

Ex 2744-A

Def. Doc. # 1714

INTERROGATORIES OF AMBASSADOR STAHLER

QUESTIONS FOR AMBASSADOR STAHLER

1. At any time during your conversations, negotiations or conferences with Ambassador OSHIMA did he at any time commit himself as favorable to Japanese commencing or participation in any war?

Answer - No, he did not commit himself in that way.

2. At any time did Ambassador OSHIMA take a partisan stand on any matters under consideration or were his acts, conversations and opinions governed by his instructions from his government?

Answer - When we talked together as far as our work was concerned, I always had the impression that he spoke according to instructions from his government.

3. Did you see him in Japan during his retirement? Socially, officially? Did he discuss his plans for the future? Military mission to Germany? Corps Commander, etc?

Answer - In Japan I saw him in 1940 only socially, but he never discussed his plans for the future nor any politics. When he left Berlin in 1939, he told me also nothing about his ideas for the future.

4. Did OSHIMA occupy any position officially or otherwise except that of Ambassador while he was in Germany? Did he ever go beyond his authority or responsibility at any time, to your knowledge?

Answer - No. as far as I know, nor got I ever the impression that he went beyond his authority or responsibility.

5. In Germany is the ambassador considered the representative of the head of the State or of the government in power?

Answer - Head of the state, we were not so much interested in the political processes by which results were obtained, but with the relationship resulting through the action taken. Ambassadors represent the head of the State. Ministers represent the government, their authority is more limited. The ambassador is the head of the mission and enjoys all the privileges of his rank and immunities from jurisdiction and interference.

6. Did OSHIMA ever at any time receive instructions as far as you know, which obliged him to do anything beyond diplomatic protocol or procedure established in international relations? Were you more or less protocol chief for diplomatic relations with Japan & Oshima? Were you ever asked by OSHIMA or Ribbentrop to go beyond diplomatic practice in any of your negotiations with OSHIMA?

Answer - I never got the impression that Oshima received instructions which obliged him to do anything beyond diplomatic protocol. I was not protocol chief for diplomatic relations with Oshima and the Japanese Embassy, but I worked in that line closely together with the Germany chief of Protocol Baron Dornberg. Neither OSHIMA nor Ribbentrop ever asked me to go beyond diplomatic practice in any of our negotiations.

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7. Were there any collaboration between Germany and Japan as far as you know that was not provided for by treaty and regulated by some agreement entered into thru the established diplomatic channels?

Answer - There was no collaboration between Germany and Japan, as far as I know, that was not provided for by treaty and went not through the established channels.

8. Were all of OSHIMA's dealings with you and with Ribbentrop usual procedure adopted by other diplomats in their relations with Germany?

Answer - OSHIMA's dealings with me and with Ribbentrop were not different at all from the dealings of other ambassadors with whom I had to work.

9. Did OSHIMA ever interest himself in matters outside of his diplomatic tasks and duties which were contrary to the best interest of either Germany or Japan and those required of his office?

Answer - No, not so far as I know.

10. Did OSHIMA ever manifest any interest in party politics of Japan or have advance information on who was to be Prime Minister of Foreign Minister? Did you know as quickly as he in most cases?

Answer - He never talked about Japanese party politics, and he was as surprised as we were when the governments changed. Sometimes we heard through radio sooner the names of the new Prime or Foreign Minister than he heard it officially.

11. How many different Foreign Ministers were there in Japan during his tour of duty in Germany? Did all of the various cabinets express different foreign policies, or vary the policy towards Germany?

Answer - As far as I know 10 or 11.

All of the various cabinets had different political ideas as far as Germany was concerned. Sometimes their policy towards Germany varied slightly, sometimes very much.

Q. Was there not always some anxiety in Germany when a change came about?

Answer - Yes, we were always nervous and never knew beforehand what a change of cabinet meant for us.

