

SUMMARY OF INTERROGATION OF

MAJOR GENERAL EUGENE OTT

Military Observer in Manchuria, 1933

Military Attache in Japan, 1934-38

Ambassador to Japan 1938-Dec., 1942

11 March 1946

RECOMMENDATIONS:

On the basis of the facts ~~personally~~ <sup>presently</sup> available, it is recommended:

1. That General Ott not be charged as a defendant; and,
2. That consideration be given to his use as a witness.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

This summary covers interrogations to date, and covers about half the period of investigation.

1. Major General Ott was not an adherent of the Nazi Political philosophy.

2. In December 1933 on his return from Japan to Germany to receive appointment as Military Attache he was summoned by Hitler to report on the condition of the Japanese army and to express his views as to the possibility of Japan creating military pressure through Manchuria against Russia. (Exam. Feb. 18, p. 23)

3. In 1937 Ott conducted peace-feeler negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek at the request of Lt. Col. Manaki, Vice-Chief of the General Staff. Negotiations were terminated by Japan when Chiang Kai-shek questioned Japanese sincerity after Japanese capture of Nanking. (Exam. Feb. 26, p. 20)

4. On being recalled to Berlin in May 1938 for appointment as Ambassador to Japan, Hitler vaguely hinted to Ott the possibility of war with England and asked whether in event of war with England, Japan might diminish her tension with Russia and change to a policy of exerting pressure on England.

5. In June 1940 Ott had a conference with Koiso, Kuniake, Minister of Colonies in the home of Prince Takagawa at Koiso's request. Koiso was Chief of the General Staff in Manchuria in 1933, was an advocate of state-controlled economy in Manchuria and was Commander-in-chief in Korea in 1935. (Exam. Feb. 28, p. 10-12)



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General Ott admitted reporting to Ribbentrop in substance that he advised Koiso that Germany would not object to Japanese going into Indo-China if by doing so Japan would tie up American forces in the Pacific, that Koiso wanted a non-aggression pact with Russia, and that Koiso had probably represented Shiratori as having the same views. Ott denied having discussed the possibility of attack by Japan on the Philippines and Hawaii as set forth in rough translation of report of June 24, 1940. (exam. March 5, p. 1-4, 6)

6. Ott received reply from Mr. Knoll of German State Department discouraging participation by Japan in the war on the ground that "assistance of the harvest is not wanted." (Id. p. 6)

7. Upon appointment of Matsuoka as Foreign Minister in July 1940, Ott was invited to a reception at Matsuoka's home at which time Matsuoka made vague and general suggestions of German-Japanese cooperation. In view of the warning received from Mr. Knoll, Ott did not communicate this suggestion to his Foreign Office. Ott was called to account for the fact that he did not transmit this information which apparently had been communicated to Ribbentrop by Kurusu the Japanese Ambassador to Germany. (Exam. Feb. 27, p. 5)

8. Stahmer, special envoy of Ribbentrop, arrived in Japan in early September 1940 and immediately secret negotiations were conducted by Stahmer and Ott with Matsuoka for conclusion of the Three Powers Pact. Shiratori and Saito were advisors of Matsuoka but took no part in the conferences while Ott was present. Matsumoto entered the negotiations shortly before the conclusion of the treaty.

The preamble to the treaty was written by Matsuoka and was an expression of the Japanese idea of Hakuighchu which Germany did not recognize as a concret policy. (Exam. Mar. 5, p. 21) In the draft produced by Matsuoka Article 3 contained the language "unprovoked attack". Germany insisted on dropping the word "unprovoked" and Matsuoka offered a counter proposal that a secret protocol be made a part of the pact providing for consultation among the contracting parties on the question of whether an attack had been committed in a given instance; that Germany should endeavor to bring Russia into the pact; and that the Mandated Islands be ceded to Japan for a consideration later to be agreed upon. (Exam. Feb. 27, p. 7-15)

The German Foreign Office refused to agree to any secret protocol and when notice of this fact was given, Matsuoka declared that, having had a chance of a personal preliminary talk with the Emperor in which



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he outlined the general terms of the pact and the secret part, the refusal of Germany to agree to the secret protocol put him in a very embarrassing position. Having informed the Emperor in this way and having received a certain favorable inclination he, Matsuoka, was in a bad situation to have his Sovereign informed on a basis which proved afterwards to be wrong. To save the situation it was agreed that the Pact should be concluded without a secret protocol but that a personal letter should be written by Ott and Stahmer addressed to Matsuoka in which the views of Ribbentrop would be expressed to the effect that in case of an attack there should be a consultation of the parties on the question of the incident being an attack within the meaning of the treaty, that mutual assistance in the furnishing of raw materials would be given and that Germany's assurances would be given to do her best to introduce the Soviet Union into the Three Powers Pact. Such a letter was in fact delivered in a sealed envelope to Matsumoto Director of the Legal Bureau.

