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HEADQUARTERS
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
APO 234
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

INTERROGATION NO. 609

DIVISION OF ORIGIN: Morale.

SUBJECT: Political Activities Leading up to the Peace.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Mr. Hisatsune SAKOMIZU, career government official and politician, Chief Cabinet Secretary in the Suzuki Government.

Where interviewed: Tokyo 11 December 1946, at the home of Mr. Hisaji KUBO.

Interrogators: Mr. David B. Truman
Capt. R. L. Guiterman, AC,
Capt. Max Kleiman, AUS.

Others present: Mr. Hisaji KUBO.

Interpreter: None required.

SUMMARY

This interview covers the major developments in the decision to seek peace from the time the Suzuki Government was appointed until 15 August 1945. Some background comments on the Tojo and Koiso Cabinets are also included:

Comment: The interview was arranged through Captain Kleiman, who is an old friend of Mr. SAKOMIZU, the latter coming up from his home in Kagoshima in order to talk with us. The appended narrative took somewhat over 5 hours to relate, and it was impossible to arrange further questioning as Mr. SAKOMIZU had to return at once.

SAKOMIZU was born in August 1902, in Kagoshima Prefecture and was graduated from Tokyo Imperial University in 1926, having specialized in law. Upon graduation he joined the Finance Ministry and was an Assistant Financial Attache in New York in 1930. He was private secretary to Prime Minister Admiral OKADA, 1934-36. Since then he has held various posts in the Finance Ministry including that of Director of the Financial Planning Section and Chief of the General Affairs Bureau. He was on the staff of the Cabinet Planning Board under the Tojo and Koiso Governments. He was Chief Cabinet Secretary throughout the Suzuki Cabinet. At present he is running for election in the Diet from Kagoshima.

SAKOMIZU speaks English, and the interview was conducted in that language although he had some difficulty at times in making himself clear. Capt. Kleiman and Mr. KUBO assisted at these points, which have not been noted in the report. The report is as nearly in his own words as it was possible to make it in view of the fact that it was written from notes and of his frequent grammatical difficulties. His language has been smoothed up in writing the report, but no editing has been done to his story.

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T-Truman G-Guiterman K-Kleiman S-Sakomizu Ku-Kubo

S - I shall talk freely. Capt. Max Kleiman, ask me any questions you wish and I shall answer them as well as I can. You will understand that most Japanese do not know the details of the events which I shall tell you about.

K - when was the Suzuki Cabinet appointed?

S - April 7, 1945.

K - Was it the expectation that this Cabinet would consider ways of making peace?

S - The Prime Minister, Mr. Suzuki, doubted the possibility of our continuing the war, so right after the Cabinet was formed he ordered me to examine into the details of the Japanese fighting power and to advise whether it was sufficient to continue the war. I reached the conclusion at the end of April, rather the beginning of May, that Japan couldn't continue the war.

T - What factors led you to this conclusion?

S - Our ability to manufacture airplanes, the amount of factory damage from bombing, ship losses and damage, the food situation, and the sentiment of the people. The official government propaganda always insisted on ultimate victory of Japan, but the people had doubt because at the time of the Okinawa battle the military said that they could defend Okinawa, but Okinawa fell. When the first B-29's came to Tokyo, Army fighter planes went up and tried to fight them, but as the raids continued, the number of defending fighter planes which rose was gradually less and less. The people saw this, and it gave them some idea of the fighting power of Japan. There were so many rumors that the fall crops were going to be destroyed by American that they were very anxious about their food.

T - Do the Cabinet and the Prime Minister usually take the sentiment of the people into consideration in their deliberations?

S - They should but usually they do not. Tojo didn't, it is clear. Suzuki did. (Kubo mumbled, "Suzuki is a very democratic man.") Yes, he is very democratic, and he is much smarter than Tojo, and I think he knows the best of any statesman in Japan today, because for many years he was his chief Aide-de-Camp. So at the very beginning of his government he asked the Emperor how he thought about the war. I think the Emperor knew the people did not want to continue the war, that their sentiment was anti-war. I guess the Emperor told Mr. Suzuki his will. So Suzuki ordered me to make the investigation which I have told you about.

T - By what means did the Emperor know that the people did not want to continue the war?

S - He read the newspapers; through the people he met; through meetings with the former Prime Ministers, for example, my father-in-law, (Adm. Keisuke) Okada, who are sort of elder statesmen.

