

## CHAPTER 5: THE AKIMARU UNIT AND THE FALSIFICATION OF HISTORY

The Akimaru unit operated under the aegis of the Ministry of War. Its official name was War Economy Research Group. It was on occasion referred to as the Special Group within the Budget Section, but its most familiar appellation was the Akimaru Unit. The group, which began its work in the autumn of 1939, when war was looming large, was instructed to conduct an exhaustive analysis of the economic ability of potential enemy nations to wage war and combine the data into a synthetic whole. This task included pinpointing those nations' weaknesses, discerning the extent of Japanese economic ability to wage a protracted war, and proposing offensive and defensive strategies.<sup>1</sup>

The research team comprised Japan's most distinguished economists. It was headed by University of Tokyo Assistant Professor Arisawa Hiromi. Assisting him were Keio University Professor Takemura Tadao (a specialist in Nazi Germany's controlled economy and leader of the team investigating Germany and Italy), Tokyo University of Commerce (today Hitotsubashi University) Professor Nakayama Ichiro (leader of the team investigating Japan), Rikkyo University Professor Miyagawa Minoru (leader of the team investigating the USSR), Nawata Seiichi, an employee of the Yokohama Specie Bank (leader of the team investigating Southeast Asia), and University of Tokyo Professor Royama Masamichi (leader of the team investigating international politics), among others. The researchers dove into their work with enthusiasm and energy.

### **An economist is an economist, regardless of political stance**

Some historians dismiss this research group, maintaining that it was an agglomeration of Marxist economists and proponents of the Nazi German brand of controlled economy. It is true that Arisawa Hiromi was a defendant in the Popular Front Incident, though he was acquitted in September 1944 at his second trial. And the Metropolitan Police Department's Secret Police Section had labeled Takemura Tadao a Marxist and was watching him (as was the Cabinet Intelligence Bureau, which had pegged him for a US-UK sympathizer). Ohara Keishi, who specialized in North American economies and led the team investigating material resources, was arrested in November 1940 in connection with his participation in the Research Group on Materialism. Naoi Takeo, who had been put in charge of evaluating the USSR's economic capability to wage war, was arrested in February 1941 in connection with the Cabinet Planning Board Incident.

But Akimaru was not unaware of these affiliations when he hired his researchers. He selected them because they were the best Japan had to offer.

Was there an economist who knew as much about war economies as Arisawa? Certainly not when it came to war economies of that era.

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<sup>1</sup> Hayashi, *op. cit.*, 20.

Takemura Tadao was absolutely unrivaled as far as knowledge about the Nazi controlled economy and the theory behind it was concerned. He was also well versed in the ability of Germany to wage war and had already done some very rational, accurate analyses.

Among all the researchers Arisawa stands out for *Wars and Economies*, his brilliant work relating to national defense published in 1937. In a research report entitled “Economic Capacity in Wartime,” he expanded upon the ideas presented in “Underlying Principles of the War Economy,” issued in March 1941.

The fruits of the unit’s labors were compiled into reports as soon as they were completed, bearing titles such as “Annual Report on Research Data,” “Data Used to Determine War Potential,” and “Research Resources.” By the time the project ended, nearly 250 such reports had been produced. A list of those that are extant can be found in Hayashi Chikatsu’s previously cited book.<sup>2</sup>

### **From “Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential” to Draft Proposal**

Among them “Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential, Part 1” is the most important. It was prepared by a special research group within the Budget Section, Ministry of the Army, in July 1941.

As I demonstrated in Chapter 2, this survey of war potential was submitted to Sugiyama Hajime, chief of the General Staff, and other high-ranking Army officials in July 1941. It is very likely that the final report contained language similar to the following:

The US-UK alliance will require more than a year to prepare for war. However, once war breaks out Japan can be ready to wage war for two years through the stockpiling of war potential and general mobilization. During that time we shall bring the UK, which is highly dependent upon imports and economically weak, to its knees by gaining control of the Indian Ocean, blocking marine transport, and attacking its Asian colonies. Doing so will cause the US to lose the will to engage in hostilities with Japan and bring the war to an end. To ensure productivity, we must at the same time make a concerted effort to achieve self-sufficiency for Southeast Asian territories colonized by the UK and the Netherlands, and others.<sup>3</sup>

Chief of Staff Sugiyama apparently praised the report, calling the research and reasoning behind it virtually flawless. After formal discussion among the chiefs of the Army-Navy War Guidance Section, it became the foundation of the “Operation Plan for War Against the US, UK, and the Netherlands,” formally approved by the Army and Navy general staffs on September 29. And as I have stated many times, the Operation Plan became the basis for the Draft Proposal for Hastening the End of War Against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek.

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<sup>2</sup> Hayashi, *op. cit.*, 250-253.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

The conclusions reached by the research group, whose objective was to determine Japanese war potential and to develop offensive and defensive strategies, ever aware of both detecting the enemy's weaknesses and the strength of Japan's economic war potential. The result was the one and only strategy that would achieve victory for Japan.

### **Adherence to Draft Proposal would have brought victory**

In Chapter 3 I demonstrated that Japan would probably not have lost the war if the Japanese had conducted the war in accordance with the strategies outlined in the Draft Proposal. I supported my claim with simulations that were premised on executable operations.

