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TOKYO STALLED WAR DECLARATION, PEARL HARBOR ATTACKER HINTS

By the Associated Press.

TOKYO, Oct. 25 — Fleet Admiral Osami Nagano — the man who gave the order starting the Pacific war — said today that a formal declaration of war was to have preceded Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor by one-half hour, but "for some unknown reason" the vital message was delayed in Tokyo.

The attack, he said in an exclusive Associated Press interview, "achieved far greater success than I had expected," and was not a military blunder.

Nagano, Japan's wartime chief of navy staff, accepted "full responsibility" for making the decision to attack, after a bitter internal controversy in which some admirals asserted that the plan was "too dangerous," he added.

He declared that he and other navy officers expected Japan's declaration of war to precede the attack on Pearl Harbor by 30 minutes. He did not elaborate on his comment that it had been delayed in Tokyo "for some unknown reason." His comment seemed to imply, however, deliberate stalling.

"Looking back on the fighting strength in the United States and Japan, I feel confident I made no mistake in issuing final orders to attack Pearl Harbor. Without its success, the Japanese would have been defeated earlier," he asserted.

The 65-year-old admiral, now living quietly on the edge of Tokyo, said he expected to be prosecuted as a war criminal for his share in the war, which he said included:

Breaking the deadlock between admirals urging that the first attack be made on Java and Malaya, and those advocating a first attack on Pearl Harbor.

Issuing orders for departure of the attacking fleet, although the late Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto decided the sailing date, November 26.

Issuing orders on December 4 or 5 "to use our martial might on December 8, 1941 (Tokyo time; December 7, United States time)."

Ordered to Rendezvous

Nagano said he issued the final attack order "because Japan was convinced that war between Japan and the United States was unavoidable."

The attacking fleet sailed before receipt of Secretary Hull's November 26 peace message — Nagano termed it "The Hull ultimatum" — but had orders to rendezvous at "a waiting point between 900 and 1,000 miles northwest of Hawaii", and could not advance without further orders, the admiral said.

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"Admiral Yamamoto had guaranteed to me in a December 2 conference that the fleet could be recalled if Washington negotiations were successful."

But by the time the fleet reached the waiting point, the situation was considered hopeless and Nagano's decisive order to attack was so timed that the fleet actually "spent very little time" there before proceeding toward Pearl Harbor, the admiral related.

"No one in Japan had the strength to halt the tide of war, running in Japan since the Manchurian incident," he added.

Navy "Had to do Duty."

The basic cause of the Pacific War was "the true situation in China, which developed along the ideas of the army, not the navy," Nagano said. Once war became inevitable navy personnel "had to do their duty as military men."

Japan did not definitely decide on war until after the cabinet of Premier Hideki Tojo was installed on October 17, 1941, Nagano declared. Then the navy made full preparations, although "always remaining able to withdraw our forces if Washington negotiations succeeded."

Before the Pearl Harbor attack, he asserted, "the Emperor, the Japanese Navy and the Foreign Office were of the opinion that war should be declared first and then the attack on Pearl Harbor should follow shortly afterward -- but the note was sent later than the attack for some unknown reason."
