

Japan's Master Plan for Victory: What Could Have Been

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Japanese personal names have been rendered surname first, in accordance with Japanese custom.

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FOREWORD

If I were to say that Japan had a master plan (and a viable one at that) for victory in World War II, what sort of reaction could I expect? Perhaps most people would be dismissive, wondering how I could be suffering from such a delusion at this late date. Certainly most citizens of the Western world would react that way.

In *Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: Was Defeat Inevitable?* James B. Wood broaches this topic. The Williams College history professor suggests that Japan was not reckless in waging war against the Allies. His opinion is very much a minority one among Europeans (and of course, Americans). Wood sums up the mentality of the Western world regarding this topic very well, as follows.

“Why were the Japanese so crazy as to take on the United States?” or “How could a country with a GNP about that of Italy or Canada, expect to win?” or “Why should we expect anything else from a country with a feudal warrior code and culture, emperor worship, racial supremacy notions, and a total lack of sympathy or respect for her neighbors?” The implication is that those responsible for Japan’s path to war were ignorant or irrational, perhaps a blend of both, as well as basically evil — a perfectly other counterpoise to the victor of modernity in all respect, the United States.¹

Nevertheless, how do we explain the fact that ignorant, backward Japan, defeated in war and reduced to ashes, managed to recover so thoroughly that 23 years later, its GNP was second only to that of the US? And are the proponents of this negative view of Japan aware that prior to World War II, Japan had a greater naval presence than the US, since the Americans needed sea power on two oceans. I will provide details in due course, but to cite an example, Japan had 10 aircraft carriers in the Pacific, while the US had only two. The Americans had others, if we include those operating in the Atlantic, but only seven altogether. They called the Japanese ignorant and irrational, but don’t those adjectives better describe the Americans at that juncture?

James Wood goes on to write, “Of all the books written during the recent fiftieth anniversary of World War II, only one has clearly taken on such deterministic explanations of the course of the war.” That book is Richard Overly’s *Why the Allies Won*.

An excerpt follows.

Why did the Allies win World War II? This is such a straightforward question that we assume it has an obvious answer. Indeed the question itself is hardly ever asked. Allied victory is taken for granted. Was their cause not manifestly just? Despite all the dangers, was the progress of their vast forces not irresistible? Explanations of Allied success contain a strong element of determinism. We now know the story so well that we do not consider the uncomfortable prospect that other outcomes might have been possible. To ask why the Allies won is to presuppose that they might have lost or, for understandable reasons, that they would have accepted an outcome short of total victory. These were in fact strong possibilities. There was nothing

¹ James B. Wood, *Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: Was Defeat Inevitable?* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 1.

preordained about Allied success.²

On the basis of a similar philosophy, Professor Wood discusses Japan's accomplishments and failures. He also describes his thoughts about the sort of world we would have today if the Japanese had had the opportunity to conduct a more manageable war.

Some of Wood's arguments are extremely useful and instructive. I shall be referring to them throughout this book and elaborating on them, as I demonstrate that Japan had a master plan, a formula for victory, but ended up fighting a war that did not adhere to that plan. I will also delve into the reasons for those deviations.

On November 15, 1941, three weeks prior to the Pearl Harbor strike, the Japanese government and Imperial General Headquarters held a liaison conference. Those present discussed the *Draft Proposal for Hastening the End of War Against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek*, and decided to execute it. I consider this the master plan, the plan for victory, and will be analyzing it with the aid of practical simulations throughout this book.

The essentials of that master plan are laid out in Section 1 of Objectives (see Figure 3). First, to ensure self-sufficiency and exercise the right to defend their nation, the Japanese military would expeditiously destroy bases established by the US, the UK, and the Netherlands in the Far East. Additionally, they would take action to facilitate the surrender of the Chiang government, and then form an alliance with Germany and Italy. They would use that alliance to effect the capitulation of Britain, which would cause the US to lose the will to continue hostilities against Japan.

Then, after securing Southeast Asian resource-rich regions, they would proceed to the Indian Ocean, where they would block shipments to Great Britain by cutting off supply lines linking it with Australia, New Zealand, and India. The Pacific Ocean, a force of nature, would serve as their weapon against the US. The Japanese military would lure American naval forces into the Pacific, and then ambush and destroy them, using whatever means were necessary.

The Pearl Harbor strike, which does not appear in the *Draft Proposal*, was a deviation. I will provide a detailed analysis of the attack and why it was made in Chapter 4. Operation 11, which involved dispatching two Army divisions and the main strength of the Navy to destroy the British Far East Fleet and occupy Ceylon. The Japanese were fully prepared to execute this operation in July 1942, but did not.

In a communiqué from British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to US President Franklin Roosevelt sent on April 15, 1942, Churchill expressed his frustration at being unable to halt Japanese advances in Southeast Asia.

I must revert to the grave situation in the Indian Ocean ... arising from the fact that the Japanese have felt able to detach nearly a third of their battle fleet and half their carriers, which force we are unable to match for several months. The consequences of this may easily be: (A) The loss of Ceylon. (B) Invasion of Eastern India with incalculable internal consequences to our whole war plan and including the loss of Calcutta and of all contact with the Chinese through Burma. But this is only the beginning. Until we are able to fight a fleet action there is no reason why the Japanese should not become the dominating factor in the Western Indian Ocean. This would result in the collapse of our whole position in the Middle East, not only because of the

² Overy, Richard, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995), 15.

interruption to our convoys to the Middle East and India, but also because of the interruptions to the oil supplies from Abadan, without which we cannot maintain our position either at sea or on land in the Indian Ocean Area. Supplies to Russia via the Persian Gulf would also be cut. With so much of the weight of Japan thrown upon us we have more than we can bear.³

I ask readers' indulgence as I demonstrate that the Japanese formula for victory was decidedly not a grandiose delusion, but a solidly realistic plan replete with potential.

Moteki Hiromichi
21 June 2019

³ Kimball, Warren, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, vol. 1, *Alliance Emerging* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 452-3.

CHAPTER 1: DID JAPAN WAGE A WAR OF AGGRESSION?

Was the Japanese strike on Pearl Harbor a sneak attack? Was Japan an aggressor nation in World War II?

These are weighty questions. However, my intent in writing this book was not to address them in great detail, as anyone who has read the Foreword can see.

Still, I see no reason to go to great lengths to avoid *any* mention of these topics. After all, at a recent televised debate among political party leaders, Shii Kazuo, chairman of the JCP (Japanese Communist Party), maintained that in going to war against the Allies, Japan was embarking on world conquest.⁴ Such a pronouncement begs for comment. Moreover, since Japan's mainstream historians operate under communist thrall, it would be foolish to ignore such an outburst. For that reason, I will briefly describe my thoughts on these matters.

The panic of 1929 and the Smoot-Hawley Tariff

What was the primary cause of World War II? When we search for the answer to this question, all paths lead to the panic that began with the Wall Street stock market crash on Black Thursday, October 24, 1929.

Figure 1 shows the massive effect of that market crash on industrial production in the world's nations.

Figure 1: Transitions in Industrial Production Caused by the Great Depression

| Year | US | UK | France | Germany | Japan | USSR |
|------|------|------|--------|---------|-------|------|
| 1928 | 93 | 94 | 92 | 99 | 90 | 79 |
| 1929 | 100* | 100* | 100* | 100* | 100* | 100* |
| 1930 | 81 | 92 | 100 | 86 | 95 | 131 |
| 1931 | 68 | 84 | 86 | 68 | 92 | 161 |
| 1932 | 54 | 84 | 72 | 53 | 98 | 183 |
| 1933 | 64 | 88 | 81 | 61 | 113 | 196 |
| 1934 | 66 | 99 | 75 | 80 | 128 | 238 |
| 1935 | 76 | 106 | 73 | 94 | 142 | 293 |

(*Baseline figures)⁵

By 1932 industrial production in the US had plunged to nearly 50% of its pre-depression level in 1929.

⁴ The debate took place in May 2015. Shii scolded Prime Minister Abe Shinzo: "Is it possible that you are unaware of the passage in the Potsdam Declaration that reads, 'There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest.'" (<https://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/c06.html>; retrieved 05/2019). Here we have a political leader quoting from a document forced on the Japanese by enemy nations, demanding surrender. It would have been bad enough if Shii had just quoted from it as though it were eternal truth, but he makes matters worse by using it to justify his claim about world conquest as well.

⁵<https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E4%B8%96%E7%95%8C%E6%81%90%E6%85%8C> (in Japanese; retrieved 6/2019).

The problem here is the American policy response to this economic crisis, which could not help but exert considerable influence on the rest of the world. The average tariff rate increased to approximately 40%, resulting in a decline in exports to the US, and a worsening of the worldwide depression.

That policy, an extremely self-centered one, was shaped by legislation passed by the US Congress on June 17, 1930. Called the Smoot-Hawley Tariff, the law raised tariffs on more than 20,000 imported goods to a record-breaking high.

Of all the US' trading partners, Japan suffered the heaviest blow. In 1929 45% percent of Japan's total exports were bound for the US in contrast to only 18.4% in 1934. Japan managed to weather that storm by expanding its export destinations, but the Americans' grasping, protectionist policy set the stage for the formation of economic blocs.

Proliferation of economic blocs leads to fragmentation of world's markets

In 1932 the United Kingdom introduced the British Preference Tariff system and formed the sterling bloc. In 1933 the French created the franc bloc, and the Dutch followed in their footsteps with the Netherlands bloc. The US had a dollar bloc that included Central and South America. By setting preferential tariffs that distinguished between members and non-members, the bloc policy protected the members of a bloc and restricted imports from non-member states.

The conventional wisdom is that the British Commonwealth was the first to create an economic bloc, but actually it was the US. The US had the largest market in the world, far larger than the franc bloc or other blocs. To use the language of economics, by introducing high tariffs, the Americans were creating an economic bloc. They were also motivating other nations of the world to follow their lead.

The free-trade system was fragmented by economic-bloc barriers, and the world's markets became increasingly protectionist. Nations that suffered most from the new order were those without spheres of influence (colonies, for instance), meaning have-not nations like Japan, Germany, and Italy.

The have-not nations were forced into a situation that was a far cry from market liberalism. The so-called advanced nations that had once touted the merits of free trade had abandoned the free-trade system. Therefore, "freedom" was now an empty word to the countries that had been excluded. This was a rude awakening for Japan. The budding dream of Taisho democracy, or political liberalism, had been shattered.

The Stimson Doctrine

When the Japanese took control of Manchuria, they intended to form a bloc called the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in partnership with China. This was a very natural step to take, especially in light of the other blocs that had been formed. But US Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson (later secretary of war) issued what became known as the Stimson Doctrine in January 1932. According to this "doctrine," the US refused to acknowledge Japanese interests in Manchuria. Never mind that the Americans had already created their own sphere of influence in South and Central America, which they called the Monroe Doctrine. By repudiating Japan's actions in Manchuria (which mirrored those that the US had taken), the Americans were revealing exactly how selfish, or more accurately, how discriminatory their policies were.

After the Russo-Japanese War, President Theodore Roosevelt acknowledged Japan's application of the Monroe Doctrine in Asia, saying that "a 'Japanese Monroe Doctrine' in Asia will remove the temptation

to European encroachment, and Japan will be recognized as the leader of Asiatic nations, and her power will form the shield behind which they can reorganize their national system.”⁶ However, Stimson adamantly refused to do so. His refusal marked a turning point and set the stage for antagonism between Japan and the US.

Comintern embraces revolutionary defeatism

In any case, it had clearly become impossible to ease the friction among the world’s economies caused by the trade blocs, or to correct the resulting distorted structure through peaceful negotiations. Only through war could the underlying problems be resolved.

Enter the Comintern (Communist International). The organization aimed to foment war, in which it would play a leading role in the hope that its formula, revolutionary defeatism, would achieve the desired goal.⁷ The aforementioned Shii Kazuo believes that most people are unaware of that, and spouts fallacious “facts,” such as the one about Japan’s seeking to gain control of the entire world.

In contrast, the Comintern was plotting to spread communism throughout the world by inciting wars wherever possible. The organization crafted a very clever policy, a plot really, whereby it would instigate conflicts while pretending to be opposed to war.

Recently report after report has revealed that there was a communist front in the form of over 200 Comintern plants among the ranks of American leaders advocating peace at the time. We know that they insinuated themselves into positions in the US government from the Venona papers.⁸ The fact is that communists were a belligerent force that professed an abhorrence of war.

Americans abrogate Japan-US treaty

On July 26, 1939 the US abruptly announced its abrogation of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the US and Japan. The reason given for this action was equivocal and vague.⁹ Under such

⁶ James Bradley, *China Mirage* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2015), 74.

⁷ Lenin advocated the use of revolutionary defeatism, in contrast to what he called “revolutionary defensism.” This ideology involves taking advantage of the defeat in war of one’s own nation, toppling its government, and then helping its labor force gain power. Defeat has indeed triggered revolution in several instances (the Paris Commune, the November Revolution in Germany, and the Russian Revolution). Defeat provides an excellent stage for a communist revolution. Ozaki Hotsumi loomed large in what is referred to in Japan as the Sorrow Incident. On the witness stand in court, Ozaki admitted that he had attempted to fuel the flames of war, believing that a conflict between Japan and China would serve as a solid first step in the transformation of China into a communist nation.

⁸ The Venona papers are encrypted communications transmitted by the USSR between 1940 and 1944. They were intercepted by the Army Security Agency (the present-day NSA) and decrypted. The Venona papers were disclosed to the public on July 11, 1995 by the NSA (National Security Agency), FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), and the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) to comply with the Freedom of Information Act. They were decrypted by the NSA, the American intelligence agency, in cooperation with the Britain’s Secret Intelligence Service. It has come to light that many high-ranking US State Department officials were working as agents for the Comintern.

