

CHAPTER 2: DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR HASTENING THE END OF WAR AGAINST THE UNITED STATES, THE UNITED KINGDOM, THE NETHERLANDS, AND CHIANG KAI-SHEK

In my Foreword I mentioned that Japan had a master plan for victory, i.e., the Draft Proposal for Hastening the End of War Against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek. The Draft Proposal was adopted at a Liaison Conference between Imperial General Headquarters and the Imperial Government. See Figure 3 for the text of the proposal in its entirety.

I was unaware of the existence of this valuable document until about 15 years ago, when I learned of it from Sato Akira's *The Greater East Asian War in Strategic Terms*. That discovery was an epiphany, which led to the writing and publication of this book, in which I examine the Draft Proposal in great detail.

Strategic Principle I, a succinct description of the substance of Japanese strategy, reads as follows:

To ensure our nation's survival and to exercise our right of self-defense, we shall expeditiously destroy American, British, and Dutch bases in the Far East. Additionally, we shall facilitate the overthrow of the Chiang government. We shall then act in cooperation with Germany and Italy to effect the capitulation of the United Kingdom, which will discourage the United States from continuing hostilities against Japan.

Am I the only one who was surprised by its content? Surprised, I suppose, because I had been laboring under the vague assumption that the first step of Japan's war plan had been offensives against and the defeat of our accursed enemy, the United States.

My impression was that the war that began with the attack on Pearl Harbor had been planned as a head-on clash with the US. But according to the Draft Proposal, the master plan, the first stated policy toward the US was Japan's intention to cause the US to lose the will to continue hostilities against Japan.

Readers may remain unconvinced, but my reaction was one of awe at how strategically sound this policy seemed. It is obvious that Japanese strategists were fully cognizant of the yawning gap between Japanese and American overall offensive strength. It is even more obvious that the conclusion they reached — one that had Japan emerging victorious — was the culmination of a tremendous amount of thought on their part.

Mr. Sato's book had been thought provoking. I read other works of his, and posed questions to him. Along the way I arrived at a new understanding of the Greater East Asian War, and a greater respect for the Draft Proposal, Japan's master plan.

1. Destroy American, British, and Dutch bases in Far East

The first strategic principle in the master plan is:

To ensure our nation's survival and to exercise our right of self-defense, we shall expeditiously destroy American, British, and Dutch bases in the Far East.

Japan's economic structure was and is such that it must rely on imports from overseas for much of its important resources. Unfortunately, the ABCD line cut the Japanese off from those important resources, and sent them into crisis. Moreover, since the US, the UK, and the Netherlands were tightening their encirclement, which included Singapore, Japan was under pressure militarily as well.

To emerge safely from this crisis, the Japanese needed to destroy American, British, and Dutch bases in East Asia, and occupy them. Only then could they be assured of a reliable supply of important resources, such as petroleum, and only then could Japan eliminate a direct threat to its survival by acquiring the right to exercise self-defense and self-sufficiency.

We know that the first tactic was accomplished successfully, even beyond expectations. Four months after the outbreak of war, the Japanese had occupied Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Burma. They had achieved this important goal speedily, and without incurring major losses.

As stated earlier, American historian James B. Wood's *Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: Was Defeat Inevitable* came out in 2007. The Japanese edition, which I translated and published, appeared in 2009.

Most American historians think the Japanese were fools to even entertain the notion of waging war with the US. Wood mentions one of them, John Dower, and his belief that "racial attitudes trumped military science."¹

But Professor Wood contradicts Dower. He maintains that "the war against the Allies was the right war at the right time for Japan."²

If the Japanese had not taken advantage of that opportunity, the naval procurement bill passed by Congress would have given the Americans a huge advantage, at least in total number of warships.³

¹ Wood, *op. cit.*, 4.

² *Ibid.*, 7.

³ In July 1940 the US Congress passed legislation authorizing the implementation of a naval expansion program. It included the addition of five Montana-class battleships, two Iowa-class battleships, 18 aircraft carriers, six Alaska-class cruisers, 27 cruisers, 115 destroyers, and 43 submarines, to be built by the end of 1943.

2. Eliminate Chiang government; establish coalition government

The second part of the first strategic principle in the Draft Proposal involves facilitating the overthrow of the Chiang government. After all, the war against the US sprang from the Second Sino-Japanese War, which had been provoked by the Chinese and by then had become an all-out war. In the early days of the conflict, the USSR supported China.⁴

Later on, the UK and the US were China's main sources of support. A huge amount of military supplies and equipment made its way from the US and the UK to Chiang over special routes earmarked for that purpose. Without the wherewithal to build aircraft or tanks, the Chinese government in Chungking desperately needed that matériel to resist Japanese offensives.

Chiang's government may have retreated to China's hinterlands, but its relocation did not discourage the Japanese. Countless Japanese attempts to make peace with Chiang were unsuccessful because the US was supplying massive amounts of aid to the Chinese government and putting pressure on it to prevent it from acquiescing to any Japanese demands.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, out of the blue in July 1939, the US sent a notice to Japan announcing the termination of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation Between the US and Japan. The Americans offered no real reason for the abrogation, which was effective in January 1940. The (unstated) reason was quite clear: to prevent the Japanese from purchasing weapons or war matériel.