T - Did the Emperor have access to the foreign radio?

S - I don't think so. Then also there were the members of the Imperial Household Ministry who were always against war.

T - How did you go about finding out the sentiment of the people?

S - I listened to what they said, in the tramcars, on the streets, and so on. They did not know the number of airplanes we had, or the iron manufacturing capacity, but they could feel what the situation was. You can't stop them from feeling, you know.

G - Did you have no organized method, like the Gallup system?

S - No, there was no organization. But I saw so many people every day. As many as 20 or 30 people came to see me every day. I knew well what the actual position was with regard to Japan's manufacturing capacity, because I was an officer of the Cabinet Planning Board at one time.

T - How long?

S - 1941-42 and 1943-44, during part of the Tojo and part of the Koiso cabinets. When I was in the Tojo cabinet, I tried to break it up. You know, there is an old Japanese proverb (much language trouble at this point, with considerable assistance from Kubo) which says that an insect was inside the lion and the lion was killed by the insect. Hoshino (Naoki HOSHINO, head of Cabinet Planning Board under one of Konoye cabinets, and Tojo's Chief Cabinet Secretary) said to some of my colleagues that he thought Sakomizu was the insect inside the lion.

T - You were not happy working with Hoshino?

S - No, but I knew him very well. We were both in the Finance Ministry together before the Manchurian Incident. I guess he wanted me in the Planning Board because he knew I had some skill in planning. I planned many things but Tojo ignored most of them, and especially he would not listen to anything about the sentiment of the people. I thought Tojo did not know how to stop the war. He knew how to start one, but not how to stop it. You know, when I was learning to drive a car in New York, the teacher told me that before I could learn to drive the car I must first learn how to stop it. Before Tojo the cabinet breakers were always Ronin, Samurai without any master. They have played a particularly important role in Japanese history, and always they have been connected with the military. Under Tojo, all the Ronin were pledged to him because he was the military's man. Under Tojo they obeyed him.

Of course, I could not indulge in any propaganda against Tojo, because I was in the Cabinet, but I believe that Okada and I were the center of the opposition to Tojo. It took just one year to do it.

You may wonder why Okada disliked Tojo, so I shall tell you the story. Before the war Tojo gathered together all the former Prime Ministers and explained why he was going to start the war. Okada, (Adm Mitsumasa) Yonai, and (Baron Reijiro) Wakatsuki did not agree. Okada asked Tojo about the condition of Japan's merchant shipping. Tojo explained that we might lose 80,000 tons per month, and I don't remember the exact amount of new construction he mentioned but it was by his calculations more than enough to make up for what was lost. Okada said his estimate was wrong. And the fact was that Okada was right. It was as he said. We lost, well, maybe 300 or 200,000 tons per month. Our capacity for building was 500,000 tons, but we couldn't build that much because we soon didn't have the materials. There were many, many shipyards which were idle during the war for this reason. So Okada says that Tojo is a liar. No, that is not the word, that he has no sense for estimating the future.

T - You said a few minutes ago that it took just a year to accomplish your project against Tojo. I wonder if you would give us the story of what happened in that year?

S - First we talked to (Marquis Koichi) Kido (Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal) because he could nominate the Prime Minister. Of course, the Emperor formally nominated him, but was Kido who actually did it. And we sent word to Tojo, advice, that it would be best for him to resign. Tojo decided to reconstruct his cabinet because Mr. Kishi (Shinsuke Nobusuke Kishi, Minister of Commerce and Industry) and (Mamoru) Shigemitsu came over to our side. This was just before the Marianas campaign. Tojo asked Yonai to be Minister without Portfolio. Okada called a meeting of the former Prime Ministers, and they decided that Yonai should not enter the Tojo government, so Tojo was compelled to resign. General Abe accepted his invitation, but Tojo could not stand up against the solid opposition of the former Prime Ministers.

Okada tried to get them to build a Cabinet of peace-minded people, and the Army fought against it. Koiso was an old soldier, but outside of the government he had been very critical of Tojo, so we expected that Koiso might do something, but he was not strong enough to fight the military. I think it was a pity that Koiso ever came in as Prime Minister.

Then Suzuki was appointed. His nomination meant a change in the tendency of operation of the government. The Emperor for the first time could express his own opinion, I think. Many of the lower officials of the government, like me, had had official conferences in which we might say something like, how can we continue the war without steel? Next day the Kempei would come to my office and say we hear that at a meeting last night you expressed doubt of final victory. All were afraid of the Kempei.

