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INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al	)	
-vs-	)	AFFIDAVIT OF
ARAKI, Sadao, et al Defendants	)	OKADA, Keisuke

I, Keisuke, OKADA, of lawful age, being first duly sworn in accordance with the customs of my country, depose and state:

I was born in Fukui Prefecture, Japan, in 1868. I graduated from the Naval Academy in 1889, became an Admiral in 1924 and remained in the Japanese Navy until 1933. I was appointed as Prime Minister of Japan in July of the following year 1934.

In February, 1936, following the so-called "February 26th Incident", I resigned my post as Prime Minister. From ~~some~~ time in 1940 up until the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration by Japan I attended many meetings of the "Jushin" or Elder Statesmen. I was present at the meeting of the Elder Statesmen which was held on 29 November 1941. This meeting, instead of being called in the usual manner by the Lord Chamberlain at the request of the Emperor, was convened upon the request of the Premier and the Imperial Palace was designated as the place of assembly. There were two sessions, one in the forenoon and one in the afternoon.

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At the morning session we heard the Premier and Cabinet Ministers speak upon the then current diplomatic and political situation. It was explained to us that the negotiations between Japan and the United States had reached an impasse and while the speakers did not say so in so many words, it was evident that the Government felt war between the nations was inevitable; that the situation which had developed and which was developing would make war unavoidable. The Premier did not state that the Government had decided at that time to go to war and the members of the government did not attempt to persuade us in support of war. However, each Elder Statesman asked questions of the Ministers who were present. To the questions they replied that the position of the Government would be well understood if the factual grounds were shown and if they could disclose and cite figures which they had, but which they stated they could not disclose <sup>since</sup> they were State secrets. None of the Elder Statesmen supported or encouraged war, especially Wakatsuki, Konoye, Hiranuma and I. Without any previous consultation or deliberation we urged the Government to reconsider the matter very carefully and to proceed with extreme caution in any matter which might bring about hostilities. We all expressed negative opinions.

After the morning session we were given a luncheon by the Emperor and after we had finished our meal, each of

us submitted our dissuading opinion to the Throne.

It may have been, although I do not exactly recall, that one of the Elder Statesmen present made a statement to the effect that the matter would have to rest in the hands of the Government. It was called to my attention that this statement was alleged to have been made. I do not recall who the person was making such a statement, if it were made, but I do know it was not HIRANUMA. Inasmuch as we were not told that the Government had decided upon war, and as we were not informed of the grounds which were based upon the figures which the members of the Government told us were being treated as State secrets, we had no opportunity to go into the matter deeply. Because of lack of exact information, which was withheld from us for the reason mentioned, we had to confine ourselves to the expression of negative and dissuading opinions.

With reference to the views expressed by the Premier that Japan would be strangled gradually and slowly, I warned that the country must not be driven to a sudden crash, which, in my opinion, would be far worse than the slow strangulation which the Premier feared. This opinion was concurred in completely by Baron Hiranuma. The opinions submitted by the Elder Statesmen to the Throne at the noonday luncheon were but a reiteration of the views expressed in the morning session to the Premier and Cabinet Ministers. The great majority of us, including Baron Hiranuma, were not satisfied

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with the explanations given by the Governmental authorities and having deep concern for the future welfare of the nation, we stated that the Government must handle the matter with utmost caution. Although our presence before the Throne I was for a comparatively short time, we spent the entire afternoon until dusk with the Government officials. However, their attitude did not change and our attitude did not waver in the least, and we parted with absolutely no premonition that within less than ten days the attack on Pearl Harbor would have been made. The Elder Statesmen who attended this conference were Wakatsuki, Konoye, Hiranuma, Yonai, Hirota, Hayashi, Abe and myself. The then Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, Marquis Kido, was present at the luncheon given by the Emperor and the talk which followed immediately, but did not attend either session of the conference.

After the outbreak of the war, and in its early stages, Japan met with many victories. However, as the war progressed the situation changed and the conditions for Japan went from bad to worse until in 1943 Wakatsuki, Konoye, Hiranuma and I, who had always been opposed to the idea of war, agreed among ourselves that this war must be brought to an end by whatever means possible. With this objective in mind, we four met frequently. In the beginning the houses of Prince Konoye in Mejiro and Ogikubo were used as meeting places, but this became too dangerous because of increasing air raids, and we rented a room in the Dai Ichi Sogo Building,

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now occupied by the Supreme Command, Allied Powers. Hiranuma or I acted as Secretary of the group. We resolved among ourselves that the first step necessary was to introduce into the Cabinet a man who was opposed to war. We selected Admiral Yonai as the most likely candidate, and endeavored to secure an appointment for him. We went to great lengths to create occasions when we could meet and talk with the Premier in order to accomplish our end, but we were eventually unsuccessful in getting Admiral Yonai into the Cabinet. It is true that a position was offered to him without portfolio, but this could not have accomplished our ends, and we sought to have him appointed as Navy Minister, but to this proposition, as previously stated, the government would not agree.

Later it became apparent that there was unrest and dissatisfaction with the Cabinet in various circles. This dissatisfaction was expressed in various quarters of the country. We became imbued with the idea that the Cabinet could not cope with the situation and on July 17, 1944, Wakatsuki, Konoye, Hiranuma and I met at the home of Hiranuma to discuss the situation. We were later joined by other Elder Statesmen who took part in the discussion. As a result of this discussion we arrived at a conclusion which we put into writing, as follows.

