

No. 3015

EX 3015

Def. Doc. No. 1639

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

vs

ARAKI, Sadao, et al

SWORN DEPOSITION

Deponent: ABE, Katsuo

Having first duly sworn an oath as on attached sheet and in accordance with the procedure following in my country I hereby depose as follows.

1. I am a former naval Vice Admiral I occupied the post of chief of the Naval Affairs Bureau of the Naval Ministry from October, 1939 until October, 1940, when I was ordered to Europe, and was chiefly in charge of affairs concerning general naval administration and armaments as well as national defense policy, assisting the Navy Minister and the Navy Vice-Minister.

2. It was while I was in the aforesaid post of chief of the Naval Affairs Bureau that the Japanese Forces marched into the northern part of French Indo-China. Prior to the diplomatic negotiations, it was agreed by the Naval General Staff that, in the capacity of Chief of the Naval Affairs Bureau, represent the Navy and together with the representative of the Army hold

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conference with the authorities of the Foreign Office (mostly the Chief of the Bureau of European and Asiatic Affairs and the Treaty Bureau) on the basic problems which might be discussed in the diplomatic negotiations.

3. At the time Japan was taking pains in the disposing of the China Incident, and Imperial Headquarters recognized, that to hasten the settlement of the China Incident it was most necessary to block off the so-called French Indo-China route, the only supply route for Chiang via French Indo-China, and ordered the Expeditionary Forces of the Army to take Nanning temporarily with an eye to bombarding from the Nanning airfield the Yunnan Railway, which led to French Indo-China. Nanning, however, was a very small and unhealthy place and, what was worse, the airfield, being unusable during the rainy season, proved to be of little use for blocking the supply route, and the situation was where materials to aid Chiang went into China as before. Thereupon, under the positive necessity of securing the blocking of the route, the Imperial Headquarters consulted the Navy and Army Ministries about the plan of diplomatic negotiations in which the Foreign Office and the French Government were to talk with each other mutually expressing their sincerest views in realizing the blocking of the route practically and peacefully by the French Indo-Chinese themselves.

4. In compliance with the above intentions, the Foreign Office after much consultation with us, the authorities of the

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Navy and Army, determined to enter into diplomatic negotiations, which were conducted very prudently and patiently, and at length obtained an understanding from the authorities of French Indo-China. And it was decided that observers be posted along the frontier as well as at sea ports and some other places so as to keep an eye on the transportation of aid to Chiang supplies which were sent by way of French Indo-China. And in June, 1940, an observation party, which consisted of Navy and Army men together with officials of the Foreign Office with Major-General NISHIHARA as Chief of section, was sent to French Indo-China. The aim, however, was not attained, and the complete blocking off of the aid to Chiang supply route not readily realized.

To secure the blocking off of the route, the Foreign Office had had talks with Henri, the French Ambassador to Japan, at Tokyo since Aug. 1 of the same year, and on Aug. 30 an understanding as to basic problems such as occupation by Japanese forces of the Tonkin area for the purpose of securing the blocking off of the aid to Chiang supply route, and offering of facilities for our military operations in China, was reached at the talk between Foreign Minister MATSUOKA and Ambassador Henri, concrete details being left to be worked out by the Japanese and French military authorities on the spot.

5. Agreement between the authorities on the spot, however, did not take shape speedily and it was not until Sept. 22, when an agreement was reached at last. But it took much time to notify

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the dispatched troops of the Japanese and French Armies of the said agreement, which caused some clashes between the troops near the frontier through misunderstandings. Except for these clash-clashes, the agreement was materialized according to peaceful and reciprocal understanding and the occupation was also carried out in peace, which I learned from reports from the spot.

6. In short, the sole aim of the occupation of the Japanese forces of the northern part of French Indo-China, as stated above, was none other than for the acquisition of facilities for military operations for the purpose of blocking off the aid to Chiang supply route. Accordingly the occupation, being of a temporary nature, would have come to an end with the settlement of the China Incident. And it was firmly promised at the above stated MATSUOKA - Henri talk that the occupied area provided in the agreement was limited to the regions of French Indo-China adjacent to the borders of China and French Indo-China, and that the Japanese Government would respect the territorial integrity of French Indo-China as well as French sovereignty over French Indo-China. Japan never had any designs of territorial aggression.

On this 15th day of May, 1947

At Yokio

DEPONENT AME, Katsuo (seal)

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

On the same date, at Tokyo

Witness (signed) YASUDA, Shigeo (seal)

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OATH

In accordance with the conscience + swear to tell the whole truth withholding nothing and adding nothing.

ABE, "atsuo" (seal)