July 1938 had marked the establishment of a large organization that called itself the American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression.⁵ Its mission was to end the commercial relationship between the US and Japan, thereby effectively preventing the US from acting as warmonger Japan's accomplice. According to the committee, at that time the US was providing 54.4% of the matériel necessary for Japanese aggression against China.

⁴ In August 1937, while the Battle of Shanghai was still raging, China concluded a non-aggression pact with the USSR. It contained a secret clause stating that the USSR would provide assistance to China in the form of 360 aircraft, 200 tanks, 1,500 tractors, 150,000 rifles, 120,00 cannonballs, and 60 million bullets, as well as the services of a team of military advisors by the end of 1937. I first encountered this information in the January 1939 issue of *The Lowdown*, a periodical published in New York City, but later learned that these were known facts, if not commonly known. It is likely that the secret clause was agreed upon prior to the commencement of the Battle of Shanghai. The clause may well have given Chiang Kai-shek the confidence to wage an all-out war with Japan.

⁵ Leading members of the American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression included Henry Stimson, honorary chairman (former Secretary of State and later Secretary of War); Roger Greene, chairman (former consul general at Hankow); Harry Price, national director (former Yenching University professor); Margaret Forsyth (YWCA National Board member); Frank Price (missionary in China); Earl Leaf (former United Press correspondent); George Fitch (YMCA secretary in China); Helen Keller (author); Maxwell Stewart (associate editor, *The Nation*); Philip Jaffe (managing editor, *Amerasia*); and Thomas A. Bisson (research staff member, Foreign Policy Association and author of *Japan in China*).

At the nucleus of the organization were Honorary Chairman Henry Stimson, former Secretary of State, YMCA and YWCA staff members, and agents of the Communist front. Some historians believe that the committee was the product of a Communist intrigue. But the fact is that the key members were Protestant Christians who believed in American Manifest Destiny, and who persuaded the like-minded Stimson to join with them in forming the committee.

Later the Comintern front joined the Protestants, and the committee began to wield more than a little influence. Even Helen Keller was one of the founding members.

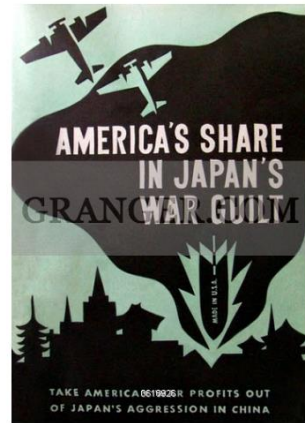


Figure 4

In 1938 the American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression produced an 80-page pamphlet entitled *America's Share in Japan's War Guilt*⁶ (see Figure 4), which was distributed widely. The pamphlet seems to have had the desired effect, as only one year after the committee's founding, the US government abrogated the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation.

If it were possible to topple the Chiang government, a coalition government joining Chiang's followers and those of Wang Jingwei, who enjoyed a cordial relationship with the Japanese, could be formed. Remember that the Japanese had never asked China's Nationalist government to cede one bit of land. Japan's basic policy was the establishment of a Japan-China alliance. Suppose China had been united behind a pro-Japanese government. Then that government could announce that it would not tolerate American interference in Asian affairs. Then young Americans would raise their voices in a chorus of "Why should we have to go to Asia to fight?!" Wouldn't the US lose the will to continue hostilities against Japan? After all, there would have been antiwar demonstrations in the US, just as there were later when the Vietnam War broke out. Military strategists must be aware of such eventualities; it is clear from this section of the Draft Proposal, the master plan, that Japanese strategists were.

3. Form alliance with Germany and Italy to force surrender of UK

The third part of the first strategic principle is:

We shall then act in cooperation with Germany and Italy to, first, effect the capitulation of the United Kingdom.

The word *first* is used, presumably, to make it clear that the defeat of the UK is to be accomplished before implementing any of the policies involving the US. Attacking an

⁶ American Committee for Non-Participation in Japan's Aggression, *America's Share in Japan's War Guilt* (New York: 1938). archive.org/details/americasshareinj00amer (retrieved 07/2019).

exhausted UK after blockading its sea lanes is a sensible strategy, a matter of breaking the weak link of a chain.

The UK was very dependent upon the US for weapons and other munitions. But the supply line, the Atlantic Ocean, was unusable, patrolled by German U-boats and pocket battleships as it was.

Moreover, the UK relied heavily on Australia and India for foodstuff and raw materials. The linchpin in the sea lanes between those two nations and the UK was the Indian Ocean. The plan, according to the Draft Proposal, was for Germany and Italy to jointly disrupt commercial sea traffic to the UK, and then for Germany to defeat a crippled UK.

I often hear pronouncements like “Japan made the decision to go to war, influenced by Germany’s energy.” German energy may have been a minor factor, but there are no signs of an inordinate German impact in the Draft Proposal. It is clear what Japan’s goals were to be in waging war, however. If Japan had attained those goals, the results would have been monumental. Unfortunately, Japan betrayed Germany and was unable to respond to German expectations. Consequently, victory eluded the Japanese, for reasons that I shall discuss in due course.

Lure main strength of US Navy into the Pacific, then attack and destroy

Strategic Principle II reads as follows: *We shall endeavor to influence other nations with the intent of preventing any increase in the number of nations waging war against Japan.*

This principle is self-explanatory.

Now I would like to move on to the portion of the Draft Proposal that outlines tactics to be employed.