I would like to restate my conviction that the sort of victory Japan sought was not world conquest, as Shii Kazuo, chairman of the JCP (Japanese Communist Party) preposterously suggested. Nor was it flying the Japanese flag in Washington, D.C. Japan's objective was very clearly stated in Strategic Principle No. 1.

*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.*

As I have stated throughout this book, the plan was to topple the Chiang Kai-shek administration and establish a coalition government under Wang Jingwei and Chiang. The next step would be achieving independence for the Philippines, Burma, India, and other Asian nations. That would result in Americans' losing the will to continue war against Japan. It would also end the hostile American economic blockade against Japan and enable the two nations to resume a free-trade relationship.

I have also stated that this strategy is virtually identical to one devised by Ishiwara Kanji, a strategist of genius proportions.

After World War II had ended, Ishiwara told reporters from Associated Press and United Press that if he had been in charge, Japan would have won. What he meant was that if the Japanese had followed the guidelines in the Draft Proposal, victory would have been theirs.

### **Chief of General Staff: "Burn every last one of them!"**

Illustrious scholar Arisawa Hiromi, a specialist in war economies who oversaw the war potential study that became the foundation of strategies that might have enabled Japan to win the war, made some strange remarks after Japan's defeat.

The year was 1956 and those remarks, in the form of Arisawa's reminiscences, appeared in the

*Economist*,<sup>4</sup> a Japanese periodical.

Our team, which was studying the UK and the US, completed its interim report toward the end of September. We had discovered that in contrast to Japan's reducing national spending by 50%, the US could reduce consumer spending by 15-20%, and still cover actual war expenditures amounting to about \$35 billion (not counting the supplying of goods to allies). We could find no noticeable deficiency in the structure of the US war economy. Furthermore, the problem of transport between the UK and the US could be surmounted, since American shipbuilding capability could be increased to a point that far exceeds the tonnage of merchant ships sunk by U-boats. We also prepared charts and graphs filled with numerical data by way of explanation. Having heard me speak, Lt. Col. Akimaru told me that the report was very well done; he looked very happy.

At the end of September Lt. Col. Akimaru presented our interim report at a meeting held within the Imperial Army Headquarters. I understand that Chief of Staff Sugiyama Hajime was in attendance, as well as the heads of all sections in the Ministry of the Army. As might be expected, we researchers, being civilians, were not permitted to attend. Lt. Col. Akimaru went into the meeting looking confident, but his mood changed to one of shocked dejection after Sugiyama spoke to him at the very end. The Chief of Staff had said that the work described in our report and our reasoning were virtually flawless and beyond criticism. Unfortunately, the report's conclusions contravened national policy. For that reason Akimaru was ordered to destroy all mimeographed copies of the report immediately.

Lt. Col. Akimaru returned from the meeting looking terribly discouraged. He collected all the copies of the report from the team members and burned them, so I no longer have a copy, nor can I be sure about the numbers that were in the report.

## **Et tu, Brute?**

After Japan's defeat, many, many members of Japan's intellectual elite: scholars, educators, and religious leaders, underwent pathetic, reprehensible transformations.

Their apologies were of this ilk: "I was opposed to the war, but the lack of freedom of speech in Japan prevented me from protesting," or "I was a liberalist at the time." Instead of taking responsibility for the statements they made before the war, they all seemed to be weaseling out of them, eager to flow with the new current.

The new reality was a sad and shameful one, typified by an outpouring of words and deeds that exposed weakness, lack of principles, and amorality.

I had once respected Arisawa Hiromi, even though he was a leftist scholar. But I was appalled

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<sup>4</sup> Arisawa Hiromi, "Gunkoku shugi no hata no shita de (3)" (Under the flag of militarism, part 3), *Ekonomisuto*, 34(30), 28 July 1956, 56-59. These articles were based on the author's reminiscences, entitled *Shiri metsuretsu no Akimaru kikan* (Chaotic Akimaru Unit).

when I learned that he was one of those ugly Japanese. Et tu, Brute?

### **Another Brutus!**

But the real culprit, who organized and supervised work on the “Survey of Allied US-UK Economic War Potential,” which gave rise to the Draft Proposal, and who joined the ranks of the ugly, traitorous Japanese, was Akimaru Jiro, who parroted Arisawa’s statement.

Akimaru wrote the following in *Rofu Jiden*, his recollections of the war, written in 1979 and published in 1988.

#### Research Results Dismissed

Since we had trodden the thorny path to the completion of our core research in July 1941, we presented the results to top-level military officials. Professor Takemura (Tadao) (then a first lieutenant employed by the Budget Section) oversaw work on the war potential of Europe, (specifically Germany and Italy, which were devastating Britain and France. Then I presented an analysis of the combined war potential of the UK and the US on behalf of Professor Arisawa, the true author of the report. The conclusion we had reached was that the ratio of economic war potential (should Japan go to war with the UK and US) was approximately 20:1. Japan could manage with reserve war potential for two years following the commencement of hostilities, but after that our economic war potential would decline, and the enemy’s would begin to increase. Therefore, the difference in war potential would grow wider, and it would be difficult for Japan to endure a protracted war. This conclusion was not welcomed by military authorities, who had already decided that war was unavoidable. They did not seem willing to lend their ears to a passive, pacifist argument; most of them were inclined to plunge recklessly into war. For those of us who were aware of the true situation, this was like walking on thin ice.<sup>5</sup>

Readers will note that this excerpt very closely resembles Arisawa’s comments in the 1956 *Economist* article. The differences come to the fore immediately: the presentation given in July (which Akimaru now says took place in September), and his statement that UK-US economic war potential, as compared with Japan’s, was 20:1.