"In order to find our way through the current difficult situation, it is necessary to renew the popular mind. All people must rally and cooperate to build a powerful national Cabinet, which will surge forward unswervingly. A partial reorganization of the Cabinet will not be of any use."

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This resolution was passed because it was apparent that the Cabinet had lost its popular appeal and we were of the opinion that it was necessary to retire the Cabinet in order to bring the war to an end. I handed this resolution personally to the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, Marquis Kido, at his official residence, and reported to him what had happened in the meeting. The following day, July 18th, the Cabinet resigned en bloc and on the same day an Elder Statesman's meeting was convened for the purpose of recommending a head to the succeeding Government. At this meeting Hiranuma was present and he pointed out that the Army had lost the peoples' support and that further military interference with various spheres of national life was not advisable. Prince Konoye suggested SUZUKI, Kantaro, as the head of the succeeding Cabinet, and Hiranuma supported his recommendation strongly. He praised SUZUKI's personality and stated he felt him eminently fit to hold the position. Eventually however, General Koiso was recommended.

After the meeting Wakatsuki, Konoye, Hiranuma and I conferred and Konoye went to the homes of all the remaining Elder Statesmen to get their agreement, and to make arrangements so that the Emperor's order for the formation of the new cabinet would be given to Koiso and Yonai jointly, appointing Yonai to the Navy Ministry. Such an Imperial order was without precedent but Prince Konoye succeeded in his task. This arrangement of having Yonai appointed to the

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Navy Ministry was in order to insure a man in the cabinet who was opposed to war. At the Elder Statesmen's meeting which was convened on April 5, 1945, at the time the Koiso Cabinet resigned, Hiranuma succeeded this time in recommending SUZUKI, Kantaro, as the next Prime Minister. Inasmuch as SUZUKI was a relative of mine, I refrained from taking any part in the matter, but did undertake the task of persuading him to give his consent to the acceptance of the post. Hiranuma had long been in favor of Suzuki and in those days, as I previously stated, the four of us; i.e., Wakatsuki, Konoye, Hiranuma and myself, met frequently to discuss measures which should be taken because of the seriousness of the situation. From these many discussions I know the reason why Hiranuma recommended Suzuki as a successor to Koiso. Suzuki had served the Emperor as his Lord Chamberlain for a great length of time and knew his wishes and thoughts perhaps better than any other popular figure in all of Japan. Hiranuma felt that the war could certainly be brought to an end if Suzuki accepted the portfolio of Prime Minister. His foresight actually came to pass and is now history. However, at the conference of the Elder Statesmen held on 5 April 1945, Hiranuma did not publicly state, as the grounds for recommending Suzuki for the Prime Ministry the reasons which I have just stated. On the contrary, he stated in substance that the country needed a man who would fight

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to the ultimate end. He gave no public interpretation of this statement. His reasons, which I will know, for making such a statement were two-fold. Hiranuma knew the internal situation in Japan. He knew that the people were not psychologically attuned to the termination of war, which could only end in defeat for Japan. He also realized that if he were to state that he was recommending a person for the Premiership who would likely bring about peace, that such a statement would defeat his purpose and his plan for bringing about peace could never be realized. He further realized, as most of us did, that in order to bring about peace, it would have to be placed on a basis where Japan could retain some form of her national integrity. He knew that if a plan of this type could not be worked out, the Japanese people would fight to the death of the last man. Consequently the person who was to be elevated to the Premiership had to be a person who would fight to the ultimate end in order to bring about the desired results. He also realized, as did the statesmen of the allied nations acquainted with the situation in Japan, that the Emperor must be retained in some capacity and that if any success at all was to be had with reference to an early peace, that it would require the services of a man who would fight for those principles to the bitter end. Fortunately the views of the allied statesmen, which coincided with those of



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~~Hiranuma on those vital questions, were accepted and were reflected in the Potsdam Declaration.~~

On 9 August 1945 The Supreme Conference for the Direction of War was convened in the Imperial Palace before the Throne to discuss and decide whether Japan should accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. At that time Hiranuma was the President of the Privy Council and was not a regular member of the conference but did attend on this occasion by special request of the Emperor. At this conference Hiranuma supported the opinion that Japan should accept the Potsdam Declaration. Perhaps I should state at this point that I was not present at the conference, but I do know personally that Hiranuma attended and I learned of his position from conversations held with him and other persons who were present. At the end of this conference the Emperor approved the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration and Japan's surrender was decided upon.

~~Before public announcement was made of the decision reached at this conference, and on the early morning of the 15th of August, 1945, Hiranuma's residence was attacked and burned by a group of students and young fanatics led by an Army officer. His home was completely destroyed, and Hiranuma escaped assassination for the second time by a hairs breadth.~~

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On this 3 day of Sept, 1947

At Tokyo

DEPONENT OKADA Koisuko (seal)

I, USAMI, Rokuro hereby certify that the above statement was sworn by the Deponent, who affixed his signature and seal thereto in the presence of this witness.

On the same date

At the same place

Witness: (signed ) USAMI, Rokuro (seal)

OATH

In accordance with my conscience I swear to tell the whole truth withholding nothing and adding nothing.

/S/ OKADA, Koisuko (seal)