I have already discussed the gist of the first tactic. However, there is one very important sentence that needs further examination, namely the part that mentions *attaining self-sufficiency by establishing a strategically superior position and gaining control of key resource-rich regions and important transportation routes for the long term.*

A nation at war must, without fail, cut off the enemy’s supply lines, while at the same time, securing its own. However, the Japanese Navy had only an inadequate escort unit, which had no headquarters until November 1943.

The last part of Tactic No. 1 describes actions to be taken against the US: *Using any and all means, we shall endeavor to lure the main strength of American naval vessels in a timely manner to an appropriate location, where we shall attack and destroy it.* The idea here is not to go on the attack against the US, but to provoke the Americans into approaching an appropriate location, whereupon the Japanese will attack and destroy their warships. This is a perfectly reasonable plan.

Later I will discuss one of the rules of battle, the inverse-square-of-distance law, in detail,

but here it will suffice to say that the Pacific Ocean was a powerful weapon for Japan. Luring the enemy warships to a location convenient for the Japanese and ambushing them, rather than going out to search for them was a traditional naval tactic and, in this case, one that was completely logical. Unfortunately, however, the Navy ignored the master plan and opted for a direct, full-force battle.

Procedures to follow after forming alliance with Germany and Italy

The recommended procedures to follow after the alliance with Germany and Italy was formed are outlined in 1. and 2. of II.A in the master plan.

The first recommendation was to sever the connections between Australia and India, and the UK, using both physical and ideological tactics (II.A.1). Next comes II.A.2: *We shall promote the independence of Burma; once it is attained, we shall use that achievement to encourage the independence of India.*

Even at this early date the Japanese were thinking about independence for Burma (present-day Myanmar) and India.

Independence for Burma

In 1943 Burma achieved independence (August 1), as did the Philippines (October 14); the Provisional Government of Free India declared independence on October 23.

For these nations the path to independence was for the large part as described in the master plan. On January 21, 1942 Prime Minister Tojo Hideki announced his intention of recognizing the independence of the Philippines and Burma.

Therefore, promoting independence for Burma and the Philippines, as well as setting India on the road to independence were not actions Japan took because it was cornered. As we have seen, these intentions were part of the master plan, which was prepared before World War II began. What is more, Prime Minister Tojo reiterated them at a Diet session after the conflict had commenced.

Later in these pages I will explain how brilliantly effective the Indian Ocean operation (in fact the most successful of all operations) was.

Steps to be taken by Germany and Italy

Tactic II.B describes Japanese expectations of Germany and Italy.

II.B.1 requests operations in the Near East, North Africa, and the Suez Canal, as well as offensives against India. North Africa was the stage for Gen. Erwin Rommel's campaigns. Whoever captured the Suez Canal would be rewarded with petroleum from the Middle

East. An additional reward would be the disruption of American supplies to the USSR via the Indian Ocean.

Next comes

2. Fortify the blockade of the United Kingdom

and

3. Launch a land offensive against the United Kingdom if the situation allows

At this point I would like to make it clear that although the Japanese mention conducting operations in the Indian Ocean in cooperation with Germany and Italy, they had no intention of making physical landings in Africa or the UK. These were tasks that they expected Germany and Italy to accomplish. There are some who criticize the Draft Proposal, mistakenly it is directing the Japanese military to travel to Africa or the Middle East, theaters where it had no experience. But careful examination of the Draft Proposal will reveal that its authors had absolutely no intention of sending Japanese soldiers to either place.

Tactic C describes undertakings involving all three nations, and recommends that they

1. Endeavor to establish contact among themselves through the Indian Ocean

2. Bolster maritime operations

3. Prevent resources in occupied territory from reaching the United Kingdom

Here the emphasis is on cooperative efforts in the Indian Ocean.

Use offensives against UK to discourage US from continuing hostilities

Tactic III has Japan, Germany, and Italy working together to convince the Americans that continuing hostilities against the Japanese would be fruitless.

Japan is to accomplish the tasks listed under III.B, namely:

1. We shall continue to recognize the current government of the Philippines for the time being, and will consider ways in which that policy can hasten the end of war.

Recognizing the current government seems reasonable, but it is not clear what is meant by *consider ways in which that policy can hasten the end of war*. Perhaps this phrase concerns the future (postwar) relationship between Japan and the US.

2. We shall do all possible to destroy commercial vessels sailing between the United States and its allies.

I imagine that everyone would agree that this is a very important policy, but many would wonder whether it was achievable, and what the aftermath would have been like. Here again, I would like to cite the aforementioned book by James Wood.

Japan had sufficient submarines to destroy American sea lanes

I would like to emphasize the fact that at the outbreak of war Japan was well matched with the US as far as the number of submarines was concerned. Compared with the Americans' fleet of 111, Japan had 65. Furthermore, the US was compelled to place many of its submarines in the Atlantic Ocean to combat German forces. The Americans had only 30 submarines in the Pacific Ocean, less than half Japan's fleet, to deploy against the Japanese.