The Akimaru Unit prepared the “Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential,” which provided the foundation for strategies that would enable Japan to emerge victorious. Then Akimaru’s assertion that the military authorities could not accept the survey’s conclusions because they are passive and pacifist conclusion is an outright lie. So here we have a second Brutus!

Akimaru’s book came out in 1988, but by that time all copies of the “Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential” had been destroyed and were seemingly lost and gone forever, paving the way for the fiction the two men concocted. However, in that same year Arisawa Hiromi died, and a copy of the survey materialized among his papers. One of his relatives, not knowing how

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<sup>5</sup> Rofu was a pen name bestowed on Akimaru by a poetry society.

important the survey was or that it would expose his secrets, contributed it to the University of Tokyo Library of Economics.

### **Only the Akimaru Unit showed the path to victory**

If at that time a government- or Army-sponsored economic research organization had arrived at the conclusion that Japan could support a war economically, there might have been a 1% chance that the Akimaru Unit's report was a passive, pacifist economic analysis.

But that was not the case. At that point there were four prominent organizations in Japan: the Research Institute on Public Finance and Economy in Japan and Manchuria, the Cabinet Planning Board, the Ministry of the Army's Procurement Bureau, and the Total War Research Institute. All of these organizations had conducted several analyses of Japanese national strength and had arrived at rather dispiriting conclusions.

#### **A. Research Institute on Public Finance and Economy in Japan and Manchuria**

The Research Institute on Public Finance and Economy in Japan and Manchuria analyzed Japanese economic strength on four occasions between 1938 and 1940. The conclusions it reached were a steep decline in exports, decreased importation capability, stagnation in expansion of productivity, lower production, and the inability to accomplish the economic cycle. These conclusions reflected the state of the Japanese economy, then on the point of buckling under the pressure of the Second Sino-Japanese War, which broke out in July 1937.

At that time the Japanese economy used foreign currency acquired through the export of textile products to import a variety of necessary resources, mainly from the UK and US. But when economic blocs were formed, Japan's export capacity, mainly for textiles, decreased significantly. Consequently, Japan was very short of foreign currency, and its capability to import declined as well.<sup>6</sup>

#### **B. Cabinet Planning Board**

The Cabinet Planning Board was established in October 1937, to provide a response to the Second Sino-Japanese War, which had just broken out. It was a key organization whose focus was mobilization on a national level.

Conclusions reached by the organization between 1937 and 1939 were: a drastic decline in exports, a decrease in import capability, and the need for review of the materials mobilization plan. It also conjectured, pessimistically, that Japan could not prevail in a war against the UK and the US, as it relied on those nations for 70% of necessary imports, that Japan did not have the economic strength to withstand a long-term war, and that economic planning was impossible because importation had been disrupted.

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<sup>6</sup> Hayashi, *op. cit.*, 27-32.

In August 1940 the Cabinet Planning Board formulated a tentative Emergency Materials Mobilization Program. It was a determination of national strength that incorporated the possibility of war with the UK and the US. The conclusion reached: there was little likelihood of prevailing in hostilities against the UK and the US, both sources of materials required by Japan. A victory in war against those two nations would be impossible.<sup>7</sup>

### C. Procurement Bureau

The Procurement Bureau was a section of the Ministry of the Army that had jurisdiction over the control of munitions, supply, manufacturing, mobilization, conscription and munitions factories.

Its determination of national strength in 1939 was “constraints on Japan’s import strength following notice of the abrogation of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the US and Japan will hinder Japan’s ability to acquire important goods and resources. Consumer demand will decrease significantly. We hope that Japan can depend upon Manchuria for the purchase of Japanese machinery and food products, and for financing.

The Procurement Bureau issued another determination in August 1941, this one filled with anguish: “Hostilities with the UK and US will commence on November 1; we will subsequently acquire petroleum from the Dutch East Indies.” Here they added, “the outlook for maintaining war potential is not totally bleak, but we are terribly worried. We will have to wait and see how the industrial and economic situation develops over the next two years.”<sup>8</sup>

### D. Total War Research Institute

The Total War Research Institute was established in September 1940. It operated under the direct control of the prime minister. Its researchers, charged with finding out if Japan was prepared for total war, were handpicked elite employees of Japan’s ministries, agencies, Army and Navy, and from the private sector. They were to be trained and educated with an eye toward total war. The focus was more on education and training than research.