Q. Were new contacts always necessary when a change in Cabinet took place?

Answer - Yes, in Tokyo the embassy always had to try to keep up contact with the changing ministers.

Q. - From your relationship with OSHIMA could you say that he was affiliated with any certain political party in Japan? Was he quite divorced from party politics?

Answer - I never got the impression that OSHIMA was interested in Japanese party politics. He seemed quite divorced from party politics.

12. Were all of the official acts of OSHIMA based upon the policy of the Japanese Government as expressed in messages, telegrams and commissions? Or did he impose his personal views in his official negotiations?



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Answer - All the official acts of OSHIMA were based upon the policy of his government, I never got any other impression.

Q. Did he represent his views and would his position permit it?

A. - When he represented his views, he did it either to assist or to explain the instructions of his government. When he was asked questions, which he felt he could not answer on his own behalf, he told us he would cable to his government and ask for explanation or definition. That happened several times.

Q. - What would happen in the event of a conflict of views between the Foreign Minister and the Ambassador? Whose word is more final in diplomatic procedure?

A. - In the event of a conflict of views between the Foreign Minister and the Ambassador, obviously the Foreign Minister's word is final in diplomatic procedure.

13. To what extent is an ambassador regarded as the representative of the head of the state and granted immunity and special privileges under International Law and customs among Nations? Germany?

Answer - An ambassador is especially treated as the personal representative of the head of the State. When he appears officially he enjoys special honours, and he is granted immunity and special privileges according to International Law and customs among nations. All these ambassadorial privileges are connected with his person, not with any other official of his embassy.

Q. - Were these principles adhered to rigidly in Germany as respects ambassadors of the allied nations at outbreak of war? Please explain procedure.

A. - These principles were always rigidly adhered to in Germany as respects ambassadors of the allied nations at outbreak of war. I remember that special officials of the foreign office were ordered to take care of the different ambassadors. Special trains and guards had to transport all members to a resort, normally first-class hotel, where they could wait till the German Embassy members in the respective countries were ready. Then the ambassadors and embassy members were exchanged, under German responsibility till the German borders. When diplomatic relations were severed as for instance between Chungking-China and Germany, the ambassador and his staff could nevertheless stay in their houses, and they enjoyed special privileges in the rationing of food, gasoline and so on. This is customary as long as he stays in the country where he was formerly accredited, when he leaves this country, he is estimated as foreigner of distinction. During the siege of Warsaw in September, 1939, i.e. even before the occupation, a special armistice of 24 hours was granted to the city only to give the diplomatic corps possibility to leave.

14. Was OSHIMA informed of the American-Japanese negotiations prior to Pearl Harbor? Had he ever protested to his government as far as you know on account of lack of information? Was he kept informed usually or only as to certain negotiations?

Answer - I do not know, but I do not believe it, because he told me several times that he was badly informed from his government, and he complained about it. I got the impression that he was usually only informed as far as his government believed it to be necessary.



BASED UPON COUNT 5 OF THE INDICTMENT

- Q. At any time during your negotiations, conversations or conferences with Ambassador Oshima did he initiate discussions or any questions officially or unofficially dealing with Japan-German relations without first obtaining instructions from his Government?
- A. Not as far as I know.
- " Did he take a lead or role as organizer of any movement, policy or program which was sponsored by any group in the Japanese Government, as distinguished from the organized machinery and governmental process of Japan?
- A. I never got the impression, when I saw him, that he talked otherwise as in his capacity as ambassador, that means as representative of his government.
3. Did he instigate any program or governmental policy of Japan which later became the foreign policy of his government ?
- A. No, he always talked according to the instruction of his government, which several times changed its policy concerning Germany.
4. Did he assist or in any way further the program of any faction, group or organization as distinguished from the ordinary channels of diplomatic intercourse during the period of your relations with him?
- A. I never got that impression.
5. Did he formulate in any manner any policy or plank of any program which was proposed by the Japanese government or were all of his negotiations based upon matters which originated in Tokyo, or through the governmental machinery in Berlin?
- A. His negotiations were always based upon orders coming from Tokyo or wishes from the government in Berlin.
- Q. Did he take any part in the execution of any program, policy or agreement which was not sponsored, promoted and urged by his own government through diplomatic channels?
- A. I never heard of it.
- Q. Was there any definite continuity in the foreign policy of Japan towards Germany over the period of years of your association with this problem?
- A. Through the German foreign policy towards Japan was unchanged, the Japanese policy as far as Germany was concerned changed several times; the ideas of the Government Konoe - Hirota (Summer 1938), Hiranuma - Arita (January 1939), and Konoe - Matsuoka (July 1940) in that line was extremely different.
- Q. Did you ever have any conversations or negotiations with Ambassador Oshima which would indicate to you that he bore any closer relationship to one of the nine foreign ministers of Japan than to the other eight, who were in charge of foreign affairs during his tour of duty as Ambassador?