⁹ Text of the notice: “During recent years the United States government has been examining the treaties of commerce and navigation in force between the United States and foreign countries with a view to determining what changes may need to be made toward better serving the purposes for which such treaties

circumstances, one would expect the Americans to terminate similar pacts with other nations as well, but that was not the case. The treaty with Japan was the sole target of perfunctory abrogation. As an article in the July 28, 1939 edition of the *Manchester Guardian* stated, “The warning is all the more serious because the denouncing of a commercial treaty for political reasons is almost unheard of in American diplomatic history.”¹⁰

The US government’s real reason for ending the treaty was to help China in its conduct of the Second Sino-Japanese War by halting the export of munitions to Japan. Since the Americans could not state that purpose in their notice to the Japanese government, they resorted to subterfuge.¹¹

Previously, high tariffs were imposed to set limits on imports. But this move on the part of the Americans went one step (politically, several steps) further. By refusing to sell goods that Japan needed, the US was on its way to creating an economic blockade. It was perfectly reasonable for the Japanese to believe that the termination of the treaty was the prelude to a declaration of war.

Since Japan has few natural resources, it must import them and many types of goods from other nations. The US was a very important supplier of goods destined for Japan. In 1940 36% of imports to Japan originated in the US. Therefore, refusing to sell to Japan was tantamount to depriving Japan of essential goods. By imposing an economic blockade, the US was seizing control of Japan’s destiny. For Japan, petroleum was critically important, as was a wide range of other products, such as scrap iron, alloys, steel, steel products, and machinery.

Was the Pearl Harbor strike a sneak attack?

Roosevelt used the Pearl Harbor strike to great advantage. He condemned the attack, calling it a sneak attack, because it was launched prior to a declaration of war. The American people, most of whom opposed US involvement in the war, believed his words of incitement, and were cleverly transformed into an angry mob determined to “kill the Japs!”

are concluded. In the course of this survey, the Government of the United States has come to the conclusion that the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the United States and Japan which was signed at Washington on February 21, 1911, contains provisions which need new consideration. Toward preparing the way for such consideration and with a view to better safeguarding and promoting American interests as new developments may require, the Government of the United States, acting in accordance with the procedure prescribed in Article XVII of the treaty under reference, gives notice hereby of its desire that this treaty be terminated, and, having thus given notice, will expect the treaty, together with its accompanying protocol, to expire six months from this date.” (<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1939v03/d530>; retrieved May 2019).

¹⁰ “Strong American Warning to Japan” in *The Manchester Guardian*, 28 July 1939.

¹¹ The Second Sino-Japanese War was instigated, unlawfully, by the Chinese. The Japanese government made peace offerings any number of times, which did not include demands for even a square foot of territory. For a detailed explanation, please refer to my book *Why Apologize to China, the Instigator of the Second Sino-Japanese War?*

But thanks to investigations conducted by the US Congress and researchers at a later date, we now know with almost 100% certainty that Roosevelt goaded the Japanese into attacking Pearl Harbor, out of his desire to involve the US in World War II via the “back door.” Research conducted by Georgetown University Professor Charles Callan Tansill led him to the conclusion that there was an unequivocal conspiracy among US government officials that provoked the Japanese into attacking Pearl Harbor. In *Back Door to War: Roosevelt Foreign Policy 1933-1941*, Tansill, a historian, writes:

The entry in [Secretary of War Stimson’s] *Diary* for November 25, 1941, is illuminating. With regard to the Japanese “the question is how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves.” On the following day Secretary [of State Cordell] Hull answered this question by submitting an ultimatum that he knew Japan could not accept. The Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor fulfilled the fondest hopes of the Roosevelt Cabinet. It was easy now to denounce Japanese perfidy and to exult in the fact that the shock of the tragedy had erased all divisions of opinion in America.¹²



We must be mindful that the first stage of the war between Japan and the US was not the strike on Pearl Harbor, but the sudden termination of the commerce and navigation treaty. Also significant were subsequent actions taken by the US — limitations on and then prohibitions against exporting munitions to Japan, and the freezing of Japanese assets in the US on July 28, 1941.

¹² Charles Callan Tansill, *Back Door to War: Roosevelt Foreign Policy 1933-1941* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), viii.

In *Freedom Betrayed*, former President Herbert Hoover wrote that the US was thrown into an “undeclared war” with Germany and Japan.

The third wrong turning was the imposition of the economic sanctions in July. That was undeclared war upon Japan by which starvation and ruin stared her in the face and if continued would soon be war, for the simple reason that no people of dignity would run up a white flag under such provocation.¹³

Soon thereafter the US issued a blanket petroleum export embargo against Japan. Petroleum imports from Indonesia, then a Dutch colony, to Japan ceased. The ABCD encirclement¹⁴ was now complete.

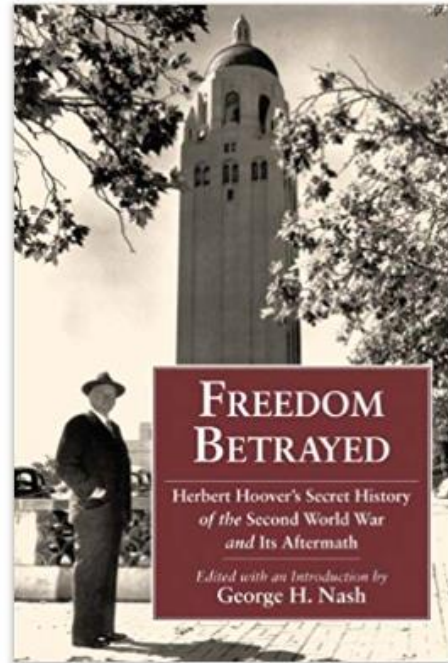
Economic blockades are acts of war

Economic blockades were defined as acts of war at a hearing before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in December 1928, where the ratification of the General Pact for the Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy (also known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the Pact of Paris) was discussed.

On December 12 Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg was asked whether an economic blockade constitutes an act of war. His reply: “An act of war, absolutely.”¹⁵¹⁶

The aforementioned treaty is often referred to as the Kellogg-Briand Pact after its authors, Kellogg and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand. Since Kellogg explicitly stated before the US Senate that an economic blockade is an act of war, the conflict between Japan and the US had already commenced in August 1941.

According to international law, by committing an act of war the US was clearly the aggressor. The Kellogg-Briand Pact was cited as the basis for the accusation that Japan was the aggressor. However, the US committed the first act of aggression. In a just world the defendant at the IMTFE (International Military Tribunal for the Far East) would have been the US, not Japan.



¹³ Herbert Hoover, *Freedom Betrayed: Herbert Hoover's Secret History of the Second World War and Its Aftermath* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2011), 846.

¹⁴ Term used to describe embargoes imposed by the US, Britain, China, and the Dutch against the Japanese.

¹⁵ https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/kbhear.asp (retrieved June 2019).

¹⁶ In *The Tokyo Trials: Unheard Defense* Kobori Keiichiro discusses the summation delivered by defense attorney William B. Logan on March 10, 1948 at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, during which Logan said, “Japan was provoked into a war of self-defense.” Full text can be found at http://www.sdh-fact.com/CL02_1/66_S4.pdf (retrieved June 2019).

MacArthur's testimony before the US Senate in 1951

Gen. Douglas MacArthur gave testimony before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and Armed Services on May 3, 1951. What he had to say was of great significance.

In the Pacific we bypassed them. We closed in. You must understand that Japan had an enormous population of nearly 80 million people, crowded into 4 islands. It was about half a farm population. The other half was engaged in industry.

Potentially the labor pool in Japan, both in quantity and quality, is as good as anything that I have ever known. Some place down the line they have discovered what you might call the dignity of labor, that men are happier when they are working and constructing than when they are idling.

This enormous capacity for work meant that they had to have something to work on. They built the factories, they had the labor, but they didn't have the basic materials.

There is practically nothing indigenous to Japan except the silkworm. They lack cotton, they lack wool, they lack petroleum products, they lack tin, they lack rubber, they lack a great many other things, all of which was in the Asiatic basin.

They feared that if those supplies were cut off, there would be 10 to 12 million people unoccupied in Japan. Their purpose, therefore, in going to war was largely dictated by security.¹⁷

But MacArthur's monumentally important testimony received almost no coverage from the Japanese media. And even more incomprehensibly, Japan's historians did not take it seriously.

Declarations of war not mandatory

Roosevelt milked the Japanese delay in issuing a declaration of war, and made the American people war-hungry by condemning Japan for its "sneak attack" on Pearl Harbor. However, no such condemnation ever emanated from England. The Japanese assault on British-ruled Malay peninsula took place at 1:30 a.m. (Japan time) on December 8, 1941. The strike on Pearl Harbor commenced approximately two hours later at 3:19 a.m. Why did the British government fail to protest an attack that was not preceded by a declaration of war, or condemn Japan for launching a sneak attack or violating international law? The answer is that declarations of war are merely formalities, and their absence is not deemed worthy of condemnation.

American writer Bob Woodward published a book entitled *The Commanders*, which dealt with foreign policy during the George H.W. Bush administration. In it he writes the following, quoting William P. Barr, then deputy attorney general:

[P]residents from the beginning had acted unilaterally to employ the forces.

¹⁷ Edward T. Imparato, ed., *General MacArthur Speeches and Reports 1908-1964* (Nashville: Turner Publishing Co., 2000), 170-71.

In all there had been more than 200 occasions when presidents had done so, and only five declarations of war.¹⁸

This concerned a statement about a discussion that took place about whether or not to initiate an offensive against Iraq without first declaring war. As it turned out, the US issued no declaration. Nor did the US issue a declaration of war before embarking on the conflict in Vietnam.

Even at the grossly unjust IMTFE, Japan's failure to issue a declaration of war was not one of the charges. That notwithstanding, the notion that Japan's delay in issuing a declaration of war was its most serious war crime has been embraced by many, sad as that may seem.

Roosevelt approves plan for bombing of Japan in July 1941

We now know that Roosevelt issued orders for acts of war targeting Japan that were even more blatant.

On July 23, 1941 he gave his signature and stamp of approval to an operation plan (JB355) submitted by the War and Navy departments. JB355 was organized by White House economist Lauchlin Currie, who later fled to Colombia after being exposed as a Comintern spy. Currie began conferring with US Army and Navy officials in early 1941. He also consulted with leading figures in the Chiang Kai-shek administration. The memorandum Currie submitted on May 9 of that year formed the basis of the plan, according to which 150 B-17 long-distance bomber aircraft and 350 fighter planes taking off from China would bomb the Japanese cities of Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, and Nagasaki. The US would be lending the aircraft to China, but the pilots would be mainly American soldiers called Flying Tigers who had volunteered for the operation.

JB355 was a plan that had Americans pretending to be Chinese soldiers bombing Japan. It was also a battle plan designed to be executed not in the far future, but on October 1, 1941. It was certainly a sneak attack, an offensive scheduled to be launched two months prior to the Pearl Harbor attack.

For better or worse, the operation was not executed in October. Since England was reeling under German attacks, the B-17 aircraft were diverted to the European front. But according to their plan, hatched in July, the Americans had every intention of implementing JB355 two months before the Pearl Harbor attack.¹⁹

The American television network ABC carried a report on JB355 on December 6, 1991, 50 years after the Pearl Harbor strike. Figure 2 is a reproduction of a letter describing the operation, which bears the signature of Acting Secretary of War Robert Patterson and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox. It also bears Roosevelt's initials, which signify his approval of the operation. The copy shown here was obtained from the US National Archives in 1970.

In 2018, at long last, the Japanese media covered JB355. TV Asahi Corp. aired a special program, Scoop Special, entitled "The Truth Comes Out 77 Years After the Pearl Harbor Attack: Roosevelt Had Foreknowledge!? The Epic Espionage War Among Japan, the US, and the USSR." The material in the broadcast seemed quite accurate.

I did not view the program, but my friend Sekino Michio did see it, and his conclusion was that the

¹⁸ Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 357.

¹⁹ For more information see Alan Armstrong, *Preemptive Strike: The Secret Plan That Would Have Prevented the Attack on Pearl Harbor* (Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press, 2006).

reportage was factually correct, and that its perspective was significantly different from that of other programs of this sort, which usually portray Japan as the villain.

Documents relating to JB355 were declassified in 1970, but the ABC broadcast took place in 1991. Not until 27 years later did a Japanese television network broach the topic. In the meantime, where have the Japanese scholars of conscience been? How could they fail to subject this important evidentiary material to analysis?

In the face of these findings, it is unbelievable that there are still people who insist, arrogantly, that Japan's Pearl Harbor was a sneak attack, and that Japan set out to conquer the world.

Arrogantly, you ask? That is correct. This is what the media, denizens of the hallowed halls of academia, and historians — all those who have appointed themselves members of the intellectual elite, are telling us. They are preaching to us, the common people, about “historical fact.” Furthermore, most Americans agree with them, even scholars. That is what prompts me to accuse them of arrogance. We can't allow these self-appointed, conscienceless academics to interpret history for us.

And finally, the coup de grâce, the conclusion reached by the 31st US President, Herbert Hoover:

[T]he whole Japanese war was a madman's desire to get into war.²⁰

By madman, Hoover meant Franklin D. Roosevelt.

²⁰ Hoover, *op. cit.*, 833.

WAR AND NAVY DEPARTMENTS
WASHINGTON

JUL 18 1941

~~SECRET~~
The President,
The White House.

DECLASSIFIED
000 Declassified
9/27/93

Dear Mr. President:

At the request of Mr. Lauchlin Currie, Administrative Assistant to The President, The Joint Board has made recommendations for furnishing aircraft to the Chinese Government under the Lend-Lease Act. These recommendations are contained in the Joint Planning Committee report of July 9, 1941, J.B. No. 355 (Serial 691), which The Joint Board approved, and which is transmitted herewith for your consideration.

In connection with this matter, may we point out that the accomplishment of The Joint Board's proposals to furnish aircraft equipment to China in accordance with Mr. Currie's Short Term Requirements for China, requires the collaboration of Great Britain in diversions of allocations already made to them; however, it is our belief that the suggested diversions present no insurmountable difficulty nor occasion any great handicap.

We have approved this report and in forwarding it to you, recommend your approval.