And Japanese warships were excellent performers. James Wood has this to say about them:

Japan entered the war with a large and technically advanced submarine fleet. The newest of her boats, especially the I-series of fleet and patrol boats, had incredible endurance, were fast on the surface, employed advanced optics, and were armed with excellent torpedoes that did not malfunction.⁷

US Pacific fleet overextended

James Wood describes the state of the US Pacific fleet at the beginning of 1942 as follows:

Consider the quandary in which the Americans in the Pacific found themselves in early 1942. There were simply not enough merchant ships available to fight two major enemies across two great oceans at the same time. (...) Furthermore, the decision to defeat Germany first meant that priority had to be given to the Atlantic. (...) Compared to the Atlantic, for example, it took a ship two and one half times longer to move cargo to its destination in the Pacific; the loss of a single ship there had the impact of three ships sunk in the Atlantic. The maritime routes of the Pacific, moreover, lent themselves well to ship hunting. Along North America, the Pacific coast had very few natural anchorages or suitable major harbors.⁸

If the Japanese had launched submarine offensives against American supply lines, they would have met with great success. In fact, according to reliable sources, the Germans strongly urged them to do so. They had after all, once they declared war, used U-boats to execute successive attacks on Allied ships off the coast of New England, and in the Gulf

⁷ Wood, *op. cit.*, 59.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 63.

of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. In less than a year, the Germans sank 400 ships with only 10 U-boats!

Unfortunately, it seems that the Japanese Navy did not understand the ideas in the Draft Proposal. Naval leaders were obsessed with using submarines in combat against warships.

3. We shall prevent Chinese and South Pacific resources from reaching the United States.

This is self-explanatory.

4. We shall intensify strategic propaganda directed toward the United States. To that end, we shall place emphasis on luring the main strength of the United States Navy to the Far East, persuading the United States to reassess its Far East policy, and convincing the United States of the futility of war with Japan; we shall turn American public opinion against involvement in the war.

This policy should certainly have been implemented. If the intent was to lure the main strength of the US Navy to the Far East, instead of being taken by surprise by the Doolittle Raid and similar attacks (to be addressed later) and overreacting to them, the Japanese should have laid a trap for the Americans and enticed them to try again. Japan should have lured the main strength into the Pacific, attacked it, and then cut off its supply and retreat routes.

The propaganda war with China too should have been launched at an early date. The Draft Proposal's recommendation to that effect was insufficient. It is extremely disappointing that the Japanese did not disseminate propaganda stressing that it was a war between Japan and the US would be senseless and pointless.

5. We shall attempt to sever ties between the United States and Australia.

Despite this tactic's inclusion in the Draft Proposal, it is unfortunate that the Japanese attempted to sever ties between the US and Australia by deploying naval forces to a vast stretch of the Pacific and launching frontal attacks during the second offensive.

B. We shall endeavor to convince Germany and Italy to adopt the following policies:

1. Intensify offensives against the United States Navy in the Atlantic and Indian oceans

Germany and Italy were to take charge of the Atlantic Ocean, and Japan of the Indian Ocean. It is strange that the Japanese encouraged the Germans to "intensify" their offensives (Germany was already attacking commercial ships in those waters).

2. Intensify military, economic, and political offensives against Central and South America

Germany had apparently made inroads into Central and South America, and wielded

considerable influence there. Perhaps for that reason, quite a few Nazi leaders fled to that region after the war.

China policy and overthrow of Nationalist government

Tactic IV: The objectives of our China policy will be to force the surrender of the Chungking government, which we shall accomplish by using our military successes, especially operations against the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, to cut off support for Chiang, reduce Chiang's offensive strength, seize concessions in China, persuade Chinese in the South Pacific to aid us, intensify our operations, and augment our strategic political methods.

The first and foremost task was to cut off all aid to the Chungking government. The occupation of Burma would make it possible to blockade the Burma Road, the most important supply route.

The Japanese would return former concessions to the Wang Jingwei government. The US and UK would have gone along with this scheme. We assume that this was done to keep the concessions from being used to aid Chiang Kai-shek. The Japanese were quite successful in influencing overseas Chinese inhabitants of the Pacific islands, but still had difficulty dealing with guerrillas and other holdouts. By stepping up offensives, the Japanese were aiming to bring down the Chungking government. This tactic could have been very successful, but it was not to be.

Major blunder: USSR policy

IV. The Empire will make a strenuous effort to avoid the outbreak of war against the Soviet Union during our offensives in the South.

The Japanese would certainly not have attacked the USSR during their southern offensives. The likelihood of a Soviet attack against Japan was only slightly greater. Why on earth does this virtually meaningless language appear in the Draft Proposal? The following tactic raises even more questions.

V. (Continued) We shall consider facilitating peacemaking between Germany and the Soviet Union, in accordance with the intentions of those two nations; we shall also consider welcoming the Soviet Union into the Axis, improving relations between Japan and the Soviet Union; depending upon the situation, we shall encourage the Soviet Union to advance to India and Iran.

At this time the war between Germany and the USSR was reaching fever pitch. It is surprising that anyone could fool himself enough to harbor the illusion of brokering peace between those two nations and then welcoming the USSR into the Japan-Germany-Italy axis.

It is my belief that the drafters of the master plan were misled by the existence of a Japan-

USSR neutrality pact. First of all, when the pact was signed, Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke was fantasizing about concluding a Japan-German-USSR alliance on Japan's initiative. Therefore, in April 1941 such a pact was signed. But within only two months, in June, hostilities commenced between Germany and the USSR.

Matsuoka failed to understand Germany's true intentions, and made a monumentally foolish mistake. The Japanese should have extricated themselves from the Japan-USSR Neutrality Pact. Even if they did not attack the USSR, doing so would have significantly constrained the Russians, and would have helped Germany.