- A. No, I have never heard him express greater friendship towards any foreign minister particularly; having been absent such a long time from Japan, probably he did not even know them personally.
- Q. It is charged that the object of the German-Japanese-Italian agreements were to secure the military, naval, political and economical domination of the whole world, each having specific domination in its won sphere.  
Would you please give your explanation of the underlying purpose of the international relations between the three nations.
- A. The claim that the three nations Germany-Japan-Italy sought to dominate the world through their international relations is absurd. When I was occupied with the negotiations of the German-Japanese-Italian agreement, it was the general idea in 1938 & 1939 to avoid threatening political isolation and to prevent war through forming a defensive alliance, thereby strengthening the international political situation in general. In 1940, after Germany was already at war, the idea was to avoid the farther outspreading of the war by preventing the United States from entering the war, and to establish a platform for peace. Never have I heard from any side any word about a plan of dominating the world.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FOR AMBASSADOR  
STAHMER

COLLABORATION - JAPAN, GERMANY AND ITALY BASED UPON  
OPENING STATEMENT OF THE PROSECUTION ON THIS PHASE.

1. To what extent did any Japanese statesmen, other than Matsuoka, participate in the negotiations with you and Ambassador Ott prior to the conclusion of the Tri-Partite Pact in September 1940?
  - A. Only Matsuoka participated, no other Japanese statesman.
2. During your negotiations with Matsuoka did he at any time interrupt conferences or conversations to confer and consult with other Japanese statesmen concerning the content, wording or intent of the Tri-Partite Pact?
  - A. No, during our negotiations Matsuoka did not even telephone with other people.
3. The Prosecution has stated on page 7, sub-division 2: "Shortly after the reorientation of German policy with respect to Sino-Japanese conflict, and German-Japanese relations, von Ribbentrop, then German Foreign Minister, proposed German-Japanese military alliance aimed at the entire world". Is this statement true? If not, explain.
  - A. As far as I know, Ribbentrop proposed a new agreement with Japan, with the idea of strengthening political relations with this country. I came in shortly after the negotiations began, and I was instructed to work in the preparations of a defensive alliance. Never have I heard from Ribbentrop or any other side even a hint of a proposed German-Japanese military alliance aimed at the entire world.
4. It is stated that the accused Oshima and Shiratori were sent to Rome for the purpose of inducing Mussolini to enter in to the proposed Tri-Partite Pact? Is this statement true? If not, explain to what extent Ribbentrop and Hitler had previously negotiated and conferred with Mussolini concerning this matter.
  - A. It is not true, according to my knowledge, that Oshima and Shiratori were sent to Rome to induce Mussolini to enter in the proposed Tri-Partite Pact. The German Government could and would never use Foreign ambassadors for such a purpose. Besides, as I know definitely, Hitler and Ribbentrop had already talked with Mussolini about the idea of a Tri-Partite Pact during the Munich Conference in September 1938, where Mussolini agreed principally.
5. Were you advised as to the mission of the Ito Commission which was sent to Berlin and Rome relating to the abortive Tri-Partite agreement.
  - A. No.