Well, I came to the conclusions I have told you about before, and Suzuki decided I was right. He went to the Emperor and came back a short time later. He said to me that we must start some steps toward peace. This was in the middle of May. So we asked HIROTA, Koki (former Prime Minister) to speak with the Russian Ambassador (Joseph Alexandrovich) Malik in private conversation. He did so on several occasions, sounding out the Russian attitude toward interceding with America. In the beginning it looked as we might be successful, but the talks never reached a successful conclusion. In May Germany collapsed, as you know, and after that the War Minister (Gen. Korechika Anami) asked the Cabinet for a conference in the presence of the Emperor to decide the "fundamental principle of the war" - whether to continue it or not. Of course, we (laughing) had had many rehearsals of that meeting.

The military insisted upon continuing, but I and others had different ideas, although we couldn't actually advocate the stopping of the war because the MP's were still around. I drafted the memorandum for the conference, and I started it with the statement that we should try to "accomplish" the war and keep the Emperor's reign intact and keep the home (national) land. Of course, the military read the word "accomplish" as meaning that the war should be continued, but it was meaning that the war should be continued, but it was followed by the details which I had collected for my report to Mr. Suzuki. The whole thing was presented to the conference in the presence of the Emperor. Those attending were the Prime Minister, the war Minister, the Navy Minister (Yonai), the Army Chief of Staff (Gen. Yoshijiro Umezu), the Chief of the Navy General Staff (Admiral Soemu Toyoda), and the Foreign Minister (Shigenori Togo). Each expressed his own opinion, but none expressed his real feelings. But if you read the details of my memorandum, it is clear that the war had to stop. The Emperor himself read the report as well as the others. This was on the ninth of June. At that time the Emperor said nothing.

On the 20th of June the Emperor, by his own will, called a meeting of the Prime Minister and the others I just mentioned who were in the meeting of June 9th. (At this point S. explained that the Cabinet had to present a written request for permission to hold a conference in the presence of the Emperor, but the Emperor could call one at his own initiative at any time, although he rarely did so.) The Emperor told them that the conclusion in the document presented in the conference of June 9th seemed to be very paradoxical. He knew the real meaning of the conclusion. He said, "I think it is necessary for us to have a plan to close the war at once as well as one to defend the home islands." (S. explained that at that time the Army was making much of its plan to defeat the American forces when they landed on the home islands.)

As a result of this expression by the Emperor, Suzuki decided to stop the war. After the meeting, when Mr. Suzuki came back, he said to me, "Today the Emperor said what everyone has wanted to say but yet was afraid to say."

T - What was the reaction of the military to this decision?

S - Yonai understood and approved the idea. The War Minister, Anami, also approved, but he could not express his real feelings of the generals around him and the fear of assassination.

After that the government decided to send Prince Konoye to Russia and asked Russia if he would be persona grata. The Russians said that they could not decide on the matter unless they received from the Japanese government and expression in more detail of the purpose of the Prince's mission. We sent a cable to Ambassador (Naotake) Sato in Moscow to explain the mission, as follows:

1. To make an improvement in relations between Russia and Japan (this in view of the recent denunciation of the Neutrality Pact).
2. To ask the USSR to intercede with the United States in order to stop the war.

The Russian answer was that Stalin and Molotov were just leaving for the conference at Potsdam, so an answer to the Japanese request could not be given until they returned. We wanted an answer before the conference, but we just couldn't have it, so there was nothing to do but wait.

Suzuki and I felt quite pessimistic about the Russian attitude toward our proposal. Then on June 26th came the Potsdam Declaration. Suzuki, Togo, and I talked together, and we felt that this declaration must be accepted as the final terms of peace (surrender), whether we liked it or not. Still the military side of the government said that the terms of the proclamation were "too dishonorable."

(Asked in aside, why the military permitted the approach to Russia, if they were hostile to acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, S. replied: "The war Minister (Anami) knew of our negotiations, but he never told his military staff. For that I admire Mr. Anami. And that is why he committed suicide." Ku. at this point interjected the comment that he was a "typical Japanese", to which S. indicated assent. He continued: "On the outside and officially he pretended that we must continue the war, but inside himself he had made his decision that it must be brought to a stop. He alone could have broken the Suzuki cabinet at any time. It shows his character that he didn't, despite what he knew of our negotiations. Yonai, of course, always expressed his idea that the war should be stopped, and that is one way of being a brave man. Mr. Anami was of another." T - what risk did Yonai run from his own people by being outspoken? S - Not much, since the Naval side was ready to quit in April or May of 1945.)