Ott and Stahmer neither requested nor obtained authority to enter into such a secret understanding and the provisions of it were never reported to the German Foreign Office. (Exam. March 6, p. 3, 4)

9. There was only one occasion after the conclusion of the Pact when a Japanese official made any remark indicating knowledge of the contents of the secret letter. In the summer of 1941 Ott was directed to request the Japanese Government to warn the United States that firing upon a submarine at sight would very probably lead to a ~~conflict~~ <sup>corruption</sup> and might concern the Three Powers Pact. Foreign Minister Toyada, Vice Minister Amanu or Matsumoto made the remark that automatic obligation would probably be contrary to a consultation. (Exam. March 6, p. 7)

10. Matsumoto stated that the Privy Council had been driven to a very quick study of the Pact by the personal influence of Admiral Suzuki, Kantaro, Vice President of the Privy Council.

11. Ribbentrop insisted that the treaty be signed in Germany in order to afford an opportunity for a "big demonstrative propaganda."

12. At the conclusion of the Pact Matsuoka requested Stahmer to obtain authority to institute negotiations immediately in Moscow for the purpose of bringing Russia into the Pact. Stahmer proceeded



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to Germany through Moscow ten days later.

13. In the winter of 1940 and 1941 there was considerable discussion of a general nature among irresponsible circles in Japan about advancing on Singapore. (Exam. March 5, p. 25; February 27, p. 11, 28)

14. Ott characterized Shiratori's views as "military action and military cooperation with Germany." (Exam. February 27, p. 29, 30)

15. Ott denied receiving report dated November 29, 1940 from Weitzsaecker to the German Embassy in Japan in which Kurusu allegedly wanted a non-aggression pact with China and Russia as a pre-condition for a "Japanese advance" through areas south of China, including Thailand, which was necessary to achieve the fall of Singapore, yet the substance of the memorandum was confirmed, according to Ott, by the general talk heard in irresponsible Japanese circles during this period, "except there was nothing as precise and exact as the purported report. (Exam. March 5, p. 25, 26) The correctness of the substance of the memorandum is also indicated by a warning given by Weitzsaecker to Colonel Kretschmer, the new Military Attache to Japan, who arrived in Japan in December 1940, to the effect that the idea of a Japanese advance in the South Pacific was regretted. (Exam. March 5, p. 7)

16. About January 1, 1941 Matsuoka suggested to Ott that it would be very interesting for him to have personal contact with Berlin, as the result of which the Foreign Office in Berlin extended an invitation to Matsuoka to come to Germany.

17. In January 1941 Ott assigned his Military Attache, Colonel Kretschmer, a former member of the German General Staff in the Poland and French campaigns and a specialist in the motorized advance on Dunkirk, to make a study of the much discussed question of a Japanese attack on Singapore and render an opinion on the probable success of such an enterprise. Information for this study had been obtained through normal channels of inquiry by the Military Attaches throughout Japan, Manchuria and the war theaters in China. The study was made in secret and without cooperation of the Japanese. Upon completion of the work in February, the Foreign Office in Berlin was advised that a Japanese attack against Singapore, considering the elements available



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for the study, would probably be successful. No details of the study were furnished the General Staff or the Foreign Office by Ott or his Military Attaches. In making his report, Ott advised his Foreign Office against encouraging such an attack on the ground it would provoke war with the United States.

The following telegram was received by Ott from Ribbentrop: "You may do your best to influence the Japanese Government for an attack against Singapore and Hongkong." (Exam. March 6, p. 9, 14)

18. Ott has admitted that on the day before Matsuoka's conference with Ribbentrop in Berlin he, Ott, discussed the question of attack on Singapore with Ribbentrop, and that on the conclusion of negotiations between Matsuoka and Ribbentrop, Hitler gave Ott personal instructions to do what he could on his return to Japan to cause the Japanese to attack Singapore. The details of these transactions are to be developed by further interrogation.

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