The war games in which the 30-some researchers participated indicated that if an ambush operation were conducted decisively, early successes would be entirely possible. But Japan, with its few material resources, could not win the war. Hostilities would be prolonged, and the USSR would enter into the conflict toward the end; Japan would be defeated.<sup>9</sup>

Incidentally, in *Defeated in War in the Summer of 1941*, Inose Naoki (former governor of Tokyo Prefecture) mentions a simulation the Total War Research Institute did, and says that the organization knew at that point that Japan would be defeated.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33, 35-37.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-35, 37-39.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 159-160.

Defeat was the only possible outcome if Japan veered from the Draft Proposal and proceeded to wage a head-on decisive war. On that point I am in agreement, as I wrote in my Foreword, and no amount of speculation will change that.

Still, as I stated in detail in Chapters 2 and 3, I believe that Mr. Inose’s assertion reveals a naïve way of thinking that does not hold up if one has read the Draft Proposal. I hope readers understand.

Moving along, we now see that the government and military authorities did not plunge into the war arbitrarily, blissfully unaware of the international situation and Japan’s national strength. Rather, they made a very difficult decision after having conducted impartial strategic analyses. Among those analyses, only the work done by the Akimaru Unit showed the way to victory.

As already stated, its work served as the basis for the Draft Proposal. If it had been used as intended, Japan could have prevailed. It was not a theoretical fantasy, but an achievable, realistic strategy.

### **20:1 ratio pandered to popular opinion**

Akimaru presented his group’s research report (this was not basic research, but a final report) on Arisawa’s behalf. He did not say, on that occasion, that the US had 20 times the economic strength of Japan. However, at a later date Akimaru maintained that he had said those words during the presentation, which seems very unnatural to me.

Unnatural because the “Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential” contains no such numbers. Furthermore, the intention of the report was to point out the enemy’s weaknesses. Suppose that, at that time, no one had known that the difference in economic scale was 20:1 (this in itself was quite off the mark — in terms of GNP, 10:1 would have been more accurate). In that case their claim would have gone against the flow of the presentation. Still, it would have had some meaning. But that *was* already known, and had been built into the analyses done by all four organizations.

Figure 16: Comparison of Japanese and US Economies<sup>10</sup>

Category	US	Japan: US
Steel manufacture	95 million tons	1:20
Oil refinery output	110 million barrels	1: 100’s
Coal production	500 million tons	1:10
Electrical output	1,800 kilowatts	1:6
Aluminum production	850,000 tons (projected)	1:3
	600,000 tons (actual)	1:6
Aircraft production	120,000	
Automobile production	6.2 million	1:50
Vessel tonnage	10 million tons	1:2
Factory workers	34 million	1:5

<sup>10</sup> Iwakuro Hideo, *Showa rikugun: boryaku hishi* (Japanese Army in the Showa era: secret history of intrigues) (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbun Shuppansha, 2015).



Also, the aforementioned Col. Iwakuro Hideo presented a comparison of Japanese and American economic strength (Figure 16) on the basis of data provided by Col. Shinjo Kenkichi of the Budget Bureau, which Iwakuro used to discourage entering into hostilities with the US.<sup>11</sup>

But apparently Akimaru's superior, Budget Section Chief Endo Takeo, said that almost all the information in what Col. Shinjo referred to as his "research" was garnered from trading company employees. That means that what was practically common knowledge at the time evolved into the notion of conducting a war that targeted American and British deficiencies.<sup>12</sup>

In other words, the numbers that Akimaru calculatedly inserted into his memoir had become conventional wisdom in the postwar era. That is because they meshed nicely with the popular notion (that Japan had plunged into war without the slightest idea of how powerful the US was). Akimaru's must have wanted to impress his readers with his very objective, very sound reasoning ("I knew even then!"). And his objective hit the mark. Later, the "Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential" would resurface and Akimaru would be exposed as a liar. On the other hand, however, his "20:1" trick seems to have helped a great deal to solidify his image as a righteous individual. This is the power of a catchphrase with popular appeal. As I will explain later, the media zeroed in on it, and decided that Akimaru was right and the military leaders were wrong. That is what prevented the spotlight from shining on the actual content of the report.

### **Fabricators dismiss newly unearthed historical fact**

Once the report had reappeared, anybody who wanted to could read it. And the bald-faced lies told by Arisawa Hiromi and Akimaru Jiro were exposed for everyone to see. But what actually happened was somewhat unexpected.

The most embarrassed by these revelations were probably economists and historians who had connections with the left-leaning Arisawa. In any case, everybody now knew that they and their cronies (who could not speak out against the war because their opinions were suppressed) had actually helped make a momentous decision for Japan: to go to war. Arisawa had claimed he was a pacifist; now he revealed himself to be a fake pacifist. Having reinvented themselves, the turncoat intellectuals then took their case to the media.

The media fell into their trap and proceeded to give them a lot of coverage. Most of the media said that the conflict was a war of aggression that narrow-minded militarist leaders had started. This nonsense continues even today. By burying the truth, the turncoats, whose sense of their own elitism is so strong, avoid having their own "theory" rejected and losing their stature. In the worst case their world view could crumble. Then they would be ruined.