July 23, 1941.
OK - but seriously
military mission
versus the
attack method.
1 Incl.
Acting Secretary of War
Frank Knox
Secretary of the Navy.

Figure 2: Letter describing Operation JB355, initialed by US President Roosevelt

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

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.

- I. We shall endeavor to influence other nations with the intent of preventing any increase in the number of nations waging war 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

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; it 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 many

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."²¹

But Professor Wood contradicts Dower. He maintains that "the war against the Allies was the right war at the right time for Japan."²²

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.²³

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.²⁴

²¹ Wood, *op. cit.*, 4.

²² *Ibid.*, 7.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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, 120,000 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

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 became 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.²⁵ 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.

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.

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*²⁶ (see Figure 4), which was distributed widely. The pamphlet seems to have had the desired effect, as only one year



Figure 4

Cover of pamphlet distributed by the American Committee for Non-Participation in Japan's Aggression

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.

²⁵ 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 Yen-ching 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*).

²⁶ American Committee for Non-Participation in Japan's Aggression, *America's Share in Japan's War Guilt* (New York: 1938). archive.org/details/america'ssharein00amer (retrieved 07/2019).

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. 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 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 was without 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 would 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 to recognize 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 the Japanese took because they were 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 come

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* because they believe, mistakenly, that 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.²⁷

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.²⁸

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 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;*

²⁷ Wood, *op. cit.*, 59.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 63.

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 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-Germany-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.

Failing to understand Germany's true aims, Matsuoka 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, the possibility that they might would have significantly constrained the Russians and 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 the treaty with the USSR, given that its involvement therewith 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. The USSR, however, 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 inescapable.

When I told 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 nothing 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. 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 it is more likely 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 topic at hand 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 efforts to end the 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 at that point — Kill the Japs! — 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 would have been a particularly appropriate mediator because of its tremendous spiritual influence. 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, Japan 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.

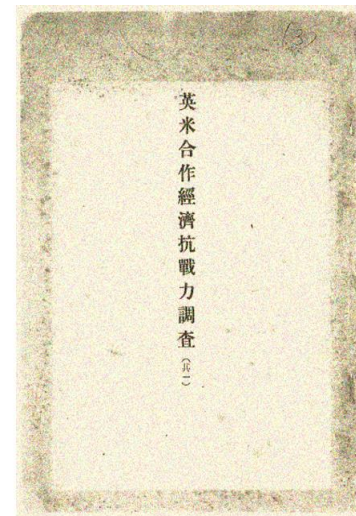
How did this superior collection of strategies come into being? In fact it was based on research done by members of the Army War Economy Research Group, more commonly known as the Akimaru Unit. The group studied Japan's and other nations' economic war potential. This was a meticulous survey based on 250 separate reports.

Akimaru Unit surveys military capability of other countries

The Akimaru Unit 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 Unit was a think tank that comprised Japan's leading intellectuals. Heading the agency was Lt. Col. Akimaru Jiro, whose name became synonymous with the Army War Economy Research Group.

With Tokyo University Professor Arisawa Hiromi²⁹ as chief investigator, the team of

Figure 5
Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential, Part 1



²⁹ Arisawa Hiromi was both a statistician and an economist. A Marxist economist 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 Unit. 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.

distinguished scholars³⁰ did research on the war potential 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 Unit's Final Report*.³¹ Despite its pioneering content, the book has not received the attention it so richly deserves.

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

"Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential" informed *Draft Proposal*

The introduction to "Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential, 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:

³⁰ 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.

³¹ 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 Unit's final report) (Tokyo: Shodensha, 2015).

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 ruining the British war economy, by destroying British production capacity through air raids, using submarines to blockade sea lanes, and 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 with the *Draft Proposal*.

Victory possible only after pinpointing enemy's weak points

Sugiyama Hajime, chief of the General Staff, received the "Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential, Part 1" in July 1941. He praised the report and expressed his appreciation of the reasoning therein.³²

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.

³² Hayashi, *op. cit.*, 125.

Lt. Cols. Ishii and Fujii used the Guidelines, especially “Strategies for hastening the end 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. And 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 Unit.

CHAPTER 3: SIMULATIONS VALIDATE PREDICTIONS OF VICTORIES

I. Premises of the simulations

1. Japan had superior war potential at start of conflict

Many people seem to believe that though Japan's war potential and economic capacity were vastly inferior to those of their opponents, the Japanese nonetheless felt compelled to fight a war, even one they could not possibly win.

Then there are others who, unaware of the world situation or Japan's capabilities, are convinced that the Japanese, like the proverbial frog in the well, plunged headlong into war. Earlier I touched on this topic, citing Professor James Wood's book. But most Americans, even scholars, continue to cling to these myths.

Perhaps the reason for the conclusion that so many have reached — that the Japanese had absolutely no chance of prevailing, but recklessly stormed into battle — is that their most vivid memories take them back only as far as the last days of the conflict, when the Allies had much more war potential than the Japanese. But when the Japanese commenced hostilities, the odds were not overwhelmingly against them.

In fact, a comparison of war potential at the beginning of the war reveals, perhaps surprisingly to some, that Japan was in a better position than the US (see Figure 6).

I would like to remind readers that a comparison of Japanese and American war potential must take into account the fact that the US needed to deploy its vessels to both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Since the United Kingdom was just barely managing to withstand German attacks, the Americans were compelled to concentrate their war potential on the Atlantic.

For that reason, the comparison must be not of the total number of vessels on each side, but the total number of Japanese vessels versus the total number of American vessels in the Pacific Ocean.

Figure 6 shows the US with 11 battleships, one more than Japan. The figure for Japan does not include *Yamato* and *Musashi*, which were completed in the following year (1942). Furthermore, most of the American warships were of the old style.

Readers may find this revelation astounding, but Japan had 10 aircraft carriers, while the US had only three! Even if we add US carriers in the Atlantic Ocean, that makes only seven. Toward the end of the war a huge fleet of American carriers headed for Japan, but those were not completed until late 1943 through 1944. This means that for the first two years of the Pacific war, there was no need to fear American aircraft carriers.

Japan had a slight edge over the US as far as cruisers were concerned, but the Japanese had far more destroyers than the Americans. The submarine situation would shift significantly in the Americans' favor toward the end of the war, but at its commencement the Japanese had 65 to the Americans' 30.

Consequently, the Japanese were able to think realistically about using their war potential to advantage

for the first two years of the war: they could make plans, set up systems, and contemplate the road to a peaceful conclusion.

I believe readers will now understand that this was anything but a reckless war.

Figure 6: Comparison of Japanese and American War Potential at Outbreak of Hostilities

| (Naval Vessels) | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|--------------------|---|
| | Japan | US (Pacific Fleet) | Combined US (Atlantic and Pacific fleets) |
| Battleships | 10* | 11 | 17 |
| Aircraft carriers | 10 | 3 | 7 |
| Armored cruisers | 18 | 16 | 18 |
| Second-class cruisers | 20 | 16 | 19 |
| Destroyers | 112 | 84 | 172 |
| Submarines | 65 | 30 | 111 |

**Yamato* and *Musashi* not included.

Maximum shipbuilding capacity: Japan, 300,000 tons per annum; US, 900,000 tons per annum
 UK (Eastern Fleet and East Indies Fleet): 2 battleships, 6 aircraft carriers, 8 armored cruisers, 5 second-class cruisers, 9 destroyers, 15 submarines

| (Aircraft) | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------|
| | Japan | US |
| Total | (Army) 1,500 | 5,500 |
| | (Navy) 3,300 | |
| | Total: 4,800 | |
| Battle-ready aircraft | (Army) 700 | 2,400 |
| | (Navy) 1,619 | |
| | Total: 2,319 | |

Source: Hattori Takushiro, *Daitoa senso zenshi* (Complete history of the Greater East Asian War) (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1953).

2. War potential is inversely proportional to the square of the distance from base to battle site

This is a well-known principle of war. An army waging war in a distant location is saddled with additional burdens; the likelihood of failure is proportional to something greater than the distance. The replenishment of supplies, for instance, takes on crucial importance. Figure 7 illustrates this principle. The point is that even if the Americans had had five times the war potential of Japan, their effectiveness from a starting point three times the distance would have been reduced in half.

The Japanese Navy used a time-honored strategy when it engaged an enemy fleet off the Mariana Islands. It was the basis for the Imperial Navy Strategic Plan for fiscal 1941, and built upon the concept of invincible, tenacious initiatives in the Pacific.

This was an eminently reasonable operation. As Figure 7 demonstrates, even with five times the war potential, the Americans would have lost half of that in simply arriving at the Mariana Islands.

Figure 7: Distance principle

- War potential is in inverse proportion to the square of the distance from base to war zone
- Offensive strategy against US: Designating the waters off the Mariana Islands as the attack zone, the following formula holds true.

| | War potential | Distance from base to war zone | Actual war potential |
|-------|---------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Japan | 100 | 1 | 100 |
| US | 500 | 3 | $500/3^2 = 55$ |

Even with five times the war potential, American troops traveling from a base three times farther away will end up with half the war potential of the Japanese.

Of course, this strategy is based on the assumption that the Japanese forces planning to engage the Americans were not standing idly by. Rather, they were employing tactics designed to weaken the enemy, such as attacking its transport convoy to cut off its supplies, while waiting for the enemy fleet (traveling a long distance) to arrive.

Interceptions would also have necessarily involved the fortification of the main islands of the Marianas, preparing a vertically deep base that would allow Japanese aircraft to counterattack in the second and third phases of the offensive. Therefore, even if the enemy seemed to be gaining an edge, it would have been possible to prevent them from maintaining that advantage.

It was certainly within the power of the Japanese to accomplish that mission.

Pacific Ocean: one of Japan's most powerful weapons

From this perspective we arrive at the realization that the Pacific Ocean was one of Japan's most powerful weapons, providing, as it did, distance in warfare against the US; it was important that that realization be well incorporated into military strategy.

It would have been foolish to pursue the enemy, which would have been doing them a favor. It would have been even more foolish, and reckless, and a waste of war potential to attempt to control every inch of the Pacific. But the fact is that the Japanese did opt for that misguided strategy. They did waste war potential. And when the enemy launched a counteroffensive, the Japanese ability to parry that was drastically reduced.

There are times when it is best to wait to act until a situation demands action, and there are times when it makes sense to hunt down the enemy, but the latter must be considered exceptions to the rule.

Perhaps some readers will think that the distance rule is an extreme argument. And while it is true that the difference that arises is not as great as the rule indicates, the fact that distance plays a huge role is indisputable. I shall now proceed to prove that by citing an actual example.

Distance principle proven at Guadalcanal

The Battle of Guadalcanal is remembered as a representative example of a disastrous battle for Japanese

forces. Japanese soldiers starved to death, one after another, to the extent that Guadalcanal Island became known as Starvation Island. Why did this battle unfold the way it did? Because the Japanese target, the battle zone, exceeded the offensive terminal point.

On June 5, 1942 the Japanese suffered a major defeat at Midway, one that cost them four aircraft carriers. Ten days thereafter the Navy began building an air base on an island 1,000 kilometers south of Rabaul.

When Lt. Col. Tsuji Masanobu, a staff officer at Imperial General Headquarters, learned that construction was nearly complete, he asked, “Do you have a garrison stationed there? This is the most critical stage.” A Navy staff officer who outranked Tsuji brushed off his warning, saying, “Tsuji, the sky may fall but Guadalcanal will not.”³³

But when the base was completed, on August 7, the 1st Marine Division landed on Guadalcanal Island and, in an instant, seized the state-of-the-art Japanese air base. It was as though the Japanese had gone to all the trouble of building it as a gift for the Americans. Apparently the Japanese had also built a runway, a repair shed, a power station, a hangar — even an ice-making machine for the compressed-air plant!

Since Guadalcanal Island was located within the American-Australian sphere of influence, the Americans were kept informed about almost every stage of the construction project. Worst of all, the Japanese were forced to travel 1,000 kilometers from their Rabaul base.

According to the aforementioned Professor Wood, the Americans stepped up scheduled counterattacks in 1943. But more important was the fact that Guadalcanal was within their sphere of influence and they knew the territory — in other words, their counterattacks were informed. Still, it was all the Americans could do to “maintain a single Marine division there.”³⁴

Maj. Gen. Futami Akisaburo’s evaluation of Battle of Guadalcanal

To recover lost ground, the Japanese Navy first dispatched the 8th Fleet under the command of Admiral Mikawa Gun’ichi. The fleet sank four enemy cruisers. But since it withdrew before it could even approach any of the key transport convoy ships, the enemy succeeded in delivering sufficient matériel and provisions.

The Japanese people cheered when they learned of Admiral Mikawa’s great victory, but 17th Army Staff Officer Futami Akisaburo could only express his disappointment: “What a shame! They set out to pick oranges, but came back with only the peels.”

Apparently Japanese naval authorities did not realize how necessary supplies are to a military venture, however elementary this concept. They were no better informed than the average civilian. The Navy believed that their mission was to fight bravely and sink as many enemy ships as possible, but it seems that their thoughts never turned to aspects of logistics like supply replenishment.

One of the Navy’s missions was, unquestionably, the defeat of enemy fleets, but the first priority should have been protecting their own sea lanes and blockading those of the enemy. Unfortunately, their awareness of those duties was insufficient. The action taken by the Mikawa fleet is a valuable teaching example.

³³ Sato Akira, *Teikoku kaigun ga Nihon wo hametsu saseta* (Incompetent Japanese Imperial Navy), vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2006), 84.

³⁴ Wood, *op. cit.*, 65.

When the enemy's 1st Marine Division captured the airfield on Guadalcanal, the Japanese Navy asked the Army for two divisions. But the enemy blocked those forces, preventing them from landing.

Japanese war potential suffered huge losses, especially of rations and heavy weapons, which sank to the bottom of the ocean. Some specialists indicate the failure of the Japanese to focus on concentrated rather than sequential deployment. Others mention the difference in weapon quality. Both are mistaken.