Then Matsuoka turned table and advocated an offensive against Far Eastern USSR, but Emperor Showa refused to countenance such a move. Japan should certainly have terminated a treaty with the USSR, given that its involvement therein stemmed from an error in judgment.

Adverse effects of Japan-USSR neutrality pact

Before anyone knew it, the neutrality pact had become a reality — a grim one. Its benefits were never reaped by Japan, only the USSR, which could now concentrate on waging war with Germany without a care in the world. Thus a treaty from which Germany received no benefits whatsoever was now inexorable.

When I told some a member of Japan's Self Defense Force that I thought Japan should never have signed that treaty, I was surprised by his reaction: "Oh, but it was meaningful because it removed the threat of a Soviet attack on Japan." And he was serious! The USSR refrained from attacking Japan not because of the treaty, but because it was *incapable* of doing so.

Furthermore, if the USSR had been in a position to attack Japan, it wouldn't have hesitated, treaty or no treaty (that's the sort of country it is). That has been made painfully clear to us over the years since. Despite the huge outcry against communism in Japan, it is truly incredible that some of us forget the true nature of communism: Communists will do anything to accomplish their goals, with neither hesitation nor regret.

National strategy: aligning with USSR and opposing US and UK?

In his book *The Communist Conspiracy and Japan's Defeat*, Ezaki Michio cites this portion of the Draft Proposal, and claims that with regard to the proposal itself, the Japanese government was commandeered ideologically by the Comintern and communism, and that is why Japan joined hands with the USSR and fought against the US and UK. But his is an extreme argument that blames everything on the Comintern. My examination of the Draft Proposal as a whole revealed anything of the kind.

The majority view is that the Tripartite Pact was a fatal mistake on the part of the Japanese. For some time I have felt that Japan's biggest blunder was signing the

neutrality pact with the USSR. That treaty was not concluded because of overweening left-wing ideological influence. As I mentioned earlier, it was premised on the belief that Germany and the USSR were allies, and that Japan should join them in an Axis alliance. However naïve, it was a reaction to the USSR and the world situation.

But the truth is probably that even when Germany and the USSR plunged into war two months later, the Japanese weren't able to awaken from their fairy tale, clinging to their demented dream of including the USSR in the Axis. The outcome was that Japan made the biggest mistake of all when the war ended by asking the USSR to intercede in peacemaking on its behalf.

Let us examine one way in which the treaty was viewed as a *fait accompli*, or as a reality derived from that view. Inexplicably, it gave rise to the assumption that the USSR actually was a neutral nation. Toward the end of the war, Japan asked the USSR (the wolf in sheep's clothing) to act as an intermediary on its behalf during the peace talks. In the most optimistic and most idiotic gesture in Japanese history, Admiral Suzuki Kantaro, prime minister at the time, exclaimed, brimming with optimism, "Stalin has the aura of an East Asian hero. He reminds me of Saigo Takamori."

The notion that the Comintern had penetrated every inch of the Empire, including the Control Faction of the Army, is inaccurate. The real problem lay in the existence and acceptance of the neutrality pact. That created an ambiance that led the Japanese to believe that the USSR was almost an ally, a nation that would never go to war with Japan.

Until then the Japanese had been anticommunist, but little by little communist Russia became the USSR, and then a neutral nation of sorts called Russia.

VI. We shall maintain current policies in our dealings with French Indochina; we shall encourage Thailand to cooperate with the Empire by restoring territory lost to the United Kingdom to Thailand.

The first part, which concerns French Indochina, needs no explanation.

Thailand had been forced to cede parts of Laos and Cambodia, both of which were under French rule. When Germany occupied France, Thai forces attempted to recapture the relinquished territories, but were unsuccessful.

But in May 1941 the Treaty Between Thailand and Japan was signed, and Thailand was awarded the ceded territory. At the Greater East Asia Conference in November 1943, Prime Minister Phibun, representing Thailand, expressed his gratitude to the Japanese.

Peacemaking opportunities, propaganda, peace talks

VII. We shall take advantage of the following opportunities to bring this conflict to an end, while closely monitoring and reviewing, at all times, changes in the war situation, the state of international affairs, public sentiment within enemy nations, and the like.

Here the subject is monitoring the war situation with an eye to grasping an opportunity to end hostilities. However, the idea of seizing an opportunity to end the war and make peace, while at the same time waging war, seems to have been forgotten. Or perhaps it now seemed cowardly or evil, as strange as that may seem. I find this very disappointing. Even though the Draft Proposal claims to be outlining principal strategies, for some reason we get no sense of always seeking an end to war, even in the midst of hostilities. The Draft Proposal mentions three peacemaking opportunities, as follows.

A. Completion of main operations in the South

Roosevelt used Japan's delay in declaring war (the attack preceded the declaration) to great advantage. The mood in the US being what it was — Kill the Japs! — at that point the Americans would not have lent an ear to peace proposals from the Japanese.

B. Completion of main operations against China, especially the capitulation of the Chiang government

I will be discussing this later; it did seem as though there would be such an opportunity in the beginning of 1943, but a major operation (Operation No. 5) was canceled due to the dire situation in Guadalcanal, and was never implemented.

C. Favorable changes in the war situation in Europe, especially the defeat of the United Kingdom; the end of the conflict between Germany and the USSR; success of our India policy;

The defeat of the UK was never accomplished, partly due to inaction on the part of the Japanese. It is not clear what was meant by the end of the war between Germany and the USSR. Nevertheless, its last days saw the complete defeat of Germany, again due to Japanese inaction, so no opportunity for peacemaking arose.