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<sup>11</sup> Makino Kuniaki, *Keizaigakushatachi no Nichibei kaisen* (Japanese economists in the process leading to the Pacific war: solving the mysteries of the "Phantom Report" of the Akimaru unit in the Imperial Japanese Army) (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 2018), 137-8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

## Mass media broadcast manufactured “news”

We can count on the media (NHK, for one) for a steady supply of broadcasts featuring fabricated news. But here I would like to single out an article from the Nikkei (Nihon Keizai) Shimbun mentioned in Hayashi Chikatsu’s *Outbreak of War Between Japan and the US: Japanese Army’s Chances of Success: Akimaru Agency’s Final Report*.

The article in question appeared on the front page of the newspaper’s morning edition on January 3, 2011. The reason for the extensive coverage exposure because that date marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Greater East Asian War.

Report burned before outbreak of war

Time to face reality

Seventy years ago, on the eve of the outbreak of war between Japan and the US, a phantom report that accurately gauged Japan’s national strength was reduced to flames. Lt. Col. Akimaru Jiro headed the War Economy Research Group, which produced that report. In September 1939 he returned suddenly to Japan from his post as head of the Guandong Army’s Construction Section in Manzhouguo. His team became known as the Akimaru Unit. Ordered to analyze Japan’s possibilities of surviving a war against the UK and the US, Akimaru assembled a team of distinguished economists, including Tokyo University Professor Arisawa Hiromi and Nakayama Ichiro, who would later become president of Hitotsubashi University. They began work in earnest.

(...)

20:1 ratio ignored

On any given day there were usually 20-30 people secluded on the second floor of the Dai-hyaku Bank in Kojimachi. They were doing research on a wide range of subjects: demographics, resources, marine transport, and industry to name some of them. Information-gathering was far more difficult then than it is today. As the victim of an economic blockade, how much energy could Japan invest in the production of munitions? What was the difference between Japan and the UK and US, as far as national strength was concerned? The researchers poured their combined, powerful intellects into their analyses.

In mid-1941, a year and a half after the work had commenced, several months before the commencement of hostilities between Japan and the US on December 8, Akimaru presented a report to high-ranking Army officers. He resolutely began to speak, and proceeded to communicate his conclusion: “If you consider Japan’s economic strength as 1, then that of the UK and the US combined is 20. Japan could fight for two years before all resources are exhausted. At that point on, and the UK and US would begin rising. The difference in war potential between Japan and the other two nations would be huge. Japan could not last in a prolonged war.”

At that meeting were Sugiyama Hajime, chief of the General Staff, and about 30 other Army leaders. After listening carefully, Sugiyama finally spoke, stating his

appreciation of the analyses. “Your report is virtually flawless. I have no criticism to lodge.” He continued, saying, “Unfortunately, its conclusions contravene national policy. I want you to burn every single mimeographed copy.”

When he returned from the meeting, Akimaru collected every copy of the report from his colleagues and destroyed them all. Arisawa was ordered to stop working on the project immediately.

In 1988, after Arisawa’s death, one copy of the report was discovered among his effects. The 104-page report was extremely detailed. But the military authorities refused to face the facts. The Akimaru Unit soon disbanded, and with the status quo firmly entrenched, the conclusion of the war with current perceptions sealed, was pitiful.

The newspaper had further embellished Arisawa and Akimaru’s fairy tale. It was now a propaganda tool, and the Nikkei reporter who wrote it used a style that suggested righteous indignation.

Did the reporter even bother to give serious attention to “Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential,” an important resource? Did he produce this propaganda by building upon the self-serving Arisawa-Akimaru prevarication, adding to it “information” fed to him by some left-wing academic?

Conclusion 7 of “Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential” reads as follows.

For strategy against the UK we recommend using frontal attacks to destroy Great Britain proper in one fell swoop, taking advantage of British weaknesses — human and material resources — by accelerating the consumption of same; destroying production capability by conducting air raids; and making increasing efforts to strengthen marine blockades using submarines. Moreover, with an eye toward destroying the British war economy, it might be very effective to expand the war front to British possessions that constitute the outer portion of British resistance, then move on to a war of attrition, and cut off British supply sources.

These recommendations formed the basis of the Draft Proposal. Nowhere was it written that difference in war potential is great, or that Japan could not survive a protracted war. The Draft Proposal did not rubber-stamp the prevailing conventional wisdom; recognition of current perceptions formed the foundation of its strategies.

Furthermore, the Nikkei article states that “the Akimaru Unit soon disbanded.” This is patently untrue. As a matter of fact, a year after the report was completed, in December 1942, the Ministry of the Army’s War Economy Research Group was still working in earnest, produced Survey No. 91: Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere National Defense Geopolitics. It was the Nikkei reporter who sealed the current perception, ignoring what he did not wish to see.

## **Restore conscientiousness to academia**

Arisawa's "Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential," thought to have been lost forever, had resurfaced. When that happened, it became obvious that what Arisawa had written in the *Economist* was untrue. But were the "scholars" who were awakened to the truth inspired to investigate historical fact? No, what they did was add another layer of fiction to the lies. What ever happened to scholarly conscientiousness?

