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Defense Document 626-A-8

CONTINUED INTERROGATION OF

General Hideki TOJO

Date and Time: 13 March 1946, 0935-1215 hours.

Place : Sugamo Prison, Tokyo, Japan.

Present : General Hideki TOJO  
Mr. John W. Fihelly, Interrogator  
Commander Yale Mazon, USNR, Interpreter  
Miss Myrtle B. Mills, Stenographer

Questions by : Mr. Fihelly

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Q. This is all very helpful to us as we are attempting to fully understand the Japanese political and military systems, and we thank you for your assistance.

A. This matter of the relation of the cabinet authority to that of the Supreme Command is very basic. If it is not understood, nothing will be understood.

Q. As Premier and War Minister, were you a member of the Supreme Command, the Board of Marshals and Fleet Admirals, and of the Supreme War Council?

A. As War Minister, I was not a member of the Supreme Command, but I was a participant (sankaku sha). I was concerned with military administration but not with the conduct of operations or tactics. I was not a member of the Board of Marshals and Fleet Admirals. However, I was, along with the Chiefs of Staff, a member of the Supreme War Council.

I am saying what follows here, not by way of excuse or to avoid responsibility because I hate the idea of trying to avoid responsibility. I wish to take full responsibility, but this is only a factual explanation of a real situation in order to assist you in your investigation. When Prince KONOYE was Premier, it was very, very difficult for him because of the fact that his sphere of authority included only the civil sphere. When I became Premier, since I was concurrently War Minister, I had, in addition, a voice in purely military matters, to wit: in military administration. When I became Chief of Staff on 22 February 1944, soon after the fall of the Marianas, I had an additional segment of authority in regard to purely military affairs. In fact after that, only the purely Naval matters were outside of my authority. As Premier, I had full responsibility for civil affairs; as War Minister, I had the additional military function of military administration; as Chief of Staff, I had the further High Command functions of operations and tactics /sakuson yohei/.

This whole matter of the actual system in Japan is basic to the understanding of such things as the China Incident and the matters in southern Indo-China that we have talked about. At the first, the government policy in regard to the China Incident was that of localization. However, due to the fact of the independence of the High Command, the fighting kept spreading as they strove for victory. Premier KONOYE had a terrible time.

One other thing I think is important: Under the Japanese system, the Emperor was assisted by the following officials: Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal /Naidaijin/; the Lord Chamberlain /jiju Cho/; and the Imperial Household Minister /kunai Daijin/. He also had a Chief Aide-de-Camp /Jiju Bukan Cho/. The Lord Privy Seal was the Emperor's advisor on matter relating to civil affairs. The Grand Chamberlain and the

Imperial Household Minister had no direct connection with either the civil government or the Supreme Command. The Grand Chamberlain was adjutant to His Majesty; as such, he had a variety of duties. However, neither he nor the Imperial Household Minister had any direct connection with either the civil government or the High Command. This was particularly true in the case of the former, since he was a civil official and not a military man. The Emperor's Aide-de-Camp, being a full general, had some unofficial access to the Supreme Command, but, under the government system itself, he had actually no authority for direct liaison.

The Emperor did confer directly with the Board of Marshals and Fleet Admirals. However, this body was not very active since most of the members were of advanced years. Therefore, in practice, the Emperor was in a difficult position. He had no one on his staff to help him on High Command matters. When the Premier and the various cabinet members reported to the Emperor on civil matters, he could consult the Lord Privy Seal. When the Chiefs of Staff reported to him in regard to command problems, he had no body to consult except the Board of Marshals and Fleet Admirals.

The responsibility of the Premier and the Foreign, War, and Navy Ministers, and the President of the Planning Board, together with the Chiefs of Staff, for advice to the Emperor, through the instrumentality of the Liaison Conferences and Imperial Conferences, was of tremendous importance. To return to the China incident, for example - the Government policy was a policy of non-enlargement of the Incident; nevertheless, because of the fact that the civil government had no authority over the Supreme Command, the fighting was in fact, enlarged and the civil government was powerless to prevent it.