3. (Continued) to this end, we shall expeditiously intensify diplomatic and propaganda activities directed toward South America, Sweden, Portugal, and the Vatican.

The list of potential intermediaries is quite reasonable, especially the Vatican, which had no armed forces, but its tremendous spiritual influence would have made it a particularly appropriate mediator. Apparently Emperor Showa was hopeful of assistance from the Vatican.

When the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, outcry from the Vatican's official newspaper was swift and vehement. Japan should have taken advantage of that gesture and asked the Vatican for help. As it was though, Japan asked for help from the most unapologetically treacherous, duplicitous nation in the world, the USSR! That it did so is utterly unimaginable! I am sure that the same delusion that gave rise to the neutrality pact caused this terrible tragedy, and not some communist fantasy.

The three nations (Japan, Germany, and Italy) will not enter into separate peace agreements; similarly, they will not enter into separate peace agreements with the United Kingdom upon its capitulation, but will strive to use that capitulation to influence the United States.

This policy involves including the US in any peace negotiations resulting from the surrender of the UK.

In determining our policy regarding the promotion of making peace with the United States we shall consider supplies of tin and rubber in the South Pacific, as well as the handling of the Philippines.

It seems that contrary to expectations, resource-rich US was experiencing serious shortages of tin and rubber. It seems to me that there was little reason to mention these resources in the Draft Proposal. (As stated earlier, the authors may have mentioned the Philippines in III.A.1 with this topic in mind.)

Historians discredit Draft Proposal

I have now gone over the Draft Proposal in its entirety. I wonder what conclusions readers have reached. I myself believe that the strategies it lays out are brilliant, and that if Japanese military authorities had followed it to the letter, we would not have been defeated.

But historians don't agree with me and make light of the Draft Proposal. I remember reading a description of it as "little more than a petty bureaucrat's writing exercise" in a dialogue that appeared in some magazine or other. To my surprise, the person who made that pronouncement was a renowned historian.

The primary author of the Draft Proposal was Lt. Col. Ishii Akiho, senior staff member, Military Affairs Section, Army Affairs, Bureau Ministry of War. Ishii worked with Fujii Shigeru, senior staff member, Military Affairs Section, Navy Affairs Bureau, Ministry of War. The Draft Proposal was then submitted to Imperial General Headquarters. Every proposal concerning strategy and operations was prepared by officials like Ishii and Fujii. It is ridiculous to call them petty bureaucrats.

What is important is its content. The strategies it proposes are excellent, and they were certainly highly implementable. But mainstream historians, who are convinced that Japan was destined to lose, no matter what, reach this conclusion without examining this precious document, and make no effort to take it seriously. Or perhaps they are incapable of comprehending it.

Then how did this superior collection of strategies come into being? In fact it was based on research done by members of the Army War Economy Research Task Force, more commonly known as the Akimaru Agency. The task force studied Japan's and other

nations' economic capacity for war. This was a meticulous survey based on 250 separate reports.

Akimaru Agency surveys military capability of other countries

The Akimaru Agency began its work in January 1940 in response to a suggestion made by Col. Iwakuro Hideo, head of the Military Affairs Section, Army Affairs Bureau, Ministry of War. The Akimaru Agency was a think tank that comprised Japan's stellar intellectuals. Heading the agency was Lt. Col. Akimaru Jiro, whose name became synonymous with the Army War Economy Research Task Force.

With Tokyo University Professor Arisawa Hiromi⁹ as chief investigator, the team of distinguished scholars¹⁰ did research on the capacity for war of Japan and other nations, and indicated strategies that would work in Japan's favor. Hayashi Chikatsu relates the story of the team and its contributions in detail in *Outbreak of War Between Japan and the US: Japanese Army's Chances of Success: Akimaru Agency's Final Report*.¹¹ Despite its pioneering content, the book has not received the attention it so richly deserves.

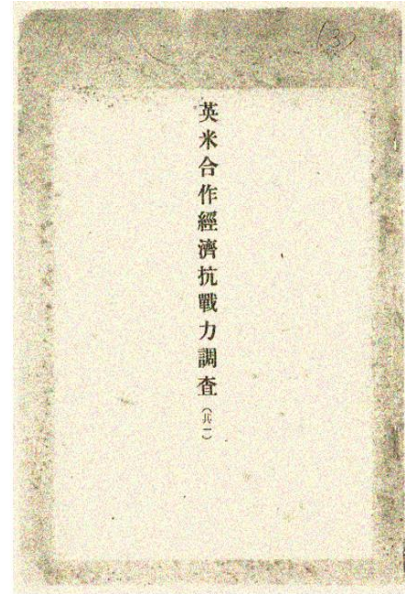


Figure 5

The focal point of this project is a report entitled *The Allied Economic War Potential of the UK and the US, Part 1* (see Figure 5). No copy of the report was available until

⁹ Arisawa Hiromi was both a statistician and an economist. A Marxist economic affiliated with the Workers and Farmers' Faction, a Marxist group, Arisawa's expertise on total war and controlled economies brought him fame. He produced a great many publications, among which *Wars and Economies*, a masterpiece published in 1937, garnered lavish praise. Arisawa was arrested in connection with the Popular Front Incident, but his great intellect won him a place in the Akimaru Agency. In the postwar era he served as Yoshida Shigeru's advisor. As an expert on energy-related problems he was also a chief contributor to Japan's recovery due to his leading role in the creation of the priority production system (a formula that gave priority to the reconstruction of important industries, such as coal and steel). Later he served as president of Hosei University and chairman of the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum.