Weapon performance, sequential deployment not factors

When we talk about fighting a battle with insufficient heavy weapons, or with an abundance of them, the issue at hand is not weapon performance. Furthermore, sequential deployment of war potential would not have brought on the disastrous results of that battle if the Japanese had been able to land soldiers and weapons.

The most tragic aspect of that battle was the inability of the Japanese to deliver food supplies. Thirty thousand soldiers were deployed to Guadalcanal Island; 5,000 of them died in action. If those 5,000 men had had access to the weapons they needed, most of them could have survived. The most appalling aspect of that battle was the death of 15,000 soldiers from starvation. At that point there were no food shortages in Japan. Provisions were available, but delivery could not be accomplished. Ultimately 10,000 soldiers were evacuated, so emaciated that they were shadows of their former selves.

The cause of this disaster was not that Japanese soldiers were weak, or their weapons inferior. Their tactics were above reproach. Only one factor was decisive: they fought at a faraway battleground that could not be furnished with supplies. They fought at a location so far away that it exceeded the offensive terminal point.

When the Mitsubishi Zeros and G4Ms flew their missions, they were taking off from Rabaul, 1,000 kilometers away from the enemy base. Since all islands en route were under control of the Americans, military intelligence operatives called Coastwatchers monitored the Japanese aircraft and reported to their base on Guadalcanal, passing on information such as the type of aircraft, number of aircraft, and the time of day. Then enemy planes would take off and wait for the Japanese planes to arrive. When the Japanese planes reached their destination, they were good for only 10 minutes of combat. Moreover, after the long-distance flights, Japanese pilots were exhausted. Unsurprisingly, victories were few. Needless to say, this was a huge waste of war potential.

And the waste was not limited to aircraft. Destroyers were not intended to serve as supply ships, and when used for that purpose, they were often attacked by enemy aircraft. The Americans sank 13 Japanese destroyers and damaged 63. Submarines, when used for the same purpose, were badly damaged; 24 were lost (because the Japanese authorities ignored the inverse-square principle).

Lt. Gen. Ishiwaro Kanji's assessment of Battle of Guadalcanal

In August 1942, when the Japanese were struggling to recapture Guadalcanal Island, Prince Takamatsu, then a Navy captain, summoned Lt. Gen. Ishiwaro Kanji³⁵ and asked him to state his opinion about the

³⁵ Ishiwaro Kanji acquired a reputation as one of Japan's leading strategists. He was also known for his writings on military ideology, e.g., *Sekai saishu senron* (Final war theory). When he served as a staff officer in the Guandong Army in Manchuria, Ishiwaro won acclaim for the planning and successful execution of the Manchurian Incident. But he was sidelined because of his disparagement of Prime Minister Tojo Hideki.

current conflict.

Lt. Gen. Ishiwara's reply follows:

I knew the outcome from the very beginning. The targets of all our operations were located beyond the offensive terminal point. According to the recognized principle, war potential is in inverse proportion to the square of the distance between the base and the battlefield.

(...)

If you anticipate a protracted battle, you must determine the offensive terminal point at the start of hostilities.

(...)

You must withdraw immediately from Guadalcanal Island. The Army should do the same. We must abandon the Solomon Islands, the Bismarck Archipelago,³⁶ and New Guinea as soon as possible. Since our objective is securing a supply route, we should set our western offensive terminal point at the Burmese border. Then we must fortify a defense line through resource-rich regions such as Singapore and Sumatra. In the mid-Pacific we should withdraw to the Philippines, while strengthening islands near Japan (Saipan, Tinian, and Guam) until they are impregnable.³⁷

There is no word-for-word record of Lt. Gen. Ishiwara's conversation with Prince Takamatsu, so we don't know exactly what was said. Still, such a statement would have been in character, as well as in keeping with Ishiwara's known beliefs, and his argument was sound.

Moreover, his reply was quite similar in spirit to the tactics laid out in the *Draft Proposal*. In other words, it is clear that the *Draft Proposal* incorporates the principle of the offensive culminating point.

After the war ended, he testified at an IMTFE proceeding held in Sakata, Yamagata Prefecture. There Ishiwara stated that the Manchurian Incident was a defensive action taken against violent Chinese soldiers, not an act of aggression. According to *The Manchurian Incident* by Seki Hiroharu, Ishiwara asked a judge how far back in history the court would go to determine responsibility. When he was told "back to the 1st Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War," his riposte was, "Haven't you heard of [Commodore Matthew] Perry? (...) Don't you know anything about your country's history? (...) Tokugawa Japan believed in isolation; it didn't want to have anything to do with other countries and had its doors locked tightly. Then along came Perry from your country in his black ships to open those doors; he aimed his big guns at Japan and warned, 'If you don't deal with us, look out for these; open your doors, and negotiate with other countries too.' And then when Japan did open its doors and tried dealing with other countries, it learned that all those countries were a fearfully aggressive lot. And so for its own defense it took your country as its teacher and set about learning how to be aggressive. You might say we became your disciples. Why don't you subpoena Perry from the other world and try him as a war criminal?"

³⁶ Now Papua New Guinea.

³⁷ Takagi Kiyohisa, *Toa no Chichi: Ishiwara Kanji* (The father of East Asia: Ishiwara Kanji) (Tokyo: Tamairabo, 1985).

3. Indian Ocean: main artery of Allied transport

The significance of the Indian Ocean cannot be exaggerated. It was the main artery of Allied transport. I touched upon this topic earlier, but a look at Figure 8 will give readers a clear picture of its importance.

The Indian Ocean provided the transport route for provisions, raw material, and other supplies bound for the United Kingdom. But its importance went far beyond that, especially as far as China was concerned. If the Japanese gained mastery of the sea, China would be brought to its knees.

The US and the UK were using the Burma Road to transport munitions to the Chiang government. But when the Japanese occupied Burma in May 1942, traffic on that route was halted.

What did the Allies do? They unloaded matériel and supplies at Chittagong and Calcutta, in India. They then transported the cargo by land to Assam, over the Himalayas by transport plane, to Kunming and Chungking. They had implemented a major air transport operation, mobilizing large transport aircraft and flying over the Hump (the Himalayas).

At that point China could not expect any aid from the USSR, which was struggling to hold its own against Germany. And since there were no other viable supply routes, Chiang's government would collapse if it lost access to the Indian Ocean route.

Furthermore, the Indian Ocean was a transport route for supplies shipped to British troops stationed at the Suez Canal and for reinforcements, soldiers from India, Australia, and New Zealand. It was also used to transport food and other supplies to England, the mother country.

The Indian Ocean was also a major transport route for American matériel headed for the Suez Canal.

Right before war broke out, the British put the southern half of Iran under protective occupation; the Soviets did the same with the northern half. In this way Iran too was used as a supply route for the USSR.

Seventy percent of American aid, goods bound for the USSR, traveled over the Indian Ocean. If that had been blockaded, the chance of a Soviet victory would have been greatly reduced. I will provide more details later.

II. Simulations

My simulations involve supposing that the Japanese military authorities acted in accordance with the *Draft Proposal*. I aim to analyze the war situation at the time, as well as what was within the possibilities of the Japanese military.

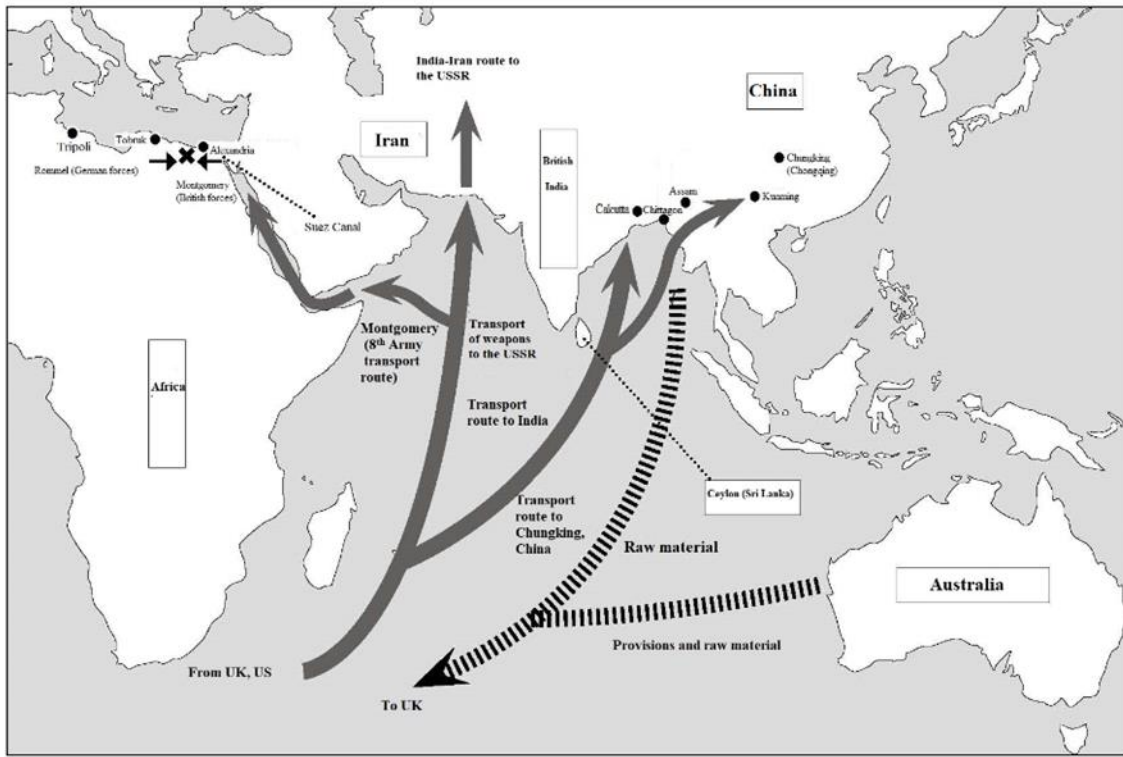
If the Japanese had conducted operations as laid out in the *Draft Proposal*, what sort of military gains would they have reaped?

1. Destroy US, UK, Dutch bases in Far East (Phase 1 operations)

These operations were executed much more quickly and with fewer casualties than hypothesized, as I mentioned earlier.

At the beginning of Chapter 2, I cited a passage from Professor James Wood's *Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War* in which he writes that "the war against the Allies was the right war at the

FIGURE 8: Indian Ocean: main artery of Allied transport



right time for Japan.” At this juncture I would like to cite an additional passage from that work.

The final decision for war, then, rested on a realistic appraisal of the international situation, national and imperial interests, and Japan’s level of military preparedness. American hostility to Japan’s position in Asia was manifest and in retrospect, the conclusion that the United States was bent on war was in no way a misreading of American intentions. Japan’s access to resources outside the empire proper was cut off and reserves were quite limited. Continuing peace with the ABCD countries could obviously not redress that situation while military action would provide Japan with the resources needed to fight the kind of protracted industrial war that the Allies would be sure to favor. The balance of military power in the region immediately favored Japan because potential enemy forces were understrength, generally of poor quality, scattered over vast distances, and isolated within a sea of indifferent or even hostile indigenous subjects.³⁸

Since Phase 1 operations were even more successful than expected, we do not need to simulate them. The results offer all the justification we need. Particularly noteworthy was the capture of Palembang, an oil-producing region, with far less damage than expected, thanks to the exploits of Japanese Army airborne troops. The Japanese now had access

³⁸ Wood, *op. cit.*, 9.

to 3 million tons of petroleum per year, which their technical prowess enabled them to increase to 6 million tons per year.

The fact that Japan required approximately 4 million tons of petroleum Japan per year at that time made this was a very meaningful coup. The most serious obstacle to Japanese economic and military activity had been eliminated.

Phase 1 operations encompassed several additional goals.

Secure main transport routes and long-term supply chains

The second half of Tactic I reads as follows:

The Empire will ... 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.

How would the Japanese have gone about accomplishing these objectives?

It is clear that they could have accomplished them. Of course, there is always the question of degree. But following on the successes of Phase 1 operations, military authorities saw that communications and transport routes were prepared. Unfortunately, most of the other goals were not achieved (naval officials apparently did not consider the securing of supply routes an important mission).

The Navy had only one escort fleet, the No. 1 Marine Convoy, which comprised 10 old-style destroyers and several each of escort ships and submarine chasers. The fleet was not augmented until November 1943, when US submarines were wreaking havoc on the Japanese. Only then did the No. 2 Marine Convoy see the light of day. Since attempts at bolstering anti-submarine war potential made little progress, enemy submarines soon dominated the seas.

The amount of petroleum that reached Japan in the second half of 1943 and onward was insufficient, because the tactics outlined in the *Draft Proposal* (as stated earlier) were not executed soon enough after the early operations. Furthermore, for better or worse, until mid-1943, enemy submarines did only minor damage. That led to overconfidence, which invited later disasters (see Figure 9).

If the Japanese had adhered to the *Draft Proposal* to the extent possible, they would have had greater prospects of victory, as the simulation demonstrates.

Figure 10 shows transitions in Japanese marine communications. According to Professor Wood, this transport route had a narrow section, and therefore was easier to protect. If the Japanese had followed the instructions in the *Draft Proposal*, their routes would not have been disrupted.

Simulation conducted in strict adherence to *Draft Proposal*

Readers will surely agree that in the context of the *Draft Proposal*, it would be hard to provide a convincing argument in favor of the Pearl Harbor attack.

The first-phase operations in the *Draft Proposal* target not the US, but resource-rich regions of Southeast Asia. Against the US, the *Draft Proposal* counsels defense, and then subsequently luring the main strength of the US Navy into the Pacific and attacking it.