S - On the 7th of August, early in the morning, about 2 o'clock, the bell rang beside my bed. (My own house was bombed in April and I moved to my official residence. That was bombed in May, so I moved by bed in to my office, and I stayed there 24 hours a day. In the morning when I got dressed, I would put on my hat and walk through the building, return to my office and hang up my hat. That I called coming to the office. At night I would again put on my hat and walk through the building the same way. That was coming home from the office.) When the bell rang beside my bed, it was Domei telling me that President Truman had announced that the atomic bomb had been used at Hiroshima. I already knew that the Hiroshima damage had been very severe and that it had been caused by just one airplane. Everyone said that America had used a new bomb, but they didn't think it was an atomic bomb because our scientists had told us that no country could finish the atomic bomb for use in this war.

The military said that it was probably a 4-ton bomb bursting in the air. They made their calculations, but found that a 4-ton bomb could not do that much damage. They suggested that it might be a 100-ton bomb. After the announcement, we sent some scientists to Hiroshima, and they reported that it was a real atomic bomb.

When this news came in on the morning of the 7th I called the Prime Minister on the phone and reported the announcement. Everyone in the government and even in the military knew that if the announcement were true, no country could carry on a war. Without the atomic bomb it would be impossible for any country to defend itself against a nation which had the weapon.

The chance had come to end the war. It was not necessary to blame the military side, the manufacturing people, or anyone else - just the atomic bomb. It was a good excuse. Someone said that the atomic bomb was the Kamikaze to save Japan. (Note: Meaning that without it the war would have continued until Japan was no more.)

T - How long do you think the war would have continued if the atomic bomb had not been used?

S - We had already asked the Russians to intercede, and we could expect that they would eventually give us some answer. If it had been unfavorable, there was just one way to bring peace and that was to broadcast directly to the United States. But it would have been difficult to find a good chance to do so. I think you can understand. Suzuki tried to find a chance to stop the war and the atom bomb gave him that chance.

I asked the Cabinet Board of Information to put all the information about the atomic bomb in the newspapers and on the radio, in order to tell the people just how fearful it was. But the General Staff Information Office stopped it. They tried hard to emphasize that the people need not fear the atomic bomb if they were in shelters. I had much struggling with the Chief of Military Information. All the Cabinet Board of Information was finally allowed to say was that the atomic bomb had been used at Hiroshima. This item appeared in the morning papers of August 8th. Of course, all the intellectuals knew the meaning of the announcement, because there had been so many stories and novels about atomic power. I wanted all the people to understand the meaning of the bomb, but it took a full day just to get the bare announcement released.

On the morning of August 7th, Suzuki and Togo (Foreign Minister) conferred and reported the news to the Emperor. They also gave their opinion that this was the chance to accept the Potsdam Declaration. Still the War Minister could not make up his mind, publicly, openly.

Early on the morning of August 9th the bell beside my bed rang again, and Domei reported that Russia had declared war on us. I previously had had a report from Sato that he was going to meet with Molotov in Moscow at midnight Japanese time on August 8th. So I was expecting some sort of news. I felt rather pessimistic about the Russian negotiations, but we didn't expect a war declaration.

I then got the full text of the war declaration. I took it to the Prime Minister at about 5 o'clock in the morning. I told him that there were two ways for the Cabinet to go:

1. They could resign because they had tried for peace through the Russians and had failed:
2. They could take some step of a positive sort.

The Prime Minister said, "If we resign it will take two or three days for a new cabinet to be formed. The loss of two or three days is intolerable, since that lapse of time might decide the national destiny. It is necessary for us to take some positive step."

So I told him there were two possible steps to take:

1. To declare war on the Russians and continue the war until the entire nation was destroyed, to the death of the whole nation.

2. To accept the Potsdam Declaration.

Suzuki said he would see the Emperor and he left about 7 A.M. He came back an hour or two later and told me that he had decided to accept the second alternative step (Potsdam Declaration) and that the Emperor's ideas were the same. He then ordered me to take the necessary procedures, to make the proper arrangements.

It was necessary to hold two conferences:

1. A meeting of the Senso-shi-do, or Inner Cabinet, made up of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the war Minister, the Navy Minister, the Army Chief of Staff, and the Chief of the Navy General Staff.
2. A meeting of the Cabinet.