¹⁰ Keio University Professor Takemura Tadao headed the team working on Germany and Italy; Tokyo University of Commerce (present-day Hitotsubashi University) Professor Nakayama Ichiro, the team working on Japan; Rikkyo University Professor Miyagawa Minoru, the team working on the USSR; Yokohama Specie Bank employee Nawata Seiichi, the team working on Southeast Asia; and Tokyo University Professor Royama Masamichi, the team working on international politics. More than 100 additional researchers participated.

¹¹ Hayashi Chikatsu, *Nichibei kaisen: rikugun no shosan: Akimaru kikan: no saishu hokokusho* (Outbreak of war between Japan and the US: Japanese Army's chances of success: Akimaru Agency's final report) (Tokyo: Shodensha, 2015).

Arisawa's relatives found one in his home after his death on March 7, 1988. They presented it, along with other works of his, to Tokyo University's Library of Economics.

But as far as the report's content is concerned, until Hayashi Chikatsu's exhaustively researched book came out, economists and other scholars of the postwar regime largely ignored it (or distorted it) because it did not illuminate them or their work.

Study (Allied Economic Power of US and UK) informed Draft Proposal

The introduction to *Report on the Allied Economic War Potential of the US and the UK, Part 1* first estimates the scale of a potential conflict, and then presents quantitative assessments of the two economies. Argument 2 discusses weak points in their war potential. Argument 4 analyzes the extent to which the two nations' capacity to sustain a war can be altered. The report is not a quantitative study of single economies, but strategic research into the possibility of changing their structures.

The researchers conducted simulations and arrived at the conclusion that Japan "should demonstrate maximum war potential, i.e., maximum military supply capability, over a short period of time, approximately two years." Their research culminated in the discovery that the UK, not the US, would be the best target, given the structural weak points in its economic war potential.

The conclusion of the report comprises eight items. Item 1 discusses the economic war potential of the UK; Item 2, the economic war potential of the US. Item 3, which discusses the allied economic war potential of the US and the UK, reads as follows:

In the event of an alliance between the UK and the US, should the two nations wage war concurrently, on the hypothesized scale, the US will not have the resources to come to the aid of the UK at the commencement of hostilities. However, if the US is compelled to enter the war, after a period of one year to 18 months the US will have the capacity to replenish shortages experienced by the UK and, additionally, supply a third nation with matériel worth 8 billion dollars.

Then, in contrast, we have Item 4:

To wage war on the hypothesized scale, Britain must form an economic alliance with the US, using the US as a matériel supply base; the capacity (or lack thereof) to transport \$5.75 billion (£ 1.15 billion) in finished matériel to Britain will determine critical strategic points.

And in Item 5:

The US currently possesses sufficient ships to fulfill its own importation needs in wartime; however, the US cannot spare vessels to aid the British. Therefore, the British must rely on their own ships for the transport of necessary supplies; however, Britain has already reached its limits as far as capacity is concerned. If German and Italian attacks

on and the sinking of British vessels continues, and exceeds British and American shipbuilding capability in tonnage, British marine transport capacity will fall below the necessary minimum of 11 million tons, and British war potential will decline rapidly.

Since Items 6 and 8 outline the authors' opinions on strategies likely to be used by the British and Americans, I will proceed to Item 7.

Recommended anti-UK strategies: a frontal attack on Great Britain that destroys the mother country in one fell swoop will accelerate the exhaustion of British manpower and physical resources (weak points). Effective strategies would be causing a sharp decline in the war potential of the mother country and the destruction of the British war economy, by destroying British production capacity through air raids, using submarines to blockade sea lanes, as well as expanding the war zone to British overseas possessions and colonies, resulting in a total war of attrition.

I am sure readers have noticed how well these items (conclusions, really) mesh with the Draft Proposal. Many surveys of Japan's economic potential and war potential have been done, as well as strategic studies, but they pale in comparison to the Draft Proposal.

Victory possible only after pinpointing enemy's weak points

Sugiyama Hajime, chief of the General Staff, received *The Allied Economic War Potential of the UK and the US, Part 1*, in July 1941. He praised the report and expressed his appreciation of the reasoning therein.¹²

The report served as the foundation of formal debates to be held among section chiefs involved in providing guidance to the Army and Navy on the following topics:

1. Objectives of war (self-sufficiency and self-defense)
2. Special characteristics of the war
3. Rules of total war
4. Strategic limitations in a total war
5. Procedures to follow during an occupation
6. Objectives of guidance on ideological warfare
7. Suggestions for guidance on economic warfare
8. Rules for guidance on diplomatic warfare
9. Strategies for hastening the end of a conflict

After the debates were held, *Guidelines for War Against the US, the UK, and the Netherlands* was compiled, and on September 29, 1941, formally approved by the Departments of the Army and Navy, Imperial General Headquarters.

Lt. Cols. Ishii and Fujii used the Guidelines, especially "Strategies for hastening the end

¹² Hayashi, *op. cit.*, 125.

of a conflict” as the basis for the Draft Proposal, which was adopted at the Liaison Conference held on November 15.

