

Takashi Itoh, ed., *Sokichi Takagi: Nikki to Joho* [Sokichi Takagi: Diary and Documents] (Tokyo, Japan: Misuzu-Shobo, 2000), pp.926-927

August 12 [, 1945]

At 7:30 A.M., the response from the three Allied powers to Japan's proposal was broadcast.

The Army Minister objected [to accepting it] at a Cabinet meeting.

The Chiefs of the General Staff made a direct appeal to His Majesty [without the Cabinet's approval].

The Navy Minister summoned [Chief of the Navy General Staff] Toyoda and [Vice Chief of the Navy General Staff] Onishi and reprimanded them.

A meeting of the Imperial family was held on the 12th.

Discussion with Navy Minister Yonai:

[Yonai:] "I am not particularly tired or worried. A possible division within the navy is a grave issue and I have to take responsibility for that, but I am not pessimistic, either. I don't think this is going to lead to significant consequences. But at the same time, if a division should appear, I think we can't help it under the current critical situation. At the national level, it is possible that the nation will be divided into pieces if some people try to stir up those who don't know the truth [to a revolt], but generally speaking, I think we will be able to avoid such a situation.

"It was unwise of the Navy General Staff to make an appeal to His Majesty together with the Army General Staff in reaction to the intercepted broadcast message of the enemy. When I asked them on what ground they decided to make an appeal to His Majesty, they couldn't answer. I called and scolded them for about one and a half hours today. I won't say that they should obey me blindly. Everyone has a different opinion, so it is natural for them to act upon their own thoughts, but then they should have a good exchange of views with me. If I am wrong, I am ready to correct my idea. If they think I am right, then it is natural that they should follow me. It is extremely imprudent of them to take an action for which they cannot give explanation to me. Today, I pressed them for an answer little by little and in the end they told me that they made a wrong decision because they were upset with the broadcast message and they had been very worried about how to rein in [the Japanese armed forces] if we have to accept the conditions presented by the enemy. But they said they would do their

best [to control the soldiers].

[Takagi:] “If they suggest that they are not sure whether they can succeed, I think you should stop being lenient and dismiss both the Chief and the Vice Chief, then install [Jizaburo] Ozawa [as a new Chief of the Navy General Staff].”

[Yonai:] “Because [Toyoda] indicated that he was always ready to resign, I told him that it was something that I would decide on and he didn’t have to think about it himself. He is influenced by the Vice Chief. I summoned the Vice Chief (Onishi) and severely reprimanded him. Once His Majesty made the decision, there is no more room for argument. What we should do is do our best to follow his will whatever difficulties lie before us.

“I heard a rumor that the Army Minister and the Chief of the Army General Staff were planning to make a special appeal to His Majesty, so I asked the Interior Minister if he knew of such a story. Then the Interior Minister told me, ‘You don’t have to worry about that. When I called Anami and asked him, he clearly stated that *go-seidan* [=the sacred decision] is absolutely irreversible and, if there are those in the Army who make complaints about *go-seidan*, it must not be tolerated and he will immediately punish them for an act of treason.’

“Anyway, they say that I am a wimp.”

[Takagi:] “It is just a superficial matter whether you look strong or weak. What really matters is what you will do to save the country.”

[Yonai:] “Whatever they say, I am willing and even feel honored to sacrifice my life if it does any good to deal with this serious situation.

“At the Cabinet meeting the other day (on the 9th?), I questioned the Armaments Minister, the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, and the Interior Minister, though I thought it was presumptuous of me to do so in the presence of the Prime Minister. When I asked them for their totally frank view about the domestic situation, they each provided us with a tedious explanation, citing lots of figures. In summary, the Minister of Armaments and the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce think the situation is bleak while the Interior Minister thinks [domestic disturbances] could be contained even if there is a change [in the policy].

“I wanted an outright answer like ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and their explanations were too lengthy. It may be inappropriate to put it in this way, but the atomic bombs and the Soviet entry into the war are, in a sense, God’s gifts. Now we can end the war without making it clear that we have to end the war

because of the domestic situation. I have long been advocating the conclusion [of the war], not because I am afraid of the enemy's attacks or because of the atomic bombs or the Soviet participation in the war. The most important reason is my concern over the domestic situation. Therefore, it is rather fortunate that we can end [the war] without bringing the domestic situation to the surface. It is troubling that the Navy General Staff doesn't understand the domestic situation.

"When I met the Interior Minister the other day, I told him, 'The current Cabinet should resign after we set things in the right direction and settle our tasks for the time being.' But the Interior Minister opposed to my opinion."

[Takagi:] "I share your opinion, Minister. I think this Cabinet will fulfill its mission when it finishes setting the course for the conclusion [of the war]."

[Yonai:] "The Interior Minister didn't understand what I meant by settling our task for the time being. He seems to have thought that I was advocating an immediate resignation."

"The Interior Minister said, 'If the Cabinet resigns, the succeeding prime minister cannot be too old. It should be an up-and-coming young person. If so, you (Yonai) would not agree on choosing Konoe. If we are going to choose from among young people, I think [Sotaro] Ishiwatari is the only possible choice.' I told him that I would agree with installing Ishiwatari but not Konoe. The Interior Minister is sensible. He seems to trust Ishiwatari."

[Original editor's note:] (The above portion is from the index card note dated August 12. There is also a three-page typed memorandum with the same content.)