

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

-vs-

ARAKI Sadao, et al

- Defendants -

A F F I D A V I T

SAKOMIZU HISATSUNE

Having first duly sworn an oath as on the attached sheet, in accordance with the procedure followed in my country, I hereby depose as follows:

When Admiral Suzuki Kantarō received an Imperial mandate to form a new cabinet on 5 April 1945, I participated in the selection of the Cabinet ministers. I was appointed Chief Secretary of the Cabinet on 7 April upon its formation and remained in that office until 17 August when the Cabinet resigned en masse. During that period, I attended all the Imperial Conferences, Cabinet meetings and Supreme War Direction Councils in the capacity of the Chief Secretary of the Cabinet. The following testimony to the facts concerning Foreign Minister Tōgō in the Suzuki Cabinet is based upon what I learned directly through my own experience at the above-mentioned Councils and Conferences and what I was told by Premier Suzuki and Foreign Minister Tōgō.

1) On the occasion of the formation of the Cabinet, it was decided to recommend Mr. Tōgō Shigenori as Foreign Minister. An urgent message was promptly wired to the Governor of Nagano Prefecture on 7 April to request Mr. Tōgō, who was then in Karuizawa, to come up to Tokyo, where he was to be asked to enter the Cabinet.

He arrived in Tokyo on the evening of 7 April and met Admiral Suzuki that evening. He declared that since he had originally been against the Pacific War, he wanted to endeavor to terminate it as quickly as possible; that although the time to close the war must of course be carefully chosen in the light of the development of the war situation, he wanted to know whether Premier Suzuki was determined to make his Cabinet the Cabinet to end the war, and accordingly what the Premier's opinion was with respect to the war potential of Japan. Exchange of opinions followed and eventually Mr. Tōgō declined the offer of the Foreign Ministership on the ground that the Admiral's reply was not clear and they parted with a promise to reconsider the matter. As the Premier told me of the above outcome, I called on Mr. Tōgō on the following day, 8 April. I explained how it was impossible for the Premier to declare, in the circumstances of those times, that he really intended to bring the war to a close promptly, because of the extremely important effect and reaction it might produce. I pressed our request that, since the true intention of the Premier was clear, he should accept the appointment on that tacit understanding, and asked him to meet Mr. Suzuki again on the following day, the 9th.

Mr. Tōgō repeatedly emphasized his position, but agreed to call on the Premier on the 9th. Mr. Tōgō met Premier Suzuki on 9 April, had a long talk with the Premier, and finally accepted the offer to become Foreign Minister. The Premier told me at that time that it was because an agreement was reached on the question between the two.

2) Mr. Tōgō as Foreign Minister in the Suzuki Cabinet was the most earnest advocate of peace from first to last. His opinions delivered at the exclusive meetings of the Big Six (the members of the Supreme War Guidance Council; namely, the Premier, the Foreign Minister, the War Minister, the Navy Minister, the Chief of the Army General Staff and the Chief of the Naval General Staff), held very frequently from the middle of May onward, were always for prompt ending of the war. From what I was told by the Premier, Mr. Tōgō did not necessarily rest his hopes upon the possibility of peace through the good offices of the Soviet Union, but intended so far as possible direct negotiation with the United States Government. However, that may be, his efforts for peace were consistent. Meanwhile, there was an opinion supported by some military circles that Japan should get from the Soviet Union petroleum and equipment which would enable Japan to continue war. But Mr. Tōgō asserted that such was quite inconceivable, and insisted on the prompt conclusion of peace.

As the Imperial wishes were revealed on 22 June and concrete measures were to be taken to end the war, the Foreign Minister in person directed the necessary preparation and proceeded with the negotiations with the Soviet Union. When the Potsdam Declaration was promulgated on 26 July, the general trend of opinions expressed at the Cabinet meeting and the Supreme War Direction Council was that as the negotiations were being conducted with the Soviet Union, Japan should decide the measures to take in this connection after receiving a reply from the Soviet Union. It was decided that Japan should for the time being see how things might develop, maintaining silence as to acceptance or rejection of the Potsdam Declaration. The military, however, raised an objection that the silence of the Government as to the Declaration would exert a most demoralizing effect upon the troops at the front and that therefore a strong statement should be issued against it.

The Foreign Minister was firmly against this opinion of the military, pointing out that manifestation of such an intention of the Government would eventually prove a fatal obstacle to the conclusion of peace. Later, this problem was brought up for discussion among the War Minister, the Navy Minister, the Chief of the Army General Staff and the Chief of the Naval General Staff at a conference which the Foreign Minister did not attend. The opinion of the military prevailed and it was decided that the Premier should state at a press conference that the Japanese Government would not take a serious view of the Potsdam Declaration, which was in substance similar to the Cairo Declaration. The press reported that the Premier stated that the Japanese Government ignored the Declaration. The Foreign Minister regretted this deeply, and did not give his consent to the decision to the last. When, afterward, the Soviet Union declared war upon Japan on the pretext of the above-mentioned statement, the Foreign Minister was deeply chagrined at this, and cried "That's just what I expected."

On 6 August, the city of Hiroshima was attacked with atomic bombs. Upon receiving the report, the Foreign Minister told the

Premier that the war should be terminated promptly, and pressed his opinion upon the military leaders.

When the American radio broadcast reported the Soviet Union's participation in the Pacific War at a little after 4 A.M., 9 August, Mr. Tōgō called on the Premier (I was with the Premier then), and advised him to end the war promptly. The Supreme War Direction Council was held in the morning of ~~the same day~~. There Mr. Tōgō strongly insisted on the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration insofar as the Allies would respect the safety of the Imperial Household, but the Council adjourned without coming to a conclusion. The Cabinet meeting was opened at 1 P.M. Here, too, Mr. Tōgō repeated his argument, and explained fully the reasons why he could not agree with those who insisted upon attaching various conditions to Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration. He succeeded in convincing the majority of the Cabinet members.

At the Imperial Conference on the night of the 9th, Mr. Tōgō stated his belief frankly and clearly. In giving the Imperial decision on that occasion, His Majesty graciously stated, "We approve the opinion of the Foreign Minister."

At the Cabinet meeting held from 10 A.M., 13 August, immediately after the Allies' reply was received, Mr. Tōgō insisted on the acceptance of the Declaration promptly on the basis of this reply. Some Cabinet members persisted in requesting a more clear and positive reply from the Allies with respect to the national polity and other questions, but Mr. Tōgō refuted them with convincing reasoning.

Discussion was repeated further at the Imperial Conference in the morning of 14 August, His Majesty again approved the Foreign Minister's opinion and gave the final decision to accept the above-mentioned reply of the Allies as it stood.

~~In short~~, Mr. Tōgō as Foreign Minister in the Suzuki Cabinet concentrated all his energy upon his cherished design of restoration of peace. I am still deeply impressed by his all-out efforts to end the war which was started against his will.

O A T H

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

Sakomizu Hisatsune (seal)

On this 4th day of December, 1947

At Tokyo

Deponent: Sakomizu Hisatsune

I, Nishi Haruhiko, hereby certify that the above statement was sworn to by the deponent, who affixed his signature and seal thereto in the presence of this witness.

On the same date

At Tokyo

Witness: Nishi Haruhiko (seal)

Translation Certificate

I, Nishi Haruhiko, of the defense, hereby certify that I am conversant with the English and Japanese languages, and that the foregoing is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a correct translation of the original document.

Nishi Haruhiko (seal)

Tokyo
6 December 1947