The strategies mentioned in the Draft Proposal stem from an expansive, broad-based approach; they specifically target the enemy’s strategic weak points. I find it incredible that today’s leading historians repudiate it, labeling it “a petty bureaucrat’s writing exercise.” I cannot imagine anyone’s producing more appropriate strategies for Japan at that time. I am convinced that those strategies were the only ones that could have resulted in victory.

In the next chapter I will provide simulations of those strategies to demonstrate their soundness. I will also delve further into the work done at the Akimaru Agency.

Figure 3: Draft Proposal for Hastening the End of War Against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek

Approved at the Liaison Conference between Imperial General Headquarters and the Imperial Government, held on November 15, 1941

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

- I. To ensure our nation's survival and to exercise our right of self-defense, we shall expeditiously destroy American, British, and Dutch bases in the Far East. Additionally, we shall facilitate the overthrow of the Chiang government. We shall then act in cooperation with Germany and Italy to, first, effect the capitulation of the United Kingdom, which will discourage the United States from continuing hostilities against Japan.
- II. We shall endeavor to influence other nations with the intent of preventing any increase in the number of nations waging war against Japan.

TACTICS

- I. The Empire will use military force expeditiously to demolish American, British, and Dutch bases in East Asia and the South Pacific, and then attain self-sufficiency by establishing a strategically superior position and gaining control of key resource-rich regions and important transportation routes for the long term.

Using any and all means, we shall endeavor to lure the main strength of American naval vessels in a timely manner to an appropriate location, where we shall attack and destroy it.
- II. We shall enter into an alliance with Germany and Italy; our first order of business will be to effect the surrender of the United Kingdom.
 - A. The Empire will adopt the following strategies:
 1. We shall use political tactics, or the disruption of communications, or other means to sever connections between Australia and India, and the United Kingdom, the mother country.
 2. We shall promote the independence of Burma; once it is attained, we shall use that achievement to encourage the independence of India.
 - B. We shall endeavor to convince Germany and Italy to adopt the following strategies:
 1. Conduct operations in the Near East, North Africa, and the Suez Canal; launch offensives against India

2. Fortify the blockade of the United Kingdom
 3. Launch a land offensive against the United Kingdom if the situation allows
- C. The three nations will implement the following strategies in cooperation.
1. Endeavor to establish contact among themselves through the Indian Ocean
 2. Bolster maritime operations
 3. Prevent resources in occupied territory from reaching the United Kingdom
- III. Japan, Germany, and Italy will cooperate, concurrently, in taking action against the United Kingdom and in attempting to cause the United States to lose the will to continue hostilities against Japan.
- A. The Empire will adopt the following policies:
1. We shall continue to recognize the current government of the Philippines for the time being, and will consider ways in which this policy can hasten the end of war.
 2. We shall do all possible to destroy commercial vessels sailing between the United States and its allies.
 3. We shall prevent Chinese and Southern Pacific resources from reaching the United States.
 4. We shall intensify strategic propaganda directed toward the United States. To that end, we shall place emphasis on luring the main strength of the United States Navy to the Far East, persuading the United States to reassess its Far East policy, and convincing the United States of the futility of war with Japan; we shall turn American public opinion against involvement in the war.
 5. We shall attempt to sever ties between the United States and Australia.
- B. We shall endeavor to convince Germany and Italy to adopt the following policies:
1. Intensify offensives against the United States Navy in the Atlantic and Indian oceans
 2. Intensify military, economic, and political offensives against Central and South America
- IV. The objectives of our China policy will be to force the surrender of the Chungking

government, which we shall accomplish by using our military successes, especially operations against the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, to cut off support for Chiang, reduce Chiang's offensive strength, seize concessions in China, persuade Chinese in the South Pacific to aid us, intensify our operations, and augment our strategic political methods.

- V. The Empire will make a strenuous effort to avoid the outbreak of war against the Soviet Union during our offensives in the South.

We shall consider facilitating peacemaking between Germany and the Soviet Union, in accordance with the intentions of those two nations; we shall also consider welcoming the Soviet Union into the Axis, improving relations between Japan and the Soviet Union; depending upon the situation, we shall encourage the Soviet Union to advance to India and Iran.

- VI. We shall maintain current policies in our dealings with French Indochina; we shall encourage Thailand to cooperate with the Empire by restoring territory lost to the United Kingdom to Thailand.

- VII. We shall take advantage of the following opportunities to bring this conflict to an end, while closely monitoring and reviewing, at all times, changes in the war situation, the state of international affairs, public sentiment within enemy nations, and the like.

1. Completion of main operations in the South
2. Completion of main operations against China, especially the capitulation of the Chiang government
3. Favorable changes in the war situation in Europe, especially the defeat of the United Kingdom; the end of the conflict between Germany and the USSR; success of our India policy; to this end, we shall expeditiously intensify diplomatic and propaganda activities directed toward South America, Sweden, Portugal, and the Vatican.

The three nations (Japan, Germany, and Italy) will not enter into separate peace agreements; similarly, they will not enter into separate peace agreements with the United Kingdom upon its capitulation, but will strive to use that capitulation to influence the United States.

In determining our policy regarding the promotion of making peace with the United States we shall consider supplies of tin and rubber in the South Pacific, as well as the handling of the Philippines.

Source: *Senshi sosho* (War history series) 076