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April 14, 2020

Mr. Kato Takeo
Director
National Archives of Japan

Mr. Hatano Sumio
Director
Japan Center for Asian Historical Records

Dear Sirs,

Thank you very much for your letter of April 8, 2020. To date, I received your response on January 15 this year in response to my previous open letter dated December 8, 2019 (sent on December 10), regarding the Special Internet Exhibit “Archives Reveal Diplomatic Negotiation between Japan and the United States—the Process Leading to the Outbreak of the War. However, finding your response lacking, I sent another letter dated January 17, to which you replied on March 13. Unfortunately, your response made me more apprehensive about the matter in question and so I sent a third letter to you on March 16.

To summarize your responses, it is fully understood that my book, *Study on Japan's Diplomacy after the Opening of the War between Japan and the United States*, is a very important piece of scholarship that covered the negotiations between Japan and the United States. However, the Internet Exhibit in question stated that it aimed “to have beginners learn basic facts, and not to introduce high quality academic studies.” So, my book was not included as a reference. If so, why is it that books by Mr. Hatano Sumio, Director, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, and many other important academic works are in the list of references? Many books detailing the circumstance of decoding the enemy's messages and the delay in the delivery of the Ultimatum are also included in the Exhibit.

According to your letter, you agreed with the point that I made in my letter of March 16, that there is not an expert or scholar without an opinion or their own interpretation. If that is the case, why did you include scholarly books that in fact stated their own “interpretations,” but not my own, with my own “interpretation”?

Your response this time clearly stated, “This Exhibit does not aim to present specific interpretations or images to viewers.” Thus, to be fair, would it not be correct for you to include my book, with my own “interpretation”, along with other books in your list of references that have their own interpretations? It most certainly appears that the exclusion of my book alone, with my own analysis, is in the hands of the person responsible for the Web exhibit. I cannot but believe that my book was excluded only because my book’s interpretation is not favorable to you.

As an excuse to exclude my book, you stated that “It is difficult to present specific interpretations, one by one, from the ‘fair and just point of view’.” I can agree to this in that all acts are done by man and man can never be perfectly “fair and just”, however hard he may try to be. However, in my case, you fully recognized that my book is an important scholarly work. Despite stating this, other scholarly books are listed as references but my book is not. I suspect that one with preconceived notions is deciding what is suitable and what is not. The fact is, the person responsible for making the list of references has specific preferences and interpretations not to his liking were ignored. This is against a fundamental principle, for government officials to be fair and just, and a betrayal to the people.

Moreover, the three responses I have received so far from you have much to be desired as they make a mockery out of me as an individual. Regarding the exclusion of my book from the references, in your first response dated January 15, 2020, my book was not included in the Exhibit because “the person responsible for this Web Exhibit listed only those sources the person directly referred to,” as if the person had not known about my book. Then, in your second response dated March 13, 2020, you said, “It is professionally reasonable for the person in charge of a public Web exhibit to avoid affixing a specific interpretation.” This is a big change from your first explanation. This time, in your third response dated April 8, concerning the observation that other high quality scholarly books are included in the Exhibit, as mentioned above, it stated, “The Exhibit started, aiming to have beginners learn basic facts and not to introduce high quality academic studies.”

Again, the reason for not including my book has drastically changed. This is clearly an insincere response and a personal affront.

In your most recent response, you mentioned that the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records takes full responsibility of listing references for this exhibit and that the person responsible for listing the references will not be identified. I will accept this. I would then ask Hatano Sumio, as Director of the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, to apologize to the people, through me, for the unreasonable treatment of my book, acknowledging that the omission of my book as a reference is tantamount to an act of betrayal of the people's trust and also apologize to me for having made a mockery of me as a consequence. And once again, I ask that you to include my book as a reference.

Judging from the exchange of our letters so far, I don't think it is possible to reach any constructive conclusion between us. So, in order to resolve this matter in a constructive manner, I have asked Representative Harada Yoshiaki of the House of Representatives to intermedate for us. From here, I ask that we communicate with Representative Harada. Shortly, Representative Harada will request an interview with you.

When we meet in the presence of Representative Harada, I will ask again why my book, *Study on Japan's Diplomacy after the Opening of the War between Japan and the United States*, was not included as reference despite the fact that you, at the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, recognize my book as an important academic work yet many other books dealing with the same theme as my book are in fact listed as reference. As I mentioned above, I agreed not to be informed of the person who made the reference list. Instead, I ask you to answer my question in the capacity of the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, with full responsibility of the Special Internet Exhibit.

Lastly, I will note that this letter of mine dated April 14, 2020, together with your response dated April 8, 2020, will be translated into English and posted, both in Japanese and English, by the Society for Dissemination of Historical Fact in its Newsletter.

Sincerely yours,

Sugihara Seishiro