The first was held at 10:00 on the morning of August 9th. Ordinarily I, as the Chief Cabinet Secretary, the Director of the Bureau of Military Affairs (Lt Gen Masao Yoshizumi), and the Director of the Naval Affairs Bureau (Vice Admiral Zenshiro Hoshino) participated in these meetings. I suggested to the Prime Minister that we three should not be included this time, because if we were, the attending members would not speak freely. Mr. Suzuki agreed. So when all had assembled I took these two out, and we waited in the other room. The important thing here is the fact that I took them out of the room. This had a very significant meaning. Mr. Anami (war Minister) had decided himself inside, but he had to express this decision openly. When I took the two military assistants out, the war Minister saw what was meant, and it gave him his chance. On the surface this was a negligible event, but it really isn't.

The conference lasted for three hours. I walked in two or three times, and each time everyone was sunk deep in his chair, and they said nothing. The atmosphere was very gloomy and very cold. Afterwards the Prime Minister came out and told me that two opinions had been expressed and no agreement had been reached.

1. To accept the Potsdam Declaration unconditionally, with the understanding that the Potsdam Proclamation did not include the requirement that the Emperor's legal position be altered.
2. To accept the Potsdam Declaration with the following conditions: First, that the Allied forces would not occupy the home land, excepting the small islands off the coast; second, that the Japanese military and naval forces abroad were to be withdrawn by the Japanese's own will and disarmed and demobilized; third, all war crimes should be prosecuted by the Japanese government.

Suzuki said that he, Yonai, and Togo were in favor of the first opinion; that Anami, Umezumi (Army Chief of Staff), and Toyoda (Chief of Navy General Staff) favored the second opinion.

Then I said, "Let's have the Cabinet conference." He agreed and I arranged it for 1 P.M. Sixteen ministers were in attendance. They were gathered about a big round table. As Chief Secretary, I sat at a small secretarial desk to one side. When the meeting opened, Togo (Foreign Minister) explained the discussion at the Inner Cabinet meeting. About 9 members agreed with the first opinion (Unconditional acceptance of Potsdam Declaration), four with the second opinion (conditional acceptance) and three were on the fence. (These took such positions as that the three conditions in the second opinion were too many, that two were enough, that the Prime Minister should take the decision and the rest should follow.) The Cabinet meeting continued until 8 P.M., with one hour out for dinner. Toward the end I wrote a note to Suzuki suggesting

that he had better declare an intermission. This he shortly announced.

The Foreign Minister, the Prime Minister, and I then met in the Prime Minister's room, and I told Suzuki that it was apparent that the Cabinet conference was unable to reach a decision. I asked him what he thought we should do. Then he said, "How about this? Go to the Emperor, report the conferences in detail, and get the Emperor's own decision." I said that it would be better to have an Inner Cabinet meeting in the Emperor's presence and let all the members express personally their own views. Suzuki agreed, and I proceeded to make the arrangements.

To hold a cabinet meeting in the presence of the Emperor, it is necessary to prepare a document stating the purpose of the meeting, over the signatures of the Prime Minister, the Army Chief of Staff and the Navy Chief of Staff. I wrote this document and got the signatures. It was taken to the Emperor and he agreed to the meeting.

The conference (with the Emperor) was held at 11:30 P.M. (the Cabinet meanwhile was still at intermission.) I read the text of the Potsdam Declaration. It was very hard to do because the words of the declaration are very hard; the contents were not cheerful things to read in the presence of the Emperor. Then the Foreign Minister expressed his opinion, and the other members, all of them, expressed theirs, as in the morning conference. About 3 o'clock on the morning of the 10th, the Prime Minister stood up and made the following announcements: "We have discussed this question for a long time and everyone has expressed his own opinion sincerely without any conclusion being reached. The situation is urgent, so any delay in coming to a decision should not be tolerated. I am therefore proposing to ask the Emperor his own wish and to decide the conference's conclusion on that basis. His wish should settle the issue, and the government should follow it." (At this point S. explained very earnestly that this was a very delicate and unusual procedure, since under the constitution the Emperor cannot decide anything by himself, that there is no constitutional procedure for the Emperor to express his wishes in matters of policy, and that the Emperor must always follow the government's advice. In this highly extra-constitutional situation the Government was suggesting that it advise the Emperor as he said he wanted to be advised.)

