

File : # 90
RE : HATTA, Yoshiaki
Date : 7 March 1946
To : Mr. Joseph B. Keenan, Chief of Counsel.
From : David Nelson Sutton, Associate Counsel.

SUMMARY OF INTERROGATION OF HATTA, YOSHIAKI, AND RECOMMENDATION AS TO HIM.

I have completed the interrogation of Yoshiaki HATTA and submit the following summary and recommendation as to him:

1. HATTA has the background and training of a railroad executive and is a top flight business man. After twenty-three years experience in the operation of the railroads owned by Japan, he was appointed Vice Minister of Railways in 1926 and continued in this position until 1929. He became Vice President and in active charge of the South Manchurian Railway Company in 1932, continued for three years and was thereafter advisor to this Railway.

2. While repeatedly stating that he did not approve of the action of the military forces of Japan in Manchuria and in North China, he did approve the Government set up by Japan in Manchukuo and in North China and was one of those big businessmen quite willing to avail himself of the fruits of the conquest accomplished by the military. He has from time to time been the president or a principal officer in a number of exploitation companies organized in Japan and approved heartily of the actions of these companies. He approved the confiscation by the state of Manchukuo of the railways therein formerly owned by the Chinese Government and the delivery by the puppet state of Manchukuo of these lines and all equipment which had formerly belonged to the Chinese Government to the South Manchurian Railway for operation by that Company. This action was instigated and approved by the Army even before the puppet state of Manchukuo was set up. He was in active charge of the South Manchurian Railway and operated it for that Company which is Japan's principal exploitation company immediately following the time this property was stolen from China and delivered to the South Manchurian Railway Company for use and operation by the Company under the guise of a lease.

3. As President of the North Eastern Development Company, he organized industry under the active support of the Government in the

six northern prefectures of Japan proper. It cost the Government over 9,000,000 Yen annually to operate this Company. He resigned the Presidency to accept the post of Minister of Overseas Affairs in the first Konoye Cabinet. He was the first President of the Imperial Oil Company organized by the Government in 1941 to supervise and control all of the oil producing wells in Japan; and was in 1945 President of the North China Development Company organized by the Government to control and supervise all industrial companies operating in North China. This Company had a capital of 400,000,000 Yen, half of which was appropriated by the Japanese Government and the remainder secured from private companies. There was advanced through this Company to some 40 companies operating in North China a total of over 900,000,000 Yen. The Government controlled the operation of these companies.

3. He was president of or active in the organization and promotion of a number of societies and government related organizations which sought to advance the role of Japan as leader in Greater East Asia, prepare Japan for war and advise the Government as to the industrial development of the conquered territory. This included his Presidency of the Central Manchurian and Mongolian Association (Chuo Hanmo Kyokai) for approximately 10 years, composed of those companies operating in Manchuria, the chief purpose of which was to direct the policy of the Government in business affairs in Manchuria and it in turn was dominated by the South Manchurian Railway Company. He was President of the Japan Chamber of Commerce; one of the organizers of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association; for 6 years President of the Industrial Policy Association which sought to render more efficient in engineering and accounting methods all industries of Japan; Chief of the Japan Branch of the East Asia Economic Association (Tea Keizei Konden Kai), which sought to foster trade between Japan, Manchukuo and North China, and which was supported by the puppet government in Manchukuo; President for 6 years of the East Asia Investigation Bureau, an organization supported and controlled by the South Manchurian Railway Company, which had offices also in Peiping and Shanghai; and an organizer of the Great Japan Rising Asia Alliance (Dai Nippon Koa Domei).

4. He was Minister of Overseas Affairs in the first Konoye Cabinet, retaining this post in the Hiranuma Cabinet and was also Minister of Commerce and Industry in that Cabinet. He was appointed on December 2, 1941 as Minister of Railways in the Tojo Cabinet and when that post was combined with the Ministry of Communications, he continued in the combined office as Minister of Transportation and Communications in the Tojo Cabinet until February, 1944, and was thereafter advisor to the Transportation Department of the combined ministries.

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(con't)

5. While he felt that the embargoes placed against Japan by the United States justified war, he did not anticipate war and states positively and repeatedly that although he had two conferences with Hoshino, the Secretary of the Cabinet, before accepting a post in Tojo's Cabinet, a conference with Vice Admiral Terachima and with Tojo immediately after accepting this post, and attending a full meeting of the Cabinet on Friday, December 5th, he had no knowledge or information of any kind as to any possible outbreak of war between Japan and the United States prior to December 8, 1941. His speedy replies to questions along this line and complete denial of any information or knowledge of the imminency of war, leads me to the conclusion that his statements on these matters are not true. Vice Admiral Terashima, Hoshino and Tojo should be questioned in detail as to their accounts of the conferences with HATTA immediately prior and subsequent to his entrance into the Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION:

HATTA through his industrial activities, interest in promotional organizations and service in government dominated companies and as a member of several Cabinets including the Tojo Cabinet set and kept Japan on a course which inevitably led to war. In my opinion, he bears responsibility for the successive, aggressive wars undertaken and waged by Japan but does not have that degree of responsibility which would include him within a list of top Japanese war criminals restricted to not more than 20 persons.

DAVID NELSON SUTTON
Associate Counsel.