The Pearl Harbor strike was a deviation from the *Draft Proposal*. Military authorities approved it in

Figure 9: Japan's Merchant Shipping Losses

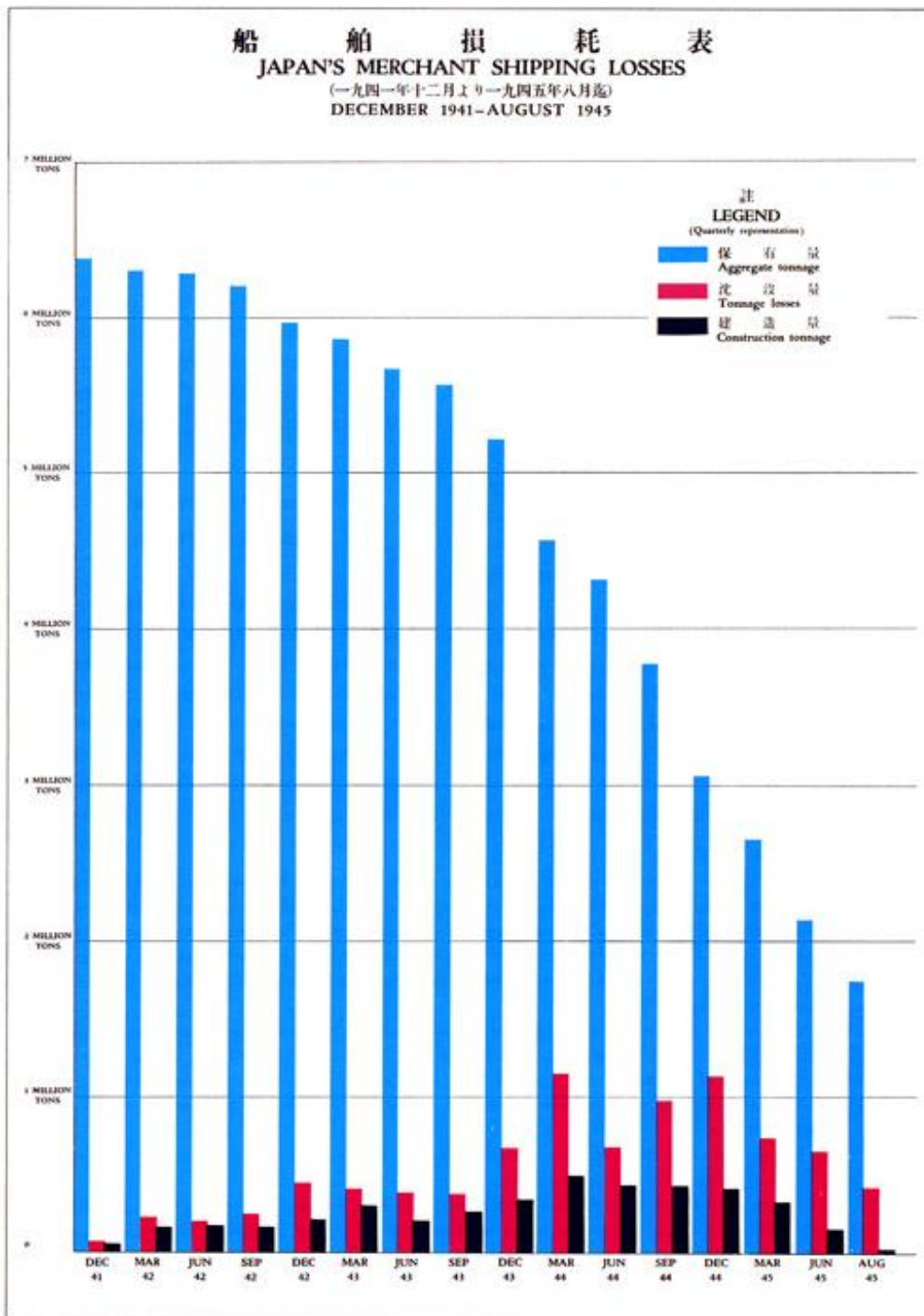
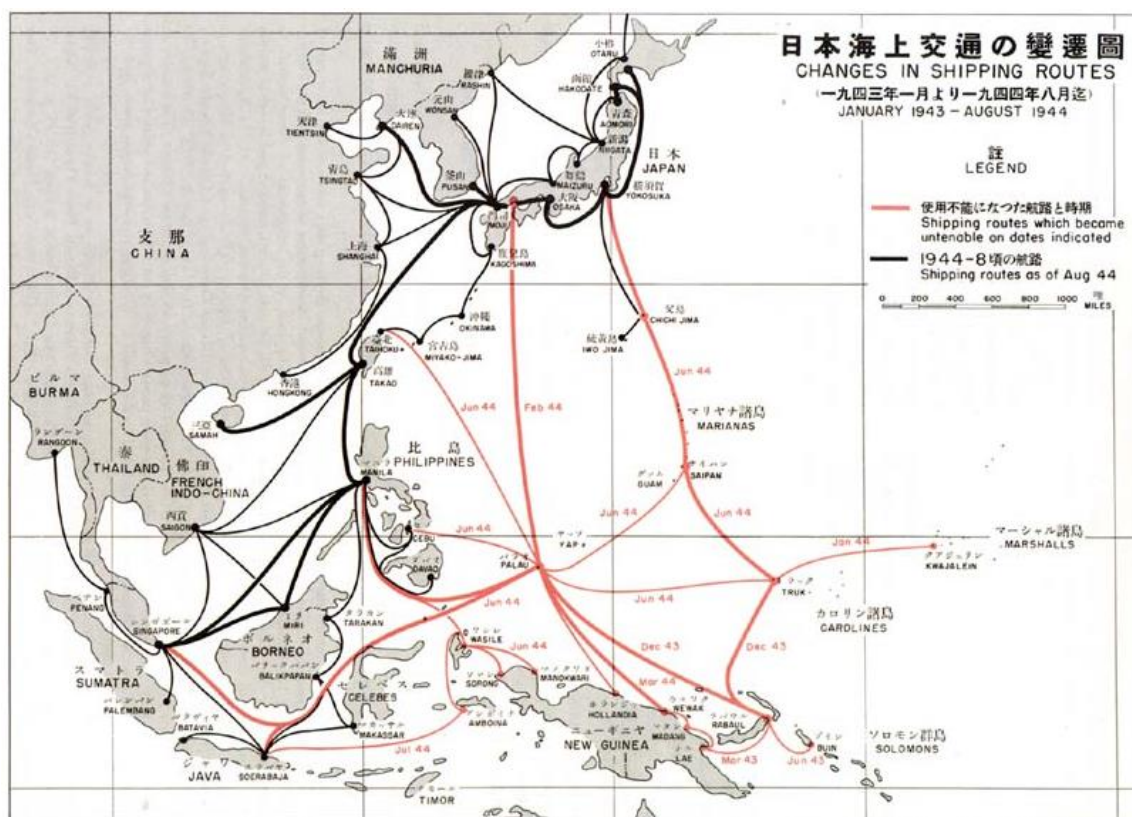


PLATE NO. 151
Japan's Merchant Shipping Losses

<https://history.army.mil/books/wwii/MacArthur%20Reports/MacArthur%20V2%20P2/index.htm>

Figure 10: Changes in Shipping Routes



<https://history.army.mil/books/wwii/MacArthur%20Reports/MacArthur%20V2%20P1/pic-306.jpg>

response to a fervent plea from Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku. But because the outcome was so impressive, more deviations ensued.

Then if the Pearl Harbor strike had not been executed, what were the likely first-phase operations?

All-out attack on the Philippines

I often hear people say that the Japanese should have put Palembang, Indonesia under protective occupation (a peacetime occupation that imposes certain conditions on the occupied territory). If they had done that, they may have been able to avoid going to war with the US.

This opinion merits analysis, and in fact the Japanese Army and Navy seriously considered such a strategy. However, as Professor Wood indicates, the Americans were not pacifist enough to look the other way.

American hostility to Japan's position in Asia was manifest and in retrospect, the conclusion that the United States was bent on war was in no way a

misreading of American intentions.³⁹

In any case, if the Japanese had not been resigned to going to war with the US, the *Draft Proposal* could not have come into being.

Having arrived at the fatalistic determination to wage war against the US, Japan would most likely have chosen not Pearl Harbor, but the Philippines as its target for Phase 1 operations. After all, there were abundant resources in Southeast Asia, and a huge American military presence in the Philippines. Eliminating it would remove American influence from the Far East.

Assuming that the attack on the Philippines would proceed in the same way as the Malay operation, the Japanese would have launched a full-scale attack on the Philippines. We would expect Army units to have landed there. They would have been joined by Navy units, including battleships, and aircraft from Taiwan (in the actual attack on the Philippines these were the only Navy aircraft used), as well as concentrated assaults from aircraft carriers.

MacArthur would not have been able to evade the bombardment from battleships by fleeing to Corregidor (or Australia, for that matter).

The Japanese would have occupied the Philippines much earlier and more completely than they actually did. Their first priority would have been to build and fortify an air base, since the Americans were bound to counterattack.

An examination of the actual conquest tells us that the Japanese could have accomplished these missions. Furthermore, they would have been able to occupy all of the Philippines within a short period of time, and to establish a government with relative ease. It is likely that the Filipino guerrillas supported by the Americans would not have been nearly as effective as they were. They had no ill feelings toward Japan, and were not even organized until the Americans rounded them up.

Next the Japanese would have lured the main strength of the US Navy into the Pacific. It is hard to guess how the Americans would have counterattacked, but such a move would probably have involved the large fleet that survived Pearl Harbor undamaged.

Great opportunity arises

And a great opportunity would have arisen. Everything would have gone the way it was outlined in the *Draft Proposal*: *(W)e 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 Americans would cross the Pacific Ocean, traveling a great distance. They had only three aircraft carriers in that part of the world.

The battleships at Hawaii had been spared, but if they had accompanied those three carriers over that huge distance, they would have been easy targets. In aircraft, including land-based units, the Japanese would have had the advantage. No matter how many battleships the US assembled, they would have suffered the same fate as did *HMS Prince of Wales* off the coast of Malaya.

I am confident that my simulation will demonstrate the superiority of the Japanese at that juncture, and the soundness of the *Draft Proposal*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

Shedding the inferiority complex

This hypothetical operation seems far superior to the one that actually was executed during the war with the US. Since the remnants of the enemy fleet and a few carriers would have been traveling such a great distance, the Japanese had absolutely nothing to fear. If they had quickly prepared a reconnoitering plan, as well as communications and defense networks, they could have responded sufficiently.

Is it possible that the Japanese were afflicted with an inferiority complex, and with an obsession that convinced them that they could not win if they did not take aggressive actions against at the enemy's main strength without delay? In the early stage of the war, any objective analysis would have concluded that the Japanese had the advantage. I wonder why they lacked the confidence of that advantage, and why they failed to conduct their operations with more conviction.

Additionally, in anticipation of American raids that were certain to come, the Japanese should have equipped airfields and fortifications in the Philippines and the Mariana Islands with air-defense radar. The Army began its investigations of radar in 1936, and started using it in 1940. We know that the British were able to repel attacks from superior German warplanes in the Battle of Britain primarily because that they were equipped with air-defense radar.

As Japan was not at war with the UK at that time, Japanese Army and Navy officers then in the UK must have known about the radar, and must have put significant effort into exploring its potential. Even the Navy, which lagged technologically behind the Army, began installing radar in its battleships in 1941. Both the *Ise* and *Hyuga* battleships, which saw action in the Battle of Midway, were equipped with radar. But it was of no use to them, since they were so far away from the battle zone.

In any case, the Japanese military was certainly capable of preparing for counterattacks from the Americans after occupying the Philippines and Indonesia. Therefore, this simulation proves that the Japanese had the practical wherewithal to accomplish these goals.

2. Take bold steps to topple Chiang government (Phase 2 operations)

Japan's policy regarding China is stated in some detail in IV of the Tactics section: *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.*

By "cutting off support for Chiang," the authors of the *Draft Proposal* meant blockading the route on which matériel and other supplies would travel. This was the best way to render Chiang powerless to resist attacks. On March 8, 1942, Rangoon, Burma fell to the Japanese. By May all of Burma was occupied, and with landings of goods now impossible, the Burma Road ceased to function.

Then the Americans decided to build another supply route beginning in Assam, India and going over the Himalayas (the Great Airlift Operation). First they crossed the Indian Ocean, unloaded their matériel at Calcutta or Chittagong, and then transported it over land to the airfield in Assam. That necessitated a Japanese operation whereby the Americans would be prevented from using the Indian Ocean.

Operation 11 (Western Asia, Ceylon)

As part of the first-phase operations, the Nagumo attack carrier striking force headed for the Indian Ocean on March 28. On April 5 the unit bombed Colombo, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), damaging

base facilities, and sank two heavy cruisers offshore. On April 9 the unit bombed the west bank, damaging Trincomalee Base, and sank the British aircraft carrier *HMS Hermes*.

The occupation of Burma was not yet complete, and in acting prematurely (before they had obtained the cooperation of the Army), the Nagumo unit showed their hands to the enemy. But its members did demonstrate that the British Eastern Fleet was no match for them.

But Commander in Chief Yamamoto Isoroku called the Nagumo attack carrier striking force unit back to assist the Midway operation. The British got hold of that information, which they relayed to US to Admiral Chester Nimitz.

The need for haste was endorsed by the relay of a British decrypt on 15 April which indicated that the Japanese striking forces were leaving the Indian Ocean and that Carrier Division 5 was to be detached “proceeding to Truk, arriving about 28 April.”⁴⁰

Though this speaks well of British intelligence-gathering capabilities, the point here is that the Americans were overjoyed that the Nagumo unit had withdrawn.

Surely Yamamoto was aware of the importance of the Indian Ocean, but he may have considered operations conducted there supplemental at most. The commander in chief’s priority may have been meeting the enemy head-on in a decisive battle. In any case, the action he took was, without a doubt, in violation of the *Draft Proposal*.

At a meeting of the Japan-Germany-Italy Joint Expert Commission on March 27, the Germans made the following requests of the Japanese:

At this point the main battles between the Axis and Allied nations are likely to be fought in the Middle East, the Suez Canal, and Egypt. We wish to occupy these strategic locations expeditiously, before the enemy has completed preparations (supplies and defense). In that case, the Axis will have gotten a strategic head start.