In Chapter 1 (Did Japan Wage a War of Aggression?) I referred to several very important historical facts and publications. But Japan's academic societies still refuse to address the majority of them. Probably the most important of all is MacArthur's testimony before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services, specifically, "[Japan's] purpose, therefore, in going to war was largely dictated by security."<sup>13</sup>

Although by "security" MacArthur was referring to national security, some left-wing scholars have come up with a laughably bizarre interpretation, insisting that he meant domestic public order. In any case, Japan's historians do not appear to have awakened to the importance of MacArthur's testimony. Or perhaps they are unwilling to do so.

Prof. Watanabe Shoichi has said that any middle-school history textbook including MacArthur's testimony would disqualify it from authorization by the Textbook Authorization and Research Council. When asked why this is so, he replied that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, Technology and Innovation is not afraid of offending the Americans. However, the standard for authorization is determined by the opinion of the academic societies and the prevailing conventional wisdom. In other words, those societies are at the crux of this problem.

## **Revealing study, *Freedom Betrayed*, by 31<sup>st</sup> US President Herbert Hoover**

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Herbert Hoover, the 31<sup>st</sup> president of the US (preceding Franklin D. Roosevelt) wrote a 900-page book entitled *Freedom Betrayed: Herbert Hoover's Secret History of the Second World War*. He spent more than 20 years writing it, during which he accumulated a huge number of references. The manuscript was completed in 1964 and sent to the printer, but the book remained unpublished due to Hoover's death in that same year. Not until 2011, more than 20 years later, was the book published by the Hoover Institution.

Wanting to introduce *Freedom Betrayed* to a wide audience, Kase Hideaki, Fujii Genki, Inamura Kobo and I compiled and published a book that discussed Hoover's work in 2016. Its title is *Who Started the War Between Japan and the US?*<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, in 2018, Watanabe Soki translated the book in its entirety; it was published by Soshisha.

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<sup>13</sup> Edward T. Imparato, ed., *General MacArthur Speeches and Reports 1908-1964* (Nashville: Turner Publishing Co., 2000), 170-71.

<sup>14</sup> Japanese title is *Nichibei senso wo okoshita no ha dare ka*, published by Bensei Shuppan (Tokyo).

At the end of Chapter 1 of this book, I included a quote from Hoover:

[T]he whole Japanese war was a madman's desire to get into war.<sup>15</sup>

I wish Japanese historians would recognize the value of Hoover's book, which should certainly be part of the historical narrative. Isn't that one of a scholar's moral obligations?

It isn't only Japanese historians who lack a moral compass. American historians are just as guilty, perhaps because they don't want the illusion that was "America's just war" to dissipate. Whatever the case, historians in the US have not paid much attention to Hoover's book, even though it was issued by the first-class think tank, the Hoover Institution.

Still we must not tolerate Japan's historians' refusal to face facts.

### **JB355 operation plan**

I referred to the JB355 operation plan in Chapter 1, but would like to revisit this topic. On July 23, 1941, five months prior to the Pearl Harbor strike, President Roosevelt put his signature on an operation plan for the bombing of Tokyo and Osaka. I cannot fathom why Japanese historians never mention JB355 when they discuss the war between Japan and the US. What exactly are they doing all day, every day?

Information pertaining to JB355 was made available by the American NARA (National Archives and Records Administration) in 1970. But to the best of my knowledge, no Japanese historian has written a paper stating that the US was planning to attack Japan prior to Pearl Harbor. If someone has, he or she has earned my respect.

In 1991, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, ABC (American Broadcasting Company) ran a special program about JB355, but as far as I know, no Japanese historian reacted publicly to it.

This despite the fact that the aforementioned Alan Armstrong came out in 2006 with a book *Preemptive Strike: The Secret Plan That Would Have Prevented the Attack on Pearl Harbor*. The Japanese translation appeared in 2008, published by Nihon Keizai Shimbun Shuppansha.

I have already mentioned that fortunately on August 12, 2018 TV Asahi broadcast a special program (Scoop Special) entitled "The Truth Comes Out 77 Years After the Pearl Harbor Attack." I commend the network for even airing the program, but the information had been available for 48 years (and the ABC program was broadcast 27 years earlier); it shouldn't be called a scoop by any stretch of the imagination, but the fact that no one else had chosen to cover it shows how negligent historians had been.

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<sup>15</sup> Hoover, *op. cit.*, 833.

The kindest thing I can say is that Japan's historians were not fulfilling their responsibilities. But it is more likely that they turned a blind eye to historical facts that contradicted the historical view of Japan as a criminal nation.

The same thing happened with regard to the work of the Akimaru Unit. Why did historians become accomplices by amplifying what was already a lie? I can't say this enough times: what has happened to academic conscientiousness?

### **Unraveling the mystery of the Akimaru Unit's phantom report**

I learned that a relatively fair-minded book dealing with the research done by the Akimaru Unit had come out in May 2018. It is Makino Kuniaki's *Japanese Economists in the Process Leading to the Pacific War: Solving the Mysteries of the "Phantom Reports" of the Akimaru Unit in the Imperial Japanese Army*.

The author has obviously done a lot of research. Unfortunately, due to space constraints, I must save a full appraisal of his book for another occasion. For now I will comment briefly on some problems I encountered.