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RE : HATTA, YOSHIKAI
STATUS: PENDING

AGE : 66 Years

ADDRESS : 73, Komagome, Kamifujinai - Cho, Hongo-Ku, Tokyo.

GOVT POSTS : 1939-42 President, Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
President Imperial Petroleum Co.
1941 - Minister of Railways - Tojo Cabinet
Nov. 43 - Minister of Transportation & Communications in revised Tojo Cabinet.
Feb. 44 - Replaced in Cabinet.
May 44 - Advisor to Ministry of Trans. & Commun. and to Federation of Japan Economic Assoc.
Apr. 45 - Advisor to Suzuki Cabinet.

FAMILY : Wife, Tsuru, daughter of Yoshitane Suga.

INCIDENTAL : Became member of Kenkyukai Group in House of Peers. Was also connected with conservative Seigukai (political party dissolved in 1940) of the Lower House. In 1940 he was a member of the preparatory committee charged with working out details of the IRAA.
On 6 Mar. 1945 was appointed President of the North China Development Co., Japan's exploitation agency in North China.

SOURCE: OIS Files 19 Nov. 45

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HATTA, YOSHIAKI

(Source -- Who's Who in Nippon -- 1943-44)

Minister of Railways; Member, House of Peers; adviser, Japan Tokyo Export Promotion Co. and Tobu Railway Co.; adviser, Japan Cham. of Com. & Ind.; b. Tokyo, Sept. 1879; e.s. of Saimei H.; m. Tsuru, 2nd d. of Yoshitane Suga. Educ.: grad. Tokyo Imp. Univ. civil enrg. 1903. Career: joined Railway Ministry 1903; dir. Construction Bureau; Vice-Minister of Railways, 1926-29; appointed Upper House member, 1929; vice-president, South Manchuria Ry. Co., 1932-35; president, Tohoku District Develop. Co., Tohoku Dist. Develop. Elec. Power Co.; concurrently Overseas Minister, Jan.-April, 1939; president, Tokyo Chamber of Com. & Ind.: same of Japan Chamber of Com. & Ind.; 1939-41; pres., Imp. Petroleum Co.; present post Dec. 1941. Address: 73, Komagome Kamifujimae-cho, Hongo-ku Tokyo.

(Source -- Japanese Personal Intelligence Volume I)

1943 Minister of Transport and Communications
(Br. Pol. Warfare Mission Who's Who of Japan, Jan. 1944
Appointed Nov. 1, 1943 at time the Ministry was established.

1943 April Appointed Minister of Railways.

1940 Appointed Sept. 1939 President of Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and currently of Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry; statesman. Member of the House of Peers; Director of the Tobu Railway Co.;
Born: Tokyo, Sept. 14, 1879; e.s. of Saimei; m. Tsuru, 2nd d. of Yoshitane SUGA.

Career: Grad. of Tokyo Imp. Univ., civil engineering 1903;
Joined the Railways Ministry as engineer on graduation;
Chief of Track Research Section;
Director of the Construction Bureau;
1926-29 Vice-Minister of Railways;
1929 Retired from Government service and nominated member of the House of Peers;
1932-25 Vice-president of South Manchurian Railway Co.
Member of the International Tourist Industries Committee;
Governor of the Tohoku District Development Electric Power Co.;
Jan-Aug. 1939 Commerce and Industry Ministry in the HIRANUMA CABINET.
Jan-Apr. 1939 Concurrently Minister of Overseas Affairs.
President of Tokoku Electric Power Co.

Listed in Who's Who of Japan 1940-41 and in Economic Who's Who of Japan, Mar. 1944 of OWI.

HATTA, YOSHIAKI (CONTINUED)

- Feb. 1944 Replaced as Minister of Transport and Communications
Feb. 19, 1944
- Aug. 1944 A member of a committee of ten in the House of Peers to
be known as the iron-ore research group especially
under the Research Association. First meeting to be
held Aug. 25 and to discuss the operation problems of
the research group."
Jap. Home and Empire at 2:00 am ewt. 8/22/44 and Tokyo
Romaji to GEA at 9:30 ewt on 8/21/44 as reported in
processed News. Aug. 23, 1944.
- 1944 Former Minister of Transportation and Communications
resigned Feb., 1944
- 1929 Upper House Member appointment
1932-35 Vice-Pres. So. Manchuria Railway Co.
Pres. Tohoku District Development Co. & Tohoku District Devel.
Elec. Power Co.
1939 Commerce and Industry Minister in Hiranuma Cabinet
Overseas Minister Jan. to April, 1939
Pres. Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Japan Ch. of Com.
and Indus. 1939-42.
Pres. of Imperial Petroleum Co.
Dec. 1941, Minister of Railways
No. 1, 1943 (reorganization of cabinet and ministries) became
Minister of Transportation and Communication.
- (Propanal #72 2/19/44: Tokyo in Engl. to Pacific)
Feb. 1944 out
May 6, 1944 appointed adviser to Trans. & Communications Ministry
(Hatta, Terashima, and Chashi appointed together)
Propanal Master File
1944 #124, 5/6/44 Propanal Master File
- 1944 Sept. 26, No further Reference in Propanal Master File
- 1944 Appointed President of newly established Dai Nippon Technology
Association.
(11/3/44-Far Eastern Propanal)