The commission asked the Japanese Navy to assist with the German-Italian invasion of Egypt, and to give due consideration to an operation that would destroy the enemy’s supply line extending northward from the east coast of Africa.⁴¹

On June 21 joint German-Italian forces captured heavily fortified Tobruk in eastern Libya, having advanced 1,400 kilometers from Tripoli, the capital.

This provided an opportunity on June 29 for Sugiyama Hajime, chief of the Imperial Army General Staff, to order preparations for Operation 11. On July 11 Nagano Osami, chief of the Imperial Navy General Staff, reported to the Emperor that the Navy would bolster the Indian Ocean operation, which would involve the main strength of the Combined Fleet.

⁴⁰ Rear Admiral Edwin T. Layton *et al.*, “*And I Was There: Pearl Harbor and Midway — Breaking the Secrets* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1985), 382.

⁴¹ Sato, *Senryaku Daitoa senso* (The Greater East Asian War: a war of strategy) (Tokyo: Senshi Kankokai, 1996), 38.

Thus two Army divisions and most of the Combined Fleet were preparing to launch Operation 11, which would attack Ceylon and defeat enemy forces in the Indian Ocean. The Japanese certainly had the war potential to accomplish this mission, and it was expected to be successful. Unfortunately, the operation was never executed because participants became mired in the Guadalcanal disaster. Even so, my simulation demonstrates that the Western Asia operation had every reason to be successful.

Incidentally, my simulations are premised on strict adherence to the *Draft Proposal*. Therefore, I must assume that the operation on Guadalcanal, which deviated from the *Draft Proposal*, did not take place. Consequently the Western Asia operation could have been launched, and if it had been, had a nearly 100% chance of success.

Enemy feared Japanese offensive in Indian Ocean

At around this time George Marshall, the US Chief of Staff, was lamenting Axis advances: German generals Rommel and Kleist are advancing from the Middle East. The entire Middle East is under German and Italian control. The Japanese are advancing from the East and are likely to take control of the Indian Ocean. There is nothing America can do about this!⁴²

Churchill's call for help

On April 7 and 15 in a letter to Roosevelt, Churchill expressed his earnest hope that by the end of April the American Pacific Fleet would stop the Japanese westward advance, and force them to move eastward instead.

I must revert to the grave situation in the Indian Ocean [mentioned in my number 65], arising from the fact that the Japanese have felt able to detach nearly a third of their battle fleet and half their carriers, which force we are unable to match for several months. The consequences of this may easily be: (A) The loss of Ceylon. (B) Invasion of Eastern India with incalculable internal consequences to our whole war plan and including the loss of Calcutta and of all contact with the Chinese through Burma. But this is only the beginning. Until we are able to fight a fleet action there is no reason why the Japanese should not become the dominating factor in the Western Indian Ocean. This would result in the collapse of our whole position in the Middle East, not only because of the interruption to our convoys to the Middle East and India, but also because of the interruptions to the oil supplies from Abadan, without which we cannot maintain our position either at sea or on land in the Indian Ocean Area. Supplies to Russia via the Persian Gulf would also be cut. With so much of the weight of Japan thrown upon us we have more than we can bear.⁴³

It may have been in response to this entreaty that the Americans deployed one Navy division to Guadalcanal, a mission that had not been previously scheduled.

I am grateful to amateur historian Tanimoto Sunao for telling me about Russell Grenfell, a captain in

⁴² Sato Akira, *Teikoku kaigun ga Nihon wo hametsu saseta* (Incompetent Japanese Imperial Navy), vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2006), 78.

⁴³ Kimball, *op. cit.*, 452-3.

the British Navy, who wrote the following in his book *Main Fleet to Singapore*:

Should the Japanese go on to capture Ceylon, an infinity of mischief would be within their reach. They could stop the flow of oil tankers coming down the Persian Gulf to give mobility to British and Allied ships and aircraft. They could sever the newly opened southern supply line to Russia through Persia. Seaborne communication between India and the outside world could be cut off. Nor was this the worst they could do. Along the east coast of Africa ran the main British supply route to the Middle East. By it came all the reinforcements of men, tanks, guns, ammunition, lorries, and all the numberless other things needed by the Desert Army. This, too, would be vulnerable to Japanese sea power; and if it were successfully attacked, our whole Middle East position was imperilled, including our naval influence in the Mediterranean. For with its communications cut, the Desert Army could not avoid defeat, Rommel would reach Cairo, the Mediterranean fleet base at Alexandria would be overrun, the overland route to Iraq, Persia, and India would be at the German disposal, and the Suez Canal would become an enemy waterway. The havoc that the Japanese could do to the British war effort if they used their command of the sea to strike westward was incalculable and would probably be catastrophic.⁴⁴

This statement is proof that if Operation 11 had been executed in compliance with the *Draft Proposal*, it would have been tremendously effective; the Japanese would have struck a heavy blow to the enemy. The Allies were truly fearful of such an operation. This is not wishful thinking on my part, but a realistic conclusion.

Battles require opponents. To win a battle, one side must strike fear into the hearts of the enemy. The tactics outlined in the *Draft Proposal* were well within the realm of possibility, and would have been extremely effective.

Operation 5 (land invasion of Chongqing)

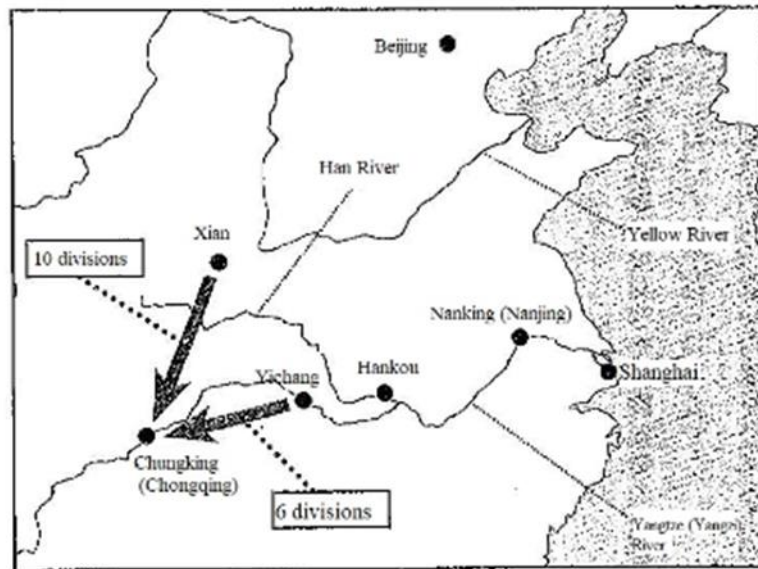
The Japanese Army General Staff was planning an operation, Operation 5, intended to attack the fortress that was the Nationalist government in Chungking.

It was a colossal operation that involved 10 divisions (more than 200,000 men) advancing southward from southern Shanxi province, and six divisions (more than 120,000 men) advancing westward from Yichang, located southwest of Hankou on the upper reaches of the Yangzi.

The troops advancing southward would travel from Xian over the Qinling Mountains, and then proceed from Yangping passage through Jiange to Sichuan province. This is the same route traveled during the Three Kingdoms era (220-280) by the Wei general on his way to attack the Shu state. The westward route was the one chosen by Liu Bei when he led his soldiers up the Yangzi River to found the state of Shu.

⁴⁴ Russell Grenfell, *Main Fleet to Singapore* (London: Faber & Faber, 1951), 161-2.

Figure 11: Operation 5



In other words, the Japanese planned to launch a major operation that closely resembled a campaign in a historical drama that took place 1,800 years ago (see Figure 11).

In September 1942, the General Staff ordered preparations for the operation, and began preparing a detailed plan that included close-up aerial photographs of the route. But on November 16, orders emanated from the China Expeditionary Army cancelling the operation. The reason was Guadalcanal.

Now we come to our simulation. If Guadalcanal had not been a factor, and Operation 5 had begun as originally scheduled, in December, what would have been the outcome?

First of all, since a detailed operation plan had already been produced, this is a very realistic, eminently feasible simulation, and the China Expeditionary Army was certainly capable of bringing the operation to fruition. For this mission that army would have deployed two-thirds of its total war potential.

As stated earlier, Operation 11 should have been conducted in August, in which case it would have adhered to the instructions in the *Draft Proposal*, and gone according to plan. Since the flow of tanks, aircraft, and other matériel from the US to Chungking would have halted, the Chinese would have experienced shortages of resources, and their morale would have plummeted. They could never have withstood a concentrated attack by the Japanese.

Chinese soldiers do not behave like their Japanese counterparts, who will resist an attack fiercely and fight to the bitter end. The Chinese would have claimed that they wanted to cooperate with Japan for the sake of peace in East Asia, but eventually Chiang Kai-shek would have had to hoist the white flag.

According to my simulation, the Japanese would certainly have succeeded in toppling the Chiang government.

3. Align with Germany and Italy to force UK to surrender (Phase 2 operations)

What about the other second-phase operation, the one that involved effecting the surrender of the UK? We have already learned that Operation 11 could have been launched on schedule. The next operation

would involve driving the British Eastern Fleet out of the Indian Ocean.

Then the shipping of provisions, raw materials, and reinforcements from India to England would have come to an end. And since both Australia and New Zealand would have used the Indian Ocean to transport matériel and men to England, most of that traffic would have stopped dead as well.

Furthermore, since shipments from England bound for British troops in Suez would travel on the Indian Ocean along the east coast of Africa, that supply line would be cut off.

Soldiers from England, India, Australia, and New Zealand could not have reached their destinations, adversely affecting the British troops in Suez as well.

M4 tanks from the US made British victory possible

The most critical shipments to the British were munitions originating in the US. Rommel, who captured Tobruk, was advancing to Suez, but the British stopped him at El Alamein. The fighting continued, but what made the difference in September 1942 were 300 of the newest M4 tanks and the 100 self-propelled guns that the Americans rushed to Suez via the Indian Ocean. On November 4, Rommel ordered all his troops to withdraw.

This victory prompted Churchill to proclaim, “Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein, we never had a defeat.”⁴⁵

If the Japanese West Asian operation had been implemented, it is very likely that Axis forces would have prevailed at El Alamein. According to my simulation the West Asian operation would have taken place, so the British would have been defeated at Suez. Russell Grenfell’s worst fears would have been realized.

Indian Ocean main artery for US cooperation with USSR

One of the important factors to consider with respect to cornering the British was warfare between the Germans and Soviets, who fought fiercely. If Germany had enjoyed a clear advantage over the Russians, it could have spared more soldiers and might have been able to force the British to their knees.

In fact, the Soviets benefited from a variety of munitions (tanks, aircraft, etc.) provided by the US, support for their battles against Germany.

There were three supply routes: the Arctic Ocean, the Tsugaru Strait, and the Indian Ocean. The Japanese allowed transport ships flying the Soviet flag to pass through the Tsugaru Strait because of the neutrality pact. As I explained in I.3 of this chapter (“Indian Ocean: main artery of Allied transport”), the main supply route was the Indian Ocean, which was used for more than 70% of this traffic.

How much military support did the USSR receive from the US? In tonnage it received as much as 16.52 million tons, valued at \$10.607 billion.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191826719.001.0001/q-oro-ed4-00002969> (retrieved 08/19).

⁴⁶ Hoover, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, 701.

A breakdown of this amount shows that the US shipped 14,700 aircraft, 7,000 tanks, as well as 6,300 armored fighting vehicles, 2,300 gun carriages, 8,200 anti-aircraft guns, 375,000 trucks, and 52,000 jeeps to the Soviets. The Americans also sent 4.478 million tons worth of provisions. With that kind of support, Germany had no hope of defeating the USSR.

And surprisingly, the Americans sent 15,000 aircraft (equivalent to Japan's entire output of Mitsubishi Zeros) to the USSR through the Lend-Lease policy. The aforementioned 7,000 tanks far exceeded Japan's entire inventory.

If even half of this matériel had not reached its destination, what would have happened?

First of all, the USSR would have had great difficulty defeating Germany; most likely the USSR would have lost. If the Japanese had launched Operation 11 adhering strictly to the *Draft Proposal*, Germany probably would have prevailed over the USSR.

In a world war the USSR would have been eclipsed; the fortunes of war would have changed completely. The UK would have found itself in a terribly desperate situation.

The Germans practically begged the Japanese to launch an operation in the Indian Ocean, but the Japanese failed to take action, thus betraying the Germans. Strange as it may seem, some specialists are of the opinion that because the Japanese had concluded a neutrality pact with the USSR, they couldn't block matériel traveling from the US on the Indian Ocean. In other words, the Japanese should have disregarded their ally Germany's desperate request. I would like them to tell me which was more important to Japan, Germany or the USSR?

The Japanese should have extricated themselves from the neutrality pact. There was still time. Then perhaps we would have been spared those foolish remarks.

But in a simulation performed in accordance with the *Draft Proposal*, we have the Japanese capturing or sinking transport ships carrying matériel from the US to the USSR. The British predicament becomes even more serious. It may not be possible to force the UK to surrender at this point, but it will be in dire straits.

4. Strip US of will to continue hostilities

As I have demonstrated, executing Operation 11 would have accomplished the objectives stated in 2 and 3.

Then once Operation 11 had been successful, Operation 5 would follow, toppling Chiang Kai-shek's government. Again, Japan's goal was decidedly not to subjugate China. From the outset of the conflict, the Japanese had made countless attempts to end it. Japan never demanded that the Chinese surrender territory.

The first peace overtures from Japan were made on August 5, 1937, right after the Marco Polo Bridge and Tongzhou incidents. It was called the Funatsu peace initiative;⁴⁷ its terms were very generous,

⁴⁷ The Funatsu peace initiative was offered on August 9, 1937. Following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, the Japanese subdued Beiping (Beijing) and Tianjin, and immediately made peacemaking overtures. Funatsu Tatsuchiro, a former diplomat and businessman who had earned the trust of the Chinese, sent peace offerings to Chiang Kai-shek's government. The proposal prepared by the Army, Navy, and Foreign Ministry was very conciliatory on Japan's part. The terms were: (1) The Tanggu Truce, the He (Yingqin)-Umezu (Yoshijiro) and Doihara-Qin Dechun agreements, and all other military pacts benefiting Japanese status in North China are hereby terminated; (2) Demilitarized zones shall be established; (3) The Hebei-Chahar

acceding to almost every one of China's demands.