(1) Here is the first problem I encountered:

According to descriptions given by Arisawa and Akimaru of their report as presented to military leaders, the Akimaru Unit wished to emphasize the folly of Japan's initiating hostilities with the US, given the huge gap between the national strength of the two countries. Even after "Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential, Part 1" was discovered, only the portion referring to the huge war potential of the UK and the US (particularly the US) acquired prominence.

An alternative theory, i.e., that the suggestion in the "judgment" of [UK-US 1] that "shipping capability between the UK and the US is a weakness, and therefore Japan should collaborate with Germany to interrupt communications between the UK and its colonies by attacking transport ships" influenced the Draft Proposal was embraced by Saito Nobuyoshi in 1999. According to this theory, the Japanese searched for weaknesses to use in the war against the UK and US, and the results of that investigation influenced national policy. Recently that theory, i.e., "the Army had conducted a rational investigation that enabled the development of strategies that would bring victory to Japan," has been advocated in a rather high-handed manner.

For a time, this writer thought that the alternative theory was the correct one. Now, however, I no longer think so, nor do I believe that the prevailing view is correct.<sup>16</sup>

It would seem at first glance that the author has assumed a rather fair stance. Unfortunately, Makino ignores the fact that Arisawa and Akimoto provided the foundation for the Draft Proposal. He refuses to recognize the untruths that came into existence during the postwar period (that

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<sup>16</sup> Makino, *op. cit.*, 102-3.

Arisawa and Akimaru were trying to prevent the war) as what they most definitely are — lies. Just like other postwar intellectual turncoats, they are attempting to rationalize their newly created views, but they are still lying. The vagueness of their language makes it possible to interpret their statements in any and every way.

As for the alternative theory, Makino should have explained Saito Nobuyoshi's opinions in more detail, and indicate where its problems lie. Even more unfortunate is Makino's failure to mention the detailed arguments presented in Hayashi Chikatsu's *Outbreak of War Between Japan and the US*. Without presenting any rebuttals, he simply dismisses it as high-handed.

Since Hayashi's is the first book to address the activities of the Akimaru Unit, its work, and the "Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential" in any detail, it would seem appropriate to give it its due share of attention.

It would be a shame if his reason for ignoring it is that the author is not a scholar. Or perhaps he is practicing some other type of childish discrimination that is common in academia.

(2) Makino insists that the content of the Akimaru Unit's report was confidential but not unknown at the time — that the gist was rather well known, as a matter of fact. Also, he states that this was the main reason why he abandoned the alternative theory, which he had thought to be correct for a time.

But the fact that the content of the report was well known, and that the main strategic deciding factor for Japan was preventing supplies from reaching the UK are not the same thing. Ultimately, frontal attacks, at best a mediocre strategy to use against the US, gained precedence and predominance.

That the importance of the Indian Ocean was widely discussed at the time is not the same as considering the Indian Ocean as Japan's greatest challenge.

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(3) Throughout this book I have analyzed the Draft Proposal and proven its effectiveness. However, Makino has embraced theories sanctioned by academic societies; he does not seem to have much use for the Draft Proposal. That seems to mean that he analyzes and then rejects it, which is the main weakness in his work.

(4) Makino criticizes the Draft Proposal because it has Japan depending on Germany and Italy for direct attacks on the UK and US, with the exception of the US Navy. But from my point of view, this is a very realistic approach. Japan's role absolutely should have been securing control of the main sea lane, i.e., the Indian Ocean.

Makino also disapproves of Germany's unwavering hope of a land offensive on Great Britain. But if Japan had adhered to the Draft Proposal and dispensed with foolhardy battles like Midway and Guadalcanal, and in July 1942 had executed the already scheduled Western Asia operations, Rommel would have defeated the British Navy at the Suez and captured the Middle Eastern oil-producing region. This was hardly wishful thinking — it was an attainable objective.

Instead of assessing the Draft Proposal from a positive point of view, Makino complains that Japan was depending on Germany to defeat the Soviet Union, or depending on Germany and Italy to conquer the UK and the US. Japan's role in the conflict, as well as Japan's expectations of Germany and Italy, are all clearly stated in the Draft Proposal.

(5) Makino argues that the Draft Proposal was not a product of research governed by logic, but merely a writing exercise performed by bureaucrats. But from the standpoint of one who thinks there was a very good chance that operations conducted according to its instructions would have been successful, and has done an analysis that proves his point, Makino's arguments are nothing more than a writing exercise done by a neophyte.

(6) In Chapter 4 I explained that the Midway operation was, like the Doolittle raids, a trap that Yamamoto Isoroku (not a brilliant strategist) fell into, a suicide mission that couldn't be reproduced. Makino's claim that it indicated, once again, how much of a threat the American carrier striking force reveals his failure to realize how superior the strategies outlined in the Draft Proposal were.

In sum, Makino seems convinced that Japan was at a strategic disadvantage from the very beginning of the war. At that time the US had only three carrier task forces in the Pacific, as opposed to Japan's 10. How could three American aircraft carriers pose such a huge threat? With a premise like that, it is no wonder that he considers the content of the Draft Proposal to be a futile writing exercise.