6. In Count Ciano's Diary it is related that Shiratori and Oshima refused to follow the instructions delivered by the Ito Commission.  
What has been your experience concerning the accuracy of the items set out in the Ciano diary?
- A. I have only read an abridged version of Ciano's diary, but I do not take it as a historical document.  
He asserts, for instance, that he was against the Italians attacking Greece, but at that time I heard from the Italian Embassy that Ciano assisted this plan very much and was proud of it; only after the Italian defeat in Albania he changed his opinion.
7. It is charged that the ambassadors asserted that they would resign in the event the pact of alliance was not concluded without reservation.  
Were you aware of any such condition?
- A. I did not hear of this assertion, if it is true, the Japanese Government must know it. I think I would have known of it, surely, if it were true. The only mention I have ever heard of such a thing was from the one source.
8. It is charged that Germany endeavored to excite Japan's feeling against America by influencing the press and leading personalities. Please state if this is true, if not, please explain the attitude of the German leaders towards appeasement of the United States.
- A. I do not know, and I was personally never connected with this line. I only remember that Goebbels wanted to attack F.D.R. personally, but that Hitler, after a conference with Ribbentrop, strictly forbade any personal attack of the person of a foreign Chief of state.
9. It is charged that negotiations for Japanese-German alliance were renewed by Kurusu on the 19 June 1940.  
Please explain this statement in the light of the actual circumstances.
- A. Kurusu only told the German Government that the new government in Tokyo wanted a closer contact; he did not begin negotiations otherwise it would not have been necessary to send me to Tokyo, because the situation was too obscure to be analyzed from Berlin. As far as I know, he was during the negotiations in Tokyo only very scantily informed by his own government.
10. It is charged that on 8 July 1940 Ambassador Sato and Kurusu in conference with you and Ribbentrop conferred concerning the relations between Japan and Germany.  
Please explain the nature and extent of this discussion.
- A. That was no conference, but only a courtesy call with a normal conversation, where I got the impression that both sides wanted to avoid any remark concerning unsolved political questions. I remember that the Japanese Minister Kawai, who travelled at that time in Europe was present.
11. To what extent the French and Dutch East Asia colonies came in for discussion during this conversation?
- A. I have no recollections.
12. To what extent had the Japanese statesmen manifested their fears concerning the interest of Germany in the Pacific Isles?
- A. Same as question number 11.



13. To what extent did the appointment of Matsuoka effect the Japanese Foreign policy towards Germany?

A. From the new cabinet with Konoye as Prime Minister and Matsuoka as Foreign Minister we got the impression that this cabinet was interested to come to a closer contact with Germany. When I arrived in Japan I found that the government had already made preparations for a pact with Germany and Italy.

14. In Germany what was the impression as to what officials of the Japanese government determined upon the Foreign Policy of Japan during all of the time while you were Liaison between Ribbentrop and Oshima?

A. We did not have the impression that any single statesmen determined upon the Japanese foreign policy. For us the different statesmen were only exponents of different groups or a combination of groups, sometimes more friendly towards Germany, sometimes more towards the United States and England.

15. At the time when you arrived in Tokyo for the negotiations of the Tri-Partite Pact did you consider that Japan and the United States would become engaged in war in the Pacific  
(p. 19)

A. No, I wanted to prevent the entrance of the United States into the war.

16. The prosecution has stated that the 20 million of German descent Americans were considered to hold an influential position in the United States. Would you please state what you told Matsuoka concerning this?

A. When Matsuoka asked me about the influence of the German descent Americans, I told him that I believed they were better American citizens than many other Americans, and informed him of my experiences in that line in Chicago.

17. Did you discuss the terms of the Tri-Partite Pact with Prince Konoye or any other cabinet member before or after its completion in Tokyo?

A. No, neither with Prince Konoye nor any other cabinet member whom I saw. Only after the signature, during official lunches or dinners was the matter commented upon.

