, and coming back from this flight I suggested to ITAGAKI to make a kind of speech to his staff about my experiences in order to stop a little the growing activity among that army which I felt during my trip for some conflict with Russia.
- Q. Let me ask you now--to interrupt you there--what did you feel about the army? What did you notice about the army there?
- A. I noticed in the army a certain activity and a certain tension to have, or to like a conflict with Russia on the border line. It was a kind of strong tension. So, I had the idea it would be useful to stop, as I could to do it, this tension to a certain extent because I considered it would be a very bad thing to have a conflict with Russia because the Japanese army seemed to be not to be able to go to war. So ITAGAKI asked me to make this speech and seemed to be very satisfied with the tendency of my speech, "Stop your activity and improve your conditions first."
- Q. What did ITAGAKI say in regard to the activities of the Japanese army up to that time in Manchuria in China and these places?
- A. He mainly asked my experiences about my trip and discussed my opinion about the necessity of consolidating the defense system.
- Q. What did you mean by "defense system?"

1. Defense system? I found on several places I considered the system as a whole not very effective owing to many military details, for instance--
- Q. I don't believe you understood my question. Why was it necessary for defense and defense against what?
- A. Border defense against Russia. I mean the defense system--every country has their permanent defense system--it wasn't especially necessary--
- Q. Were they expecting Russia to attack?
- A. They didn't say, but every country had to build up a permanent defense system.
- Q. What was said about the defense they were using in China and Manchuria at that time?
- A. Beg your pardon?
- Q. Did you discuss the defense of Manchuria?
- A. Manchuria only. Because my trip was limited to a part of Manchuria.
- Q. I see.
- A. In a purely military way this discussion. Later on, I met ITAGAKI a second time as a War Minister when I came back from Berlin in 1938 to begin my Ambassadorship in Tokyo. Then I asked him about his opinion of the development of the China conflict at that time, because, as I mentioned on another occasion, I tried to stop the danger of a German-English conflict in that time. So when I heard from him that the Japanese army has developed in the meantime during my absence a fighting of life and death in China, I reported to my government that at the present time the Japanese are unable to do anything else than to occupy themselves with their fighting in China.
- Q. Now, what did ITAGAKI say about their advances there? Did he talk to you about what was happening there?
- A. He gave me only a common general aspect that in the meantime they had advanced further on. At present time I don't know the names of the places.
- Q. Why did he say they had advanced? For what reason?

- A. In order to accomplish the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek.
- Q. Did he tell you that was the aim to defeat Chiang Kai-shek?
- A. To win the war.
- Q. To win the war?
- A. This war had in the meantime developed to a fighting of death and life.
- Q. Did he say that he was in favor of the Japanese going ahead and winning the war against China? What was his attitude?
- A. He was War Minister--
- Q. I know that. What did he say?
- A. He was War Minister, so of course he told me, "Now we are fighting for death and life. We have to win this war in a complete engagement of our forces."
- Q. Then he told you that the Japanese intended to use all their resources and power to win the war?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And that he was in favor of them going ahead?
- A. Probably.
- Q. Did he say that?
- A. He didn't tell this exactly.
- Q. From what he said to you?
- A. I had to conclude it.
- Q. Yes. Well, did you say anything to him about stopping the war in China?
- A. This I couldn't say, no.
- Q. You didn't?
- A. No. May I add? My main interest at that time was to hear and report to Germany that Japan wasn't able to go on any other adventure against another country; she is limited to her aims or purposes.

Q. Did he tell you at that time what the aims of Japan were?

A. Only winning this Chinese war.

Q. Chinese war? He didn't mention going to Singapore?

A. No, no, nothing. A third role of ITAGAKI, which I didn't talk over with him, personally, was his influence upon the negotiations of a military alliance between Germany, Japan and Italy in 1939. I think he was War Minister at that time. These negotiations eventually failed. After my impression, the army was to a certain extent and probably ITAGAKI personally, in favor of such an alliance, but eventually followed the idea of the navy. It would be not possible for them to engage in an alliance without obligation to act automatically in case of a conflict, because they were not advanced enough in the building up of their fighting forces. But I had no personal talk with ITAGAKI about those questions. It is my impression. He retired when the Hiranuma cabinet retired owing to the conclusion of the German-Russo treaty. Generally spoken, ITAGAKI belongs to the most intelligent and able leading army men of Japan.