Suzuki stepped two or three steps away from the Emperor and asked him to express his own opinion. (At this point, S., who could not satisfy himself that he had made clear to us the character of the situation, explained again that this was an unprecedented development, that always in such conferences the Emperor says nothing at all.) The Emperor just leaned forward and told Suzuki to go back to his seat. The Emperor then started to express his own opinion: "I agree with the first opinion as expressed by the Foreign Minister. (I thought he was through at this point but he continued.) I think I should tell the reasons why I have decided so. Thinking about the world situation and the internal Japanese situation, to continue the war means nothing but the destruction of the whole nation. My ancestors and myself have always wished to put forward the nation's welfare and international world peace as our prime concern. To continue the war now means that cruelty and blood shed will still continue in the world and that the Japanese nation will suffer severe damage. So to stop the war on this occasion is the only way to save the nation from destruction and to restore peace in the world. Looking back at what our military headquarters have done, it is apparent that their performance has fallen far short of the plans expressed. I don't think this discrepancy can be corrected in the future. (S. stopped at this point and said with great feeling that he thought the Emperor was the wisest statesman in Japan today, the most perspicacious. Despite the isolation, he knows well what is going on and understands it. He recalled that one day at lunch Tojo had told S. that he had tried to "educate" the Emperor to start the war. It was very hard. He (S.) went on to state that the Imperial rescript at the start of the war was drafted by the Cabinet, as always, but that the Emperor insisted on making one alteration be-

fore he signed it. After the sentence which states that war with the United States and Great Britain was an inevitable thing, the Emperor inserted another, as follows: "Ani chin ga Kokorozashi naranya?" Translated, this means, "How can this be our own will?" S. insisted that this means something very important. The government could agree to include the sentence, since it appears merely to elaborate the preceding statement of inevitability, but it also means, when it is understood, that the Emperor rather than the government wrote it in, that the war was not the Emperor's will but was forced on him by his obligation to take the government's advice under the constitution.) But when I think about my obedient soldiers abroad and of those who died or were wounded in battle, about those who have lost their property or lives by bombing in the home land; when I think of all those sacrifices, I cannot help but feel sad. (S. said that the Emperor used very heavily emotional words in this part of the statement, and because of then the members of the Cabinet cried openly.) I decided that this war should be stopped, however, in spite of this sentiment and for more important considerations."

Mr. Suzuki then said, "The Imperial decision has been expressed. This should be the conclusions of the conference." It then was about 3 A.M. on August 10th.

We went back to the Cabinet offices and reconvened the Cabinet meeting. The Prime Minister reported the Emperor's decision. All the members agreed to it and signed the document (advising the Emperor that the Potsdam Declaration should be accepted unconditionally).

I forgot to say that the conference in the presence of the Emperor was attended by (Baron Kiichiro) Hiranuma, President of the Privy Council. This he did at the Emperor's special request. A Privy Council resolution is essential for the ratification of international agreement, such as the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, but there was not time to assemble the full Privy Council. They are old men, living all over the country, and it would have taken a considerable period to assemble them all for a formal session. To save time, I advised the Prime Minister that this should be omitted. So Mr. Suzuki asked the Emperor to call Baron Hiranuma into the meeting. Hiranuma agreed with the first opinion (unconditional acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration), and his agreement was sufficient to constitute acceptance by the Privy Council.

The cable of acceptance was sent early, about 7 o'clock, on the morning of the 11th through the Swedish and Swiss governments. About 0400 on the 12th we received a broadcast from San Francisco giving us your government's answer, but we did not receive the official written document through the neutral countries until about 0700 on the morning of the 13th.

There was little difference between the broadcast version and the official text. We studied the former the whole day on the 12th, the unofficial document. On the afternoon of the 12th, San Francisco broadcasted that the Japanese reply was very late and intimated that as a result it might be necessary to bomb Tokyo. (Meanwhile we had heard from a prisoner of war, A b-29 pilot, that your government planned to use the atomic bomb on Tokyo on the 12th.) I was very much worried. So I asked Domei to broadcast that the Japanese government had not yet received the official reply of the American government. This broadcast was stopped by the military on the grounds that they were afraid the military forces abroad would pick it up, guess that something was going on, and the effects on morale would be serious. The military refused to permit Domei to send anything. I was very afraid of the possibility that the atomic bomb would be used against us again. So on my own responsibility I told Domei to make the broadcast despite the military.

