

Ex-1981-B

Extract from
Interrogation of Hideki Tojo
26 March 1946

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- Q Do you not recall that the Japanese Government informed the United States, through the Swiss Government on or about 30 January 1942, that Japan would follow, in the war then pending: (1) The various international conventions, including those signed at The Hague and Geneva; (2) International law; (3) The rules and customs of law as to prisoners and civilians?
- A I don't recall it, but I think it is very likely.
- Q You state that you are now aware of the fact that that promise was not kept or carried out. Why was it not complied with or kept? Do you understand the question?
- A I understand it as regards the inhumane acts towards prisoners that we have talked about. It was the Government's intention to follow these conventions, and it was mine. The fact that these things happened is very much to be regretted. The responsibility for them is mine.
- Q You mentioned today that you did not even suspect the occurrence of these atrocities and the inhumane treatment of prisoners. How can you say this when the United States and Great Britain, through the Swiss and other governments, made numerous written and detailed complaints to your Foreign Office about these very matters?
- A The matter of responsibility for humane considerations and the following of treaty provisions was the responsibility of the various army commanders. I believed that they were following them. That is my answer.
- Q So that, although these numerous complaints were made on these matters, you still trusted the commanders in the field and did not believe the complaints. Is that true?
- A As I said before, when a protest would come in, I would forward it to the responsible army commander involved for action which I thought was taken. I could not tell whether the protest was appropriate or not, and I presumed that investigations were made, followed by courts martial or other suitable action.

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Q Did you hear of any courts martial or suitable action taken in connection with the atrocities and inhumane acts against American prisoners in the "Bataan March" that we spoke about yesterday and today?

A I think that the commanding officer took legal measures.

Q On what do you base that statement?

A The facts of that case would have gone to the commanding officer who had the responsibility for taking appropriate action.

Q Then, it is only your speculation that such action was taken?

A Yes, but I think it was taken because it was his responsibility.

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