Potential for Indian independence increases

Operation 11 would have accomplished even more than the obvious. When Ceylon was captured, it was not only Navy personnel, but also two Army divisions that occupied the island. Then soldiers in the Indian National Army could have established a base in Ceylon where they could plan a landing on Indian soil.

For that to happen, Japanese troops in Burma would have to defeat British troops from India in air battles. Then the Indian National Army, with Japanese support, could achieve air supremacy, and advance without difficulty.

On the aerial-warfare front, the Japanese had the 5th Air Division in the Burma area. In September 1942 that division conducted three operations there, overwhelming the enemy. The Fighter Air Group led by Col. Kato Tateo, which later became famous, was part of the 5th Air Division.

But the division was weakened when half of it was diverted to Guadalcanal. For the purposes of our simulation, we must assume that the Battle of Guadalcanal, which contravened the policies laid out in the *Draft Proposal*, never took place. We must also assume that the 5th Air Division's war potential remained unchanged. In that case, the Japanese would have had superior air power in the Burma area, compared with that of the British. This assumption is very critical because when the Japanese launched operations in Assam and in Imphal, their aerial war potential was reduced to less than half its former strength (not through combat with UK forces, but because military authorities disregarded the *Draft Proposal* and diverted troops to the mire of Guadalcanal and New Guinea.

Imphal operation: a very close contest

When the Japanese conducted that notorious Imphal operation, five months behind schedule, the 5th Air Division's war potential had been reduced by more than two-thirds. Moreover, it was now 1944, and the British had gained military strength. As a result, the Japanese captured Kohima at the entrance to Imphal,

Political Council shall be dissolved, and Nanjing shall take over the administration of that region; (4) The number of Japanese military personnel stationed in China shall be the same as it was prior to hostilities.

This proposal was exceedingly generous in that it relinquished most of the concessions Japan had acquired in North China since the Manchurian Incident. It was very favorable toward China because the relinquished territory included Beiping (Beijing) and Tianjin. The Japanese asked the Chinese only to acknowledge Japanese administration of Manzhouguo, and to suppress anti-Japanese movements.

On the basis of this proposal, hostilities should have ceased on the same day. The first negotiations were scheduled to begin on August 9 in Shanghai. Unfortunately, Lt. Oyama Isao was murdered on that very same day, bringing the negotiations to an abrupt halt. According to *Mao: The Unknown Story* by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, Zhang Zhizhong, a clandestine Communist Party member, arranged the assassination for the express purpose of disrupting the peace negotiations.

and were only slightly short of their goal when they were forced to fight a miserable retreating battle.

Even so, after the war had ended, Mutaguchi Renya, the Japanese commanding officer at the Battle of Imphal, posed some questions to his British counterpart, A. J. Barker. One of the answers was: “Your conviction that Lt. Gen. Sato Kotoku could have recaptured Dimapur is correct. When I consulted Gen. Montagu Stopford about this matter a few days ago, he told me that if the Japanese 31st Division had left a few soldiers behind to contain Kohima and continued with their advance, Stopford would have been in a tight spot.”

Dimapur was a strategic point for supplies; weapons, ammunition, and provisions were plentiful there. If the Japanese had occupied it, their supply problems would have been resolved. In other words, in the Imphal operation, later described as reckless, only a fine line separated success from failure.

If only Indian National Army had advanced from Ceylon to India ...

If the Japanese had conducted the Imphal operation on land, in the first half of 1943, when they had the air advantage, and if reinforcements had joined the landing operation from Ceylon, Japanese troops and Indian National Army units might very well have been able to triumph over the enemy.

If Japanese and Indian forces had continued to advance, and the British Indian Army had surrendered, many of the defeated soldiers might have joined forces with the Indian National Army soldiers. Then they might have defeated the British soldiers from India. Once that started happening, things would have proceeded very quickly. The British soldiers from India might very well have been defeated quickly. What would the consequences have been?

The Japanese had already told the Filipinos and Burmese of their intention to acknowledge their independence. Furthermore, Indian nationalists might have been able to establish a government headed by nationalist hero Subhas Chandra Bose — not a provisional government, but a full-fledged one.

Could the US have refused to recognize such a government? How would the Americans have dealt with this problem, after professing they were fighting a just war. They would have been at their wit's end. They might even have been reluctant to continue hostilities against Japan.

Objectives of *Draft Proposal* were attainable

We have reached the point at which it might have been possible to *discourage the United States from continuing hostilities against Japan*.

There are many other points to make here, but at this point I believe readers understand that the strategies described in the *Draft Proposal* were logical and attainable, and had every hope of success.

The *Draft Proposal* provides clear evidence that Japan had absolutely no intention of “embarking on world conquest,”⁴⁸ the text of the Potsdam Declaration to the contrary, or of JCP Chairman Shii's opinion, which he lifted from the declaration. Flying the Japanese flag over Washington, DC was never an objective of Japanese national policy.

Some Japanese were overcome with excitement by victories in battles with American forces, and did have visions of the banner with a red sun on a white background waving above Washington, DC. I

⁴⁸ <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Docs/Hiroshima/Potsdam.shtml> (retrieved 9/2019).

remember reading a magazine article written by a former Navy sailor that quoted Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku warning that it was too soon to rejoice over flying the Japanese flag over Washington, DC.

From beginning to end, Japan's main purpose in going to war was not to conquer the US, but to conquer American hostility and end the economic blockade against Japan.

Another objective was achieving independence for the nations of Asia, which victory would make possible. And the *Draft Proposal* showed the way to victory.

“If I had been Chief of the General Staff, Japan would have prevailed!” (Ishiwara Kanji)

In Section I.2 of this chapter I introduced a comment made by Gen. Ishiwara Kanji to Navy Captain Prince Takamatsu: “You must withdraw immediately from Guadalcanal Island. The Army should do the same. We must abandon the Solomon Islands, the Bismarck Archipelago, and New Guinea as soon as possible. Since our objective is securing a supply route, we should set our western offensive terminal point at the Burmese border. Then we must fortify a defense line through resource-rich regions such as Singapore and Sumatra. In the mid-Pacific we should withdraw to the Philippines, while strengthening islands near Japan (Saipan, Tinian, and Guam) until they are impregnable.” From Ishiwara's viewpoint, if his advice were taken, Japan could not lose.

At the IMTFE (Tokyo Trials), Ishiwara was called as a witness. He told one of the American prosecutors: “If I had been Chief of the General Staff, Japan would have prevailed!”

At an interview reporters from United Press and Associated Press asked Ishiwara: “General, at the Tokyo Trials you said that if you had been in charge you would have won the war. What kind of war would you have waged?” Ishiwara's answer was practically the same as the comment he had made to Prince Takamatsu.⁴⁹

Since Ishiwara Kanji was in the reserves when the *Draft Proposal* was adopted, he probably was not familiar with its content. But given the ideas about strategy produced by this extraordinary genius, it is likely that he would have devised very similar strategies. And he did say, confidently, during the Occupation, that had those strategies been implemented, Japan would never have been defeated.

⁴⁹ Yokoyama Shinpei, *Hiroku Ishiwara Kanji* (Confidential papers of Ishiwara Kanji) (Tokyo: Fuyo Shobo, 1971), 29-30.

CHAPTER 4: WHY JAPAN COULD NOT IMPLEMENT MASTER PLAN

In Chapters 2 and 3 I showed how Japan had a good chance of winning the war if it adhered to the *Draft Proposal for Hastening the End of War Against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek*.

The next question I would like to address is why, instead of being guided by the *Draft Proposal*, they veered far from it and ended up suffering an ignominious defeat. The most meticulous examination of the strategies in the *Draft Proposal* fails to yield even the faintest suggestion of engagements such as the Battle of Midway (considered the first step on the road to defeat, in which Japan lost four aircraft carriers) or the New Guinea campaign.

Midway operation

Nor do we find in the master plan (the *Draft Proposal*) language instructing the Japanese military to head for Midway Atoll and from there, attack and destroy American aircraft carriers. As a matter of fact, occupying Midway Atoll was emphatically not in keeping with the policies in the *Draft Proposal*.

I often hear comments like, “Remember the Doolittle Raid?”⁵⁰ To stave off such attacks we needed to shut down Midway, the advance base for attacks on Japan.” The Doolittle Raid did take the Japanese by surprise, but it was merely a clever scheme, a suicide attack that could be executed only once.

The Americans launched 16 B-25 long-range bombers from the *USS Hornet* 500 nautical miles (900 kilometers) away from Japan, and proceeded to bomb Tokyo and other key cities. Surveillance systems detected the planes early on, but there was no emergency response system in place. The Japanese were shocked by the attack, which they were completely unable to repel.

However, in my opinion, no one who called himself a professional soldier should have been surprised. If the Japanese had had better surveillance and response systems, the Americans could not have protected two aircraft carriers with the defensive aircraft on the *USS Enterprise* once they were within 500 nautical miles from Japan. The two carriers would have been sitting ducks.

In other words, the Doolittle Raid was a surprise attack; a repetition could not have been successful.

And indeed, the Americans did not attempt to repeat this foolish assault. Therefore, shock or no shock, there was no need to contravene the strategies outlined in the *Draft Proposal* and attempt an attack on Midway. I am reminded of the sumo wrestler’s trick of clapping his hands in front of his opponent’s face, hoping he will be so surprised that he loses his concentration. Only a rank amateur would fall for such a ruse.

Deployment of troops to New Guinea

Japanese military authorities deployed a total of 160,000 soldiers to New Guinea; only 10,000 men

⁵⁰ The Doolittle Raid occurred on April 19, 1942. The US Army Air Force launched B-25 bombers from aircraft carriers, which dropped bombs on Tokyo, Yokosuka, Yokohama, Nagoya, Kobe, and other cities. The attacks killed 87 Japanese. Three bombers were lost; the others made emergency landings on Chinese soil and were abandoned.

survived their ordeal there. To make matters worse, more than 100,000 of the 150,000 who did not return died of starvation. It was a repetition of the tragedy in Guadalcanal, but larger in scale. In Chapter 3 (I.2) I explained that these tragedies occurred because the Japanese violated a principle of battle: war potential is inversely proportional to the square of the distance from base to battle site. Because of the impossibility of delivering supplies, the target must not exceed the terminal offensive point. Moreover, New Guinea could not be considered a strategically important point as a stronghold. It was unthinkable in the context of the strategies hypothesized in the *Draft Proposal*. The aforementioned Professor Woods describes the situation as follows.

The move to the south also took Japanese forces to some of the most rugged and isolated places in the world. East of the Indies and within ten degrees of the equator, this enormous territory consisted entirely of impenetrable landmasses, disease-ridden coasts, and tiny and widely separated atolls and islands of the tropical sea. The area contained only small and primitive human populations, no large settlements, no developed facilities, and precious few natural resources. Every bullet, can of food, pound of rice, roll of barbed wire, and drop of oil used by Japanese forces would have to come from within the empire along extraordinarily long lines of communication.⁵¹

In that case why was such a huge number of Japanese military personnel transported to such places? I shall address this question in due course.

Did Japan's leaders fail to understand the *Draft Proposal*?

Did the leaders of the Army and Navy willfully disregard the *Draft Proposal for Hastening the End of War Against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek*, which had been officially adopted at a Liaison Conference between Imperial General Headquarters and the Imperial Government held right before war broke out?

In February and March of 1942, a time when Phase 1 operations were proceeding smoothly, a heated debate was exchanged between Army and Navy staff officers concerning Phase 2 operations. Members of the operations sections of the Army and Navy ranking section chief and below had assembled for a joint research session. The positions put forth by the Army and Navy were, in substance, as follows:

- The Army's viewpoint: Bring about the downfall of England, which is the objective of the Western Asia operations. Use political strategy to achieve the surrender of China without outside help. Avoid launching major operations in outlying areas; instead, concentrate on making occupied areas invincible.
- The Navy's viewpoint: Launch aggressive operations aimed at crushing the main strength of the US Navy and attacking the enemy's advance bases. Attack Australia, one of those advance bases.

It seems strange to me that Australia was perceived as one of the enemy's major advance bases. Nevertheless, that is how the Navy viewed it at the time. They were offering a compromise when they agreed to initiate the FS (Fiji-Samoa) and MO (Port Moresby) operations. What is astonishing is the fact that the Navy's viewpoint, i.e., advancing into the South Pacific, was established at that early stage of the war. No matter how one looks at it, the Navy made a recommendation that strayed completely from the portion of the *Draft Proposal* that reads "Using any and all means, we shall endeavor to lure

⁵¹ Wood, *op. cit.*, 25.

the main strength of American naval vessels in a timely manner to an appropriate location, where we shall attack and destroy it.”

I cannot help thinking that Army staff officers failed to realize how important the *Draft Proposal* was. Remember, its strategies were the only ones that would enable Japan to win the war. Looking at the situation in the long term, a Japanese victory (since Japan had far less economic strength and war potential than its opponents) depended on adherence to the *Draft Proposal*. Still, these facts appear not to have penetrated the minds of Army authorities. And it does seem as though naval authorities totally ignored the *Draft Proposal*.

Did Commander Yamamoto understand the *Draft Proposal* when he attacked Ceylon?

But between February 20 and 23 the Combined Fleet Headquarters conducted a map exercise on board the battleship *Yamato* in which an attack targeting Ceylon was launched in the Indian Ocean. Members of the Naval General Staff were present, as were three observers from Army General Staff Headquarters, who had been invited. The members of the Staff Headquarters apparently objected to the assault, stating that it should not be initiated until Germany had made more progress with its Africa operation, and the subjugation of Burma was complete. The Naval General Staff officers did not voice their opinions. But on February 27 at a joint Army-Navy research conference, they communicated their disapproval of the Ceylon operation.

