

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

- vs -

ARAKI, Sadao, et al

SWORN DEPOSITION

DEPONENT: OIKAWA, Koshiro

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

I was a former Admiral in the Navy. I was appointed Navy Minister in the Third Konoye Cabinet on July 18, 1941, and served in that capacity until the said Cabinet resigned on Oct. 16, 1941. During my tenure of office OKA, Takazumi, was the Director of the Naval Affairs Bureau.

I attended the Liaison Conferences between the Imperial Headquarters and the Government. This was a gathering of the high ranking men in the Supreme Command, that is Chief of Army General Staff, Chief of Naval General Staff, Deputy Chiefs of both Staffs and the Cabinet Ministers representing the Government, in order to bring about an understanding between the political functions and the Supreme Command. The meeting was not formally arranged, the discussions were informal and no votes

Def. Doc. No. 2761

were taken. The matters which were unanimously agreed upon at the Liaison Conference were carried out by Government organs or the Supreme Command in the regular channels. The Liaison Conference not being an official organ, therefore it is not an organ which is charged with responsibility, it was simply held for the convenience of those parties concerned who met and discussed matters informally. For that reason the responsibility of the Chiefs of Staff of both services and of the State Ministers could not be diminished or altered on account of the Liaison Conferences.

OKA, attended the Liaison Conferences in the capacity of "KANJI" or Secretary, but was "JIMURAN" or Official Clerk of the Conference, and not a member of the Conference. Therefore, he did not affix his signature to matters taken up at the Conference. In the capacity of Secretary OKA could only make explanations at the Conference when he was asked to do so by a member of the Conference. He had no part in the discussion, and he had nothing to do with the making of any decisions whatsoever. His primary duty was to supply information to the members when called upon to do so.

OKA likewise usually attended the Imperial Conferences with the Navy Minister if not ordered to go elsewhere. His presence at the Imperial Conferences gave him no right of expression or voting, and he had no voice at the Conference.

OKA as Director of Naval Affairs Bureau attended the meetings of the Investigation Committee of the Privy Council as

"explainer" only when investigation involved matters pertaining to the Navy, he was never permitted to express himself or vote at such meetings, and could not take part in the decisions which were arrived at. It was his duty to present data which was required by the Navy Minister when he spoke at such meetings. There were also "explainers" from other Ministers, who attended these meetings, but their presence did not affect the decisions reached at such meetings. The preparation of the agenda for these meetings was prepared by the Privy Council itself, and OKA as the Director of Naval Affairs Bureau did not attend the meetings of the Privy Council.

OKA as Director of Naval Affairs Bureau did not attend any of the Cabinet meetings.

During my tenure of office as Navy Minister, OKA always acted under my commands and orders, and never acted upon his own personal opinion. That was not only due to Government organization, but I observed that OKA was not the type of person who acted in disregard of his superiors.

The position of Director of Naval Affairs Bureau at the Imperial Headquarters, together with the Vice Navy Minister, Director of Mobilization Bureau and two or three Chiefs of Sections, was that of an aide to the Navy Minister within the Imperial Headquarters; however, so far as I am aware neither I nor OKA, as Director of Naval Affairs Bureau, ever attended any of the conferences of the Imperial Headquarters during my tenure of office.

In early August 1941 when we were told by Prince KONOYE about intentions of a direct conference with President Roosevelt we

attached great expectations to it. We requisitioned the merchant-ship NITTA MARU for that purpose and completed all preparations. Because of his intense interest in the negotiations I had unofficially selected Keijun OKA as one of the Naval attendants to the suite of Prince KONOYE.

Even after October came, U.S. Japanese negotiations did not make the progress which we had expected and according to the "Outlines on Accomplishment of the Empire's National Policy," which was approved at the Imperial Conference of 6 September we had to decide our attitude towards the continuation of the United States Japanese negotiations. Needless to say the Navy did all it could to avoid war with the United States. And this sentiment among naval circles was communicated to Premier KONOYE. In the midst of such circumstances, the reasons for entrusting the decision as to whether or not we should continue negotiations to the Prime Minister was because I considered the following: namely.

It was my opinion that if the Navy made a public announcement that it "lacked confidence in fighting the United States," it would lead to (create) the disruption of national opinions, cause the pitting of the Army against the Navy and consequently develop into a grave internal problem. As the Prime Minister too was of exactly the same opinion as the Navy, and this problem, moreover, had an important bearing on the overally national strength and hence should not be dogmatically concluded solely on the basis



of the Navy's standpoint.

When OKA stated to Kenji Tomita then the Chief Secretary of the Cabinet in answer to an inquiry from MUTO that the Navy could not state that it could not fight he was conveying the intention expressed by me as Navy Minister. I had previously informed TOJO that the greatest work confronting Japan at the moment was the termination of the China Affair, and that I could not make public the fact that the Army and Navy had opposing views thereon, and that we ought first to let Prime Minister KONOYE decide and then abide by this decision. It is incontrovertible that at that time OKA was my subordinate and was in no position to make any decision on his own authority as to whether or not the Navy could wage war. I had many conversations with OKA concerning the Japanese-American negotiations, and he expressed himself strongly in favor of continuing such negotiations. At the time of my resignation as Navy Minister, OKA remained as Director of Naval Affairs Bureau due to the fact that his term of shore service, which was ordinarily fixed at two years, and the term of office of both the Vice Minister of Navy and Director of Naval Affairs Bureau had another year to run. OKA tendered his resignations, but since his term of office had not yet expired, such a request was denied, and I told OKA that he and the Vice Minister should remain in the Navy Ministry and continue to do everything in their power to bring about a compromise in the American-Japanese negotiations.

Def. Doc. No. 2761

In the Navy it was customary when a new Minister was appointed not to shift those below the Vice Minister, therefore, regardless of whoever the Prime Minister might have been then, personnel below the rank of Vice Minister were not affected thereby.

On this 10th day of Oct. 1947,  
at Tokyo.

DEPONENT: OIKAWA, Koshiro

I, SOMIYA, Shinji, 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: SO IYA, Shinji

OATH

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

OIKAWA, Koshiro