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Mr. Kato Takeo  
Director  
Japan National Archives

**An Open Letter Regarding the Special Internet Exhibit “Diplomatic Negotiation Between Japan and the United States—the process leading to the outbreak of the War seen through archives”**

Dear Mr. Kato:

On this day, seventy-eight years ago, the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, U.S., initiating the War between Japan and America. I co-authored a book, *Reconsideration Called Yoshida Shigeru—Nothing will change even if the Constitution is amended, unless there is reconsideration of Yoshida Shigeru*, with Mr. Ara Kenji (published by Jiyusha), in which we carefully detail the events leading up to the attack. Our book won the 2019 *Apa Recover Japan Award*.

I have question concerning your Special Internet Exhibit, now on the Web, “Archives Reveal Diplomatic Negotiation between Japan and the United States”.

In reference to Japan-U.S. diplomatic negotiations, a number of scholarly papers have been uploaded. However, my book, *Study on Japan’s Diplomacy after the Opening of the War between Japan and the United States*, published in 1997 (by Aki Shobo), is not referred to in your exhibit.

My book is extremely important with respect to U.S.-Japan negotiations in the following

aspects:

- (1) I describe in detail the very critical historical fact that Japan succeeded to a certain extent in decoding American diplomatic cables related to Japan-US negotiations and further explain how events developed based on Japanese decoding of American diplomatic cables up to the outbreak of war.
- (2) Immediately after Japan's capitulation, the Emperor Showa and Commander-in-Chief of the Occupation Forces Douglas MacArthur met for the first time on September 27, 1946. Prior to this meeting, on September 25, *New York Times* reporter Frank Kluckhohn interviewed the Emperor Showa at the Imperial Palace. On this occasion, a document pertaining to the Japanese Navy's attack on Pearl Harbor was handed to the reporter. This document described that on the outbreak of the US-Japan War, Japan was to directly deliver an ultimatum half an hour prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor to the American Government. However, due to faulty handling on the part of the Japanese Embassy in Washington, D.C. at the time, delivery of the ultimatum was nearly an hour and a half late and it was actually delivered to the American side about an hour after the attack started on Pearl Harbor. The document handed to Kluckhohn further stated that it was all Tojo Hideki's fault. This document was published in 2006 by the Imperial Household Agency and came to be known to the public for the first time. However, my book presented the document in 1996, based on sources found elsewhere, and explained in detail how the document was, in fact, false.
- (3) Regarding the circumstances of the delayed delivery of the "Ultimatum," an investigation was carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1946. The results of this investigation, "Memorandum regarding the United States—the record of the circumstance pertaining to the delay in delivering the Ultimatum," were not made public for a long time. Upon the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Attack on Pearl Harbor in 1991, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not bother to release its findings. The Foreign Ministry finally published its findings in 1994. My book describes in detail the process of how I negotiated with the Foreign Ministry, asking them to disclose this report, and explains what is contained in the report.
- (4) In addition, my book has been translated into English,<sup>1</sup> Chinese, and Hangul, which

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<sup>1</sup> Seishiro Sugihara (translated by Norman Hu), *Between Incompetence and Culpability* :

is quite rare for an academic book.

Thus, I am confident that my book, *Study on Japan's Diplomacy after the Opening of the War between Japan and the United States*, is highly relevant and should be included in the literature related to pre-war U.S.-Japan diplomatic negotiations. The very title of my book, *Study of Japanese Diplomacy after the Opening of the War between Japan and the United States*, indicates that this book is indispensable in terms of the literature related to U.S.-Japan diplomatic efforts leading to the outbreak of the War. Amazingly, my book is not included as reference in your Web exhibit.

I cannot help but wonder if it may have been intentional not to include my book, or perhaps an oversight. If it was intentional, then I ask that an explanation be given by the person responsible for the "reference literature" related to your Web exhibit. If it was an oversight, then I request apology and that my book be added to the list of "reference literature."

Sincerely yours,

Sugihara Seishiro  
Former Professor,  
Josai University