It seems as though the Headquarters of the Combined Fleet understood the *Draft Proposal*, while the Naval General Staff did not. I say this because the Combined Fleet embarked on the Ceylon operation on April 5, despite the fact that Headquarters had rejected it. That operation succeeded in sinking two heavy cruisers, as well as the *HMS Hermes*, a light aircraft carrier. At about the same time the Kondo Fleet, based in Penang and commanded by Adm. Kondo Nobutake, set out accompanied by seven submarines; during a daring, destructive encounter in the Bay of Bengal, it sank 28 merchant ships. These operations should have continued, based on the original strategy, but that was not to be. As stated earlier, on April 10 Commander Yamamoto ordered the Nagumo Fleet to return to Japan so that it could take part in the Midway operation.

After the Pearl Harbor strike Yamamoto had ordered Combined Fleet Chief of Staff Ugaki Matome to investigate subsequent operation plans. They involved attacks on Midway, Johnston Atoll, Palmyra Atoll, and Hawaii. Yamamoto also recommended that the first attack should target Ceylon, an important enemy base, while there was still time to spare (the aforementioned Ceylon operation).

Since in April Burma was not fully under Japanese control, the Navy could not count on help from the Army. Without that, the Navy would only be displaying their war potential — showing their hands to the enemy.

The Midway operation could never have appeared in the *Draft Proposal*. The only explanation that occurs to me is that Navy officials did not understand the true objective of the Western Asia operation.

Guidelines for the Next Stage of the War (Phase 2 operations, March 7)

On March 7, 1942, a liaison conference between Imperial General Headquarters and the Japanese government was held. Those present made formal decisions about a document entitled “Guidelines for the Next Stage of the War.” They were as follows:

1. To cause Great Britain to surrender, and the US to lose the will to engage in further warfare, we shall build upon our military gains, and while readying our long-term, invincible offensive

stance, take decisive action at the first opportunity.

2. Protecting occupied territories and important communication routes all the while, we shall encourage the exploitation and usage of critical resources for national defense, and endeavor to secure self-sufficiency and increase our national war potential.
3. We shall make decisions relating to still more assertive war strategy, taking into consideration our national strength, the status of our operations, the war between Germany and the USSR, US-USSR relations, and developments in Chungking.
4. Our policy toward the USSR shall be informed by the *Draft Proposal for Hastening the End of War Against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek* issued on November 15, 1941 as well as “Measures Intended To Accompany Developments in the War Situation,” adopted on January 10, 1942. However, given the current state of affairs, we shall not participate in mediating a peace between Germany and the USSR.
5. Our policy toward Chungking shall be governed by “Efforts to Force Chungking to Surrender in Connection with Developments in the War Situation,” adopted on December 24, 1941.
6. Cooperation with Germany and Italy shall be guided by the essentials outlined in the *Draft Proposal for Hastening the End of War Against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek* issued on November 15, 1941.

In the first item, put forward by the Army, “We shall build upon our military gains, and while readying our long-term, invincible offensive stance” had replaced “We shall extend our military gains,” proposed by the Navy. Appended to the same item was, “(We shall) take decisive action at the first opportunity.”

Staff officers had already agreed to proceed with the Fiji-Samoa operation and the attack on Port Moresby, and their decisions had been put in writing. It is likely that the aforementioned revisions were made to rationalize agreement among staff officers. Furthermore, the *Draft Proposal* was ostensibly valued; it was neither ignored nor rejected. But it had certainly been watered down by this stage of the war.

Prime Minister Tojo reportedly found fault with the *Draft Proposal*, saying that he couldn’t tell if it proposed offensive or defensive strategies. Though he served concurrently as Minister of War, at that time he lacked the authority of the supreme command, which was held by the Chief of the General Staff (Army) and the Chief of the Naval General Staff. Therefore, Tojo could not overrule the staff officers. But formally the guidelines were signed by Prime Minister Tojo, Sugiyama Hajime, chief of the General Staff, and Nagano Osami, chief of the Naval General Staff.

There are some who maintain that Prime Minister Tojo had unchecked power, but they are completely mistaken. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, and Chiang Kai-shek had total control over their nations’ armed forces, so the description would certainly apply to them, but not to Tojo.

Tojo (now a general) made the following comment on February 16, 1945, after he had resigned as prime minister, to Col. Tanemura Sako, a staff officer:

I overestimated the capabilities of our Navy, but allowed them to lead me around by the nose. I was wrong about the offensive terminal point; we should have focused on the Indian Ocean.

— Gen. Tojo Hideki⁵²

One can almost sense his pain. Judging from his bitter reaction, Gen. Tojo must have captured the essence of the *Draft Proposal*.

Let us take a look at the occupation of Rabaul during the first-phase operations. On January 23 the South Seas Detachment (an Army unit), attached to the 4th Fleet, captured Rabaul. After that mission was accomplished, they were supposed to withdraw, leaving a naval land force in charge. But persuaded by an appeal from the Navy, they remained on Rabaul.

Prime Minister Tojo was vehemently opposed to this decision, fearing that it would lead to an extension of the war front. His view was supported by Deputy Chief of Staff Tsukada Osamu. But both men ended up giving in to pressure from the Navy, and its promise of assistance of a naval air squad in the assault on Singapore. Even this compromise demonstrates the prime minister's strategic perspective and his profound understanding of the *Draft Proposal*.

Because of the advance into and fortification of Rabaul, it is probably safe to say that the Port Moresby operation, the objective of which was the occupation of the air force base on the Australian side of New Guinea, was decided upon at the February Army-Navy Staff Officers' Joint Conference. The assault on Rabaul was a turning point, the first step in a series of reckless undertakings.

One can't help but wonder what would have happened had the Army General Staff Headquarters and the Prime Minister tried a little harder to stop the invasion of Rabaul.

IGHQ chief senses a crisis

In entries in his war diary dated March 8 and 10, Lt. Gen. Tanaka Shin'ichi, head of Section 1 (Operations Section) of the Headquarters of the General Staff, describes his foreboding, his sense that the decision made on March 7 might lead to a "dreadful crossroads in the war."

March 8: We may reach a dreadful crossroads in the war. I fear that the Navy's offensive operations in the Pacific will become the driving force behind our actions.

March 10: Aggressive operations in the Pacific will shake the foundation of our efforts to increase national strength. The building of invincible readiness is of utmost importance. The Guandong Army's preparations remain incomplete.

I see no end to this war. Guidance for the Greater East Asian War stands at a crossroads at the end of each battle. We must open up a route between India and Western Asia.

After World War II ended, Lt. Gen. Tanaka wrote down his recollections as follows:

⁵² Tanemura Sako, *Daihon'ei kimitsu nisshi* (Confidential diary of Imperial General Headquarters) (Tokyo: Daiyamondo Sha, 1952), 263 and Gunjishi Gakkai, ed. (The military history society of Japan), *Dai hon'ei rikugunbu senso shido han: kimitsu senso nisshi* (Confidential war diaries of War Guidance Section, Imperial General Headquarters), vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kinseisha, 1998).

1. The Liaison Conference between Imperial General Headquarters and the Imperial Government, held on March 7, ultimately ended in the adoption of “Guidelines for the Next Stage of the War” in the absence of true agreement between the Army and Navy.
2. The Army’s position was the same as stated at the Liaison Conference held immediately prior to the outbreak of hostilities, i.e., to win this war, we must build an impregnable defense and prepare for a protracted war. To that end, we must refrain from dangerous, large-scale invasive operations in the Pacific. We must be equipped for crushing, large-scale enemy offensives that are likely to be launched after 1943. Also crucial is the protection of sea routes in the western Pacific. Additionally, priority must be given to encouraging, over the long term, the building of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Furthermore, during this time, they stated that they would endeavor to bring this war to an end by placing emphasis on the Indian Ocean area, assisting with German and Italian operations and, when an opportunity presents itself, complete work on operations intended to open up a route between India and western Asia.

3. Navy officials asserted that all major operations in the Greater East Asian War should be launched on the Pacific Ocean, and that since the road to ending the war rested entirely on causing the US to lose the will to wage war against Japan, they clung to the concept of early, decisive battles. In any case, Japan would maintain its offensive stance, putting the enemy on the defensive. It was absolutely necessary to destroy the enemy’s counteroffensive bases and cripple its initial response capabilities.

In other words, instead of using defensive strategy on the Pacific, as was expected prior to the outbreak of war, the Navy now wanted to go on the offensive. This would involve the conquest of Australia, the largest American base from which counteroffensives could be launched. It was also diametrically opposite the Army’s defensive strategy, which was to establish a long-term, invincible politico-military stance.

4. The Army interpreted a portion of “Guidelines for the Next Stage of the War,” i.e., (we shall) take decisive action at the first opportunity,” as a tactical suggestion or an expression of enthusiasm for the operation. But the Navy obviously believed that the phrase included the intention to launch operations in Australia and Hawaii to crush the enemy’s naval military strength and even to ruin its counteroffensive base. The subsequent Battle of Midway was clearly a result of this interpretation.⁵³

Success at Pearl Harbor disrupted all plans

It is not at all surprising that both Prime Minister Tojo and Operations Section Chief Lt. Gen. Tanaka Shin’ichi were troubled by the decision to adopt “Guidelines for the Next Stage of the War” on March 7. But then, why were they unable to dissuade naval officials from promoting operations that deviated from the *Draft Proposal*, which laid out the only strategy that would place the Navy on the victorious side? Additionally, why did the Naval General Staff, which had previously adopted a defensive stance against the US (as outlined in the *Draft Proposal*) for their basic strategy, shift to a decisive-frontal-battle philosophy, which contradicted the *Draft Proposal*?

⁵³ *Senshi Soshō* (War history series) 035 (Daihon’ei Rikugun bu 3) (Imperial General Headquarters, Army Division 3) [covers up to April 1942] (Tokyo: Asagumo Shinbunsha), 517-8.

It is my conviction that the change of direction can be traced directly to the dramatic success of the assault on Pearl Harbor, which was conducted even though there was great opposition to it, and which was masterminded by Yamamoto Isoroku, commander in chief of the Combined Fleet. It was the reason for a complete change in the Navy's approach. The Army, unable to resist, was dragged along by the Navy.

Yamamoto Isoroku had achieved godlike status. Of course, in a nation like Japan it would be unlikely for a dictator to be deified. In any case, Yamamoto did not become a dictator. Still, because he wielded so much influence, even high-ranking officers were loath to stand up to him. And even though the Naval General Staff was dead set against the Midway operation, they acquiesced when Yamamoto said he would resign if they failed to go through with it.

There was one more misfortune that arose in connection with the Pearl Harbor success —victory disease. Prof. James Wood cites it as the primary reason for Japan's defeat. It led to the following notion: "Now is the best time to confront the Americans head on! We will crush them. There is no need to worry about defense!" This mindset spread like wildfire and became entrenched. I agree with Prof. Wood; victory disease caused the Japanese to depart completely from their original, basic strategy.

Combined Fleet command and Naval General Staff become equals

Commander Yamamoto's forcefulness and victory disease combined to exert a tremendous influence on operations officers in the Army General Staff as well. The Army General Staff ended up agreeing to outrageous, expanded operations, such as the Port Moresby Operation, at a central liaison meeting, the result was the New Guinea tragedy.

As a matter of fact, the power Commander Yamamoto had acquired had begun to create strain and tension, even within the Navy. In the first place, supreme command of the Navy rested with the head of the Naval General Staff. That organization would draw up operation plans, and the Combined Fleet, which was responsible for acting on orders to execute those operations issued by the Naval General Staff, would be dispatched to fight battles. But perhaps readers have already noticed that the relationship between the Naval General Staff and the Combined Fleet command had become an equal one.

Please refer to Figure 12. You will see that right around the end of a first-phase operation, the Naval General Staff and the Combined Fleet command had differing concepts of that operation. Also, a time series analysis (the chronological order of events) tells us whether the Combined Fleet managed to push past resistance from the Naval General Staff.

The Combined Fleet command planned the Hawaii assault early on; the Midway operation became a logical next step. The Naval General Staff was dead set against Midway, but Yamamoto, who bears responsibility for the crushing defeat there, was not disciplined in any way by the Naval General Staff. He would have been dismissed at the very least, and even punished severely, if this had happened in another nation. But by then Yamamoto had been put on a pedestal; the Naval General Staff had been paralyzed by his aura.

Figure 12: Disagreement between Combined Fleet and Naval General Staff about operation concepts at end of Phase 1 operations

| Date | Combined Fleet | Naval General Staff |
|---------------|---|---|
| 12/09/1941 | Yamamoto Isoroku orders Naval General Staff to research operation plans for attacks on Hawaii and Ceylon | |
| 01/14/1942 | Ugaki Matome draws up plan for Hawaii attack; staff officers under Kuroshima Kameto draw up plan for Ceylon attack | |
| 01/27-28/1942 | | Army-Navy High Command Conference on Blocking Communications Between the US and Australia; agreement between Army and Navy General staffs Capture of Eastern New Guinea and the Solomon Islands |
| 01/29/1942 | | Order No. 47 from IGH* |
| 02/09/1942 | Decision made to attack Ceylon, then Hawaii | |
| 02/20-23/1942 | Map exercise of Ceylon attack commences | |
| 02/16-27/1942 | | Conference involving all staff members ranking section chief or below in Army-Navy General Staff. Navy recommends shift from protracted war to offensive strategy. They compromise, settling on FS** and MO*** operations; they reject Combined Fleet's Ceylon attack operation |
| 03/07/1942 | Decision made to adopt "Guidelines for the Next Stage of the War" (offensive operations already decided upon) | |
| 03/08/1942 | Combined Fleet informed that Ceylon attack operation has been rejected | |
| 3/27/1942 | Japan-Germany-Italy Joint Expert Commission meets; Germany and Italy ask Japanese Navy to disrupt Allied communications on the Indian Ocean | |
| 04/05-09/1942 | Japanese attack Ceylon | |
| 04/10/1942 | Carrier battle group ordered to conclude Phase 1 operations in Indian Ocean | |
| 05/08/1942 