That was about 5 P.M. Fifteen minutes later San Francisco said that they could understand why the Japanese reply was late. Immediately thereafter several high officials of the military came to me and asked me why I had told Domei to issue this broadcast. They had been to the Domei

officials and had been told that I had ordered the broadcast despite the military objections and would take complete responsibility. This conversation was repeated several times with the military officials, but nothing came of it, and no harm was done to me. You see, the military were trying very hard to cancel the Emperor's decision to accept the Potsdam Declaration unconditionally.

The official answer of your government was received on the morning of the 13th, as you know. We had a Cabinet meeting beginning at 1 P.M. The discussion was confined entirely to the part which said that the ultimate form of the Japanese government should be decided by the Japanese people themselves. Some said that this meant acceptance of our proposal, while others said that it was a refusal.

It is difficult to explain the second opinion, that this was a refusal of our offer. (S. paused at this point, reflecting.) I forgot to say earlier that in our cable to the United States, which I drafted myself, I had stated that the "legal position" of the Emperor should not be altered. Hiranuma, President of the Privy Council, who is a very theoretical nationalist, believed that the "prerogatives" of the Emperor are not derived from the Constitution, so that the position of the Emperor is not a legal but a natural one. He, therefore, insisted that the word "prerogatives" be substituted for "legal position". That was all we meant by the statement anyhow. But I was over-ruled.

About 13 ministers held the opinion that the American answer was acceptable, that the Japanese people could decide the ultimate form of the government. Three believed that it was unacceptable because the Emperor's position should not be dependent upon the people. Again no conclusion for the conference was reached, and we declared an intermission about 6 P.M.

I thought that another conference in the presence of the Emperor would be necessary, but I saw that was not going to be possible when the members of the military staff came to see me and said, "You used a trick the other night (to get the Imperial decision)." They thought I had arranged and staged everything. Nevertheless I asked the military and naval chiefs of staff to sign a request for a second conference in the presence of the Emperor. They refused. They did not want the Emperor's decision to be apparent.

(Aside: All this was going on while the Cabinet session was at intermission. As you can see, these intermissions are a very convenient thing.) I wondered what to do. The military had closed one path to a decision (by refusing to sign the request for another conference with the Emperor). I was very tired, and I thought it would be a good thing if we all got some sleep that night. But San Francisco was still broadcasting, and I was afraid of that atomic bomb. I suggested to Suzuki that the cabinet meeting should be postponed until morning and that I would talk with the military people that night. I said I would talk with them, but I had no idea how I would get through them.

The two chiefs of staff had a talk with the Foreign Minister all that night. They wanted him to put the question to the American government again, to get the answer more exactly. The Foreign Minister told them that that would mean cutting the slim string of communication between the two countries, so he would not agree. They pressed him all night. I stayed with them until 2 A.M. The Foreign Minister insisted that we had been able to establish a very delicate relation with the American government, that to ask the question again would be construed as a refusal, which would result in the destruction of communications between the two governments.

Early on the 14th the Prime Minister came to the office about 8 o'clock. I said, "Did you sleep well?" He said, "Yes, did you?" I said, "One-half hour."

At 2 A.M. I had asked Domei, completely on my own responsibility, to broadcast that the Japanese government had almost decided to accept the reply of the American government. The military people were very angry with Domei, and they (Domei) anxiously asked me to explain that I had ordered it. But that is a minor point.

Suzuki said to me, "what shall we do now?" I suggested that he go to the Imperial Palace and ask the Emperor to call a conference of the Cabinet, the two chiefs of staff and Hiranuma in the Emperor's presence. The Emperor can do that at any time, although the government cannot request such a meeting without the signatures of the chiefs of staff on the requesting document. Mr. Suzuki went to the Palace and returned about 10 o'clock. Immediately after the return, a telephone call came from the Imperial Household Ministry summoning all these people to a conference. All were in informal clothes, but with the permission of the Imperial Household Minister, we all went as we were.

The 16 Cabinet Ministers, the 2 chiefs of staff, Baron Hiranuma, the directors of the Bureaus of Military and Naval Affairs, and I were present at the conference. Mr. Suzuki announced that the Emperor had called us to discuss the matter of the American reply in his presence, so that everyone who had an opinion should express it freely. Anami (War Minister), Gen Umezu (Chief of Staff), and Adm Toyoda (Navy Chief of Staff), expressed the opinion that the American answer was insufficient, so that we had better ask them again for a more concrete answer or, if that were impossible, to continue the war. No one else took that position.