I would like to add that the Japanese lost four carriers at Midway, but still managed to sink an American carrier. At the end of 1942 the US had no carriers in the Pacific, even though a replacement carrier was sent from the Atlantic, a very sad state of affairs. At that point Japan had six standard carriers and five smaller carriers.

If carriers, battleships, and aircraft had not been wasted on Yamamoto-style head-on battles at Midway, Guadalcanal, and the Solomon Islands, they could have been used after 1943 to great effect. I hope everyone understands this basic fact.

(7) Writing about the Total War Research Institute, Makino makes a perspicacious observation. Inose Naoki wrote that the organization predicted Japan's defeat in the Pacific War before it began, a prediction that became famous and influential. But Makino reminds us that the organization was more of an educational group than a research institute.

Makino states that the report issued in August 1943 was a simulation of an active-learning exercise. Beyond that he describes the Total War Research Institute as a training facility for bureaucrats established to conquer sectionalism in the various ministries and agencies.

On this point he is correct. I will simply add that the organization was not engaged in any groundbreaking strategic research.

(8) Makino's recognition of the importance of the Survey of the German Economic Strength Resistance is significant. Even if Japan broadened the battlefront to outlying areas of the UK



(possessions and colonies), and advanced to the Indian Ocean and disrupted communication between India and Australia, and Great Britain, military matériel, of which the US had an oversupply, could still be shipped to Great Britain. As a result, the focus was now on Germany and Italy, and the extent to which they could blockade supply routes.

Makino adds that Takemura Tadao, head of the team researching Germany, had indicated that starting in 1942, Germany's war potential would gradually decline, necessitating the use of Soviet production capacity.

In that case the importance of the Indian Ocean would continue to increase. First of all, Japan would be blocking the transport of munitions from the US to the UK by gaining control of the Indian Ocean. Second, the flow of a huge amount of munitions from the US to the USSR would cease. The accomplishment of these two goals would enable Rommel, having captured Tobruk, to advance to the Suez and take over the oil fields in the Middle East. Makino does not address these topics.

It is my hope that the author will continue his search for the truth and debunk the prevailing view. I would recommend that he begin with the same type of analysis and critical reasoning that characterizes Hayashi Chikatsu's *Outbreak of War Between Japan and the US*.

In conclusion, what limits and weakens Makino's book is his argument that Arisawa and Akimaru's research was intended to stave off the war, which is completely untrue.

The war ended and a new trend came into being, spearheaded by the fabrication of history by the occupying forces, the conquering nations, leftists, and the "converted" intellectuals and their toadies. Japan had been made into a criminal nation. It was that new environment that motivated Arisawa and Akimaru to bear false witness. Put simply, they made an about-face to convince those hypocrites that they were moral, upstanding citizens!

Unless we expose the flaws in the foundation on which an argument is based, we may find that part of the argument is based on fact, we must discredit that argument to avoid becoming accomplices who support the current perception of history, which is utter mythology.

### **Arisawa-Akimaru produced a viable strategy**

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Japan certainly did not enter into hostilities with the aim of conquering the world, or even invading another nation. Faced with an environment that threatened Japan's security and survival, the Japanese accurately grasped the situation that confronted them, and rose to defend themselves using the few strategies available to them.

As Herbert Hoover, the 31<sup>st</sup> US president, wrote in *Freedom Betrayed*, "[T]he whole Japanese war was a madman's desire to get into war."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hoover, *op. cit.*, 833.

In other words, it was not Japan that started the war, but the US. Consequently, all the premises on which the postwar fabricated historical perception was based were erroneous.

- Did Japan start the war because it had a feudalistic system and an emperor who was an absolute monarch?

No. It was the US, ostensibly a democratic nation, that started the war.

- Did Japan start the war because its military authorities had taken control of politics?

No. It was the US, ostensibly under civilian control, that started the war.

- Did war break out because there was no freedom of speech in Japan, and opinions opposing militarism were suppressed?

No. It was the US, whose citizens supposedly enjoyed freedom of speech, that started the war.

- Did the Japanese start the war because they embraced in rabid nationalism and a Japan-first policy?

No. The ethnically and racially diverse US started the war against Japan.

- Did Japan start the war because it forced fanatic National Shinto on its citizens?

No. The US, a nation of Christians, which supposedly had freedom of religion, started the war against Japan.

Consequently, the research done by the Akimaru Unit, which provided strategies that opened up possibilities for Japan to prevail, despite the unpleasant situation it found itself in, is nothing to be ashamed of. It was a fine achievement, and made perfect sense.

The first question Makino should have asked is, “Why didn’t Arisawa and Akimaru take pride in the spirit with which they undertook their research, and in their accomplishments?” There was no reason for him to accept prevailing theory in all its absurdity: that Japan was a militarist nation intent on aggression.

If we approach the Akimaru Unit’s research logically and rationally, we will surely come to appreciate its accuracy and strategic importance.

Japan’s economic strength was far inferior to that of the UK and the US. Everyone knew that. But rising to that challenge and giving birth to a strategy that could lead to victory was an accomplishment that deserves special mention in the annals of world history.

I am certain that the day will come when the researchers' achievements are duly recognized. In the tribunal of history, the gestation period for judgments seems interminable, but I believe that justice will prevail.