18. Please explain the circumstances which brought about the signing of the Pact in Berlin rather than in Tokyo.

A. I do not remember; the German Embassy in Tokyo got a cable some days before the negotiations were finished that Germany and Italy wanted to have the pact signed in Berlin.

19. Please explain Matsuoka's idea concerning this matter.

A. At first he seemed a little reluctant, but very soon he agreed; I believe that, as a sort of compensation, Ribbentrop invited him on the evening of the 27 September to come to Berlin.

20. \* \* \* \* \*  
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21. Was the Soviet Union considered a potential participant in the Tri Partite Pact? Explain.
- A. Though I was never told so, I believe both Germany and Japan wanted the Soviet Union to participate later. At any rate, both governments were very anxious to avoid any possibility to offend the Soviet Union.
22. It is stated that "The German Ambassador to Japan made a report on the 31 January 1941 to his government of a two day research with the attaches of the armed forces in which it was concluded that the chances of success of an attack by Japan against Singapore were favorable". Was this action authorized in Berlin or taken upon the initiative of Ambassador Ott?
- A. I believe that this action was taken upon the initiative of Ambassador Ott, because if Berlin had asked for such a research the telegram concerned must be referred to after the custom of the German Foreign Office, as for instance in the telegram Nr. 129 from the 27th September, 1941. German Number 119.
23. Upon the arrival of Foreign Minister Matsuoka in Germany in 1941 did he advise you of the principle international question which he desired to discuss with Ribbentrop?
- A. No.
24. Did you at any time learn of the purpose of his mission?
- A. I only heard shortly after he had left Berlin that he wanted to make a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union.
25. As far as you know was Ambassador Oshima advised beforehand or during the visit of the object of his tour?
- A. I do not know, because Oshima did not tell me.
26. Were you ever aware of any conversations between Ambassador Oshima and von Ribbentrop concerning the advisability of an Japanese attack on Singapore?
- A. I was never present at a meeting between Ribbentrop and Oshima where a Japanese attack on Singapore was mentioned.
27. Is it likely that such a conversation took place? Explain
- A. I do not believe it, for as far as I know Oshima, he was always very cautious.
28. Was it understood in Berlin that Matsuoka's opinions and expressions were purely unofficial and personal views, rather than backed by his Government, when he discussed Singapore and joint economic and military cooperation?
- A. I believe that Berlin understood Matsuoka's opinion as purely unofficial and personal views, because we knew that the governments changed very often in Japan and that a strong man, as what Matsuoka wished to impress himself, was not possible under the Imperial Regime in Japan.



29. It is stated (p30) that "On the 24 May 1941 a report was made by German Military Attache in Tokyo to German Foreign Intelligence Office that Japan acknowledged her treaty obligations in the event United States entered the war." Is this statement based on facts?
- A. I do not know. I never heard of it.
30. It is charged that "When the Tri-Partite Pact was concluded 27 September 1940, Matsuoka in reply to a question stated that an agreement would be negotiated between the three powers for a new separate peace pact in the event of hostilities". Are you aware of any such statement being uttered at that time?
- A. I do not remember to have talked with Matsuoka about a "no separate peace clause".
31. Up until the time you left Germany were the officials of the government informed of the state of negotiations between Japan and the United States? Please explain this situation.
- A. When I was still in Germany in 1941, the German officials concerned were very nervous, because they never got a clear answer of the state of negotiations between Japan and the United States, during early 1941 until October when I left. We only heard indirectly and thru unreliable information or rumors.
32. It is stated that on the 18 January 1942 the armed forces of Japan, Germany and Italy concluded military agreement "In the spirit of the Tri-Partite Pact 27 September 1940", and provided for operational coordination among them. Was any such situation contemplated at the completion of the Tri-Partite Pact?
- A. At the time of the signature of the Tri-Partite Pact no such action or situation was contemplated.