Then the Emperor spoke. He said: "It seems to me that there is no other opinion on your side (the military's). I shall explain mine. I hope all of you will agree with my opinion. (Aside: This was very important. You must remember that the Emperor never used to say anything in these conferences. Now he asked that the government agree with the opinion he expressed. This is a great thing in our political history.) My opinion is the same as the one I expressed the other night. The American answer seems to me acceptable." (Everything then was decided, and all the members of the conference then really recognized that Japan had been defeated for the first time in her 3000-year history. Everyone cried like children. I had intended to write down the Imperial expressions, but I found I could not. Yet all there remember the Emperor's words to this day, just like a dream.)

The Emperor gave almost the same reasons for his opinion as he had in the former meeting with the smaller group. He expressed his opinion on the reconstruction of Japan. He said that all must cooperate together. He then asked the government to draft the Imperial Rescript to stop the war. He said that all the people who will suddenly realize what the military situation is may be surprised. So if the ministers think it would be better, he said he would speak personally to them over the radio. He said, "The military and naval forces especially will be shocked, so I will go any place the Ministers want and explain the situation to the soldiers personally." (Aside: It is very seldom that the Emperor has done this, and I think it is the first time in Japanese history. The Emperor was wearing snow-white gloves, and he himself put his hand to his eyes to brush away the tears. To see that, everyone felt that the Emperor had come back to the people from his capture by the military. I had the conviction that the Emperor was with the people, really near to them, for always.)

The decision was made and the conference was closed. The Cabinet members returned to their office and made the formal decision accepting the American answer. I started to draft the Imperial Rescript. Because I remembered his very words, it was not difficult. I put it in the Chinese style of writing. You should read the Rescript very carefully because it gives the Emperor's real statement, unlike the usual Rescript, which is drafted entirely by the government.

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The answer to the American government was sent out about noon. The Rescript was issued at 11 P.M., and at 12, midnight, the Emperor's broadcast to the people was recorded for broadcast.

At 4:30 the next morning (15 August) I was awakened by the noise of machine guns outside the Cabinet offices. At first I thought it was American planes on a raid, but I soon discovered it was an attack by 50 or 60 Japanese soldiers. I immediately left the building by an underground passage, and went to the Metropolitan Police Headquarters. The machine gun fire lasted only 2 or 3 minutes; they entered the building and, finding no one of any importance around, tried to set fire to it. They left in about 30 minutes and went to the private residence of Mr. Suzuki, which they burned to the ground. Just 5 minutes before they arrived, I had called the Prime Minister, told him of the attack on the Cabinet offices, and suggested that he should get out at once, as it seemed likely that they would go next to his private residence.

At the Metropolitan Police Station I found that the Imperial Household Ministry had been occupied by a military force who were trying to get the record of the Emperor's broadcast and destroy it before it could be put on the air. They did not succeed in locating it. (Gen Shizuichi) Tanaka (Commander of the Eastern District Army, Tokyo) spoke to the leaders of the group, trying to persuade them to vacate the premises, and he finally succeeded about 7 o'clock in the morning.

At noon on the 15th of August the broadcast of the Emperor's speech to the people was made.

T - I understand that the attack on the Cabinet offices did not come completely as a surprise to you?

S - Informed people suspected that something was going on as early as the 12th or 13th. Posters were put up in the Ginza and elsewhere urging people to kill "the Badoglios of Japan, Suzuki, Sakomizu, Yonai, Okada, Togo, and Hiranuma". Hiranuma's name was left off some of the posters and leaflets. The police said they were put up by "Ronin" who were connected with the military.

Then on the 15th, all the military airplanes came out. They had not gone up to attack the B-29's for a long time, but they all came out then, hundreds of them, and spread leaflets saying, "We will continue the war" and "The Imperial Rescript is a forgery".

For one month I lived with two policemen at all times, and at the recommendation of the police I changed my sleeping place every night. It was not so bad, but the rice problem was difficult, as it is rationed, and moving all the time I could not get proper rations for me and my two bodyguards.

This was the second time I had had machine guns turned on me, the first being in the February, 1936, incident, when I was secretary to my father-in-law, Okada, the Prime Minister. Then I was not a marked man, as they were after the Prime Minister himself. This was the second time, when they were really after me. I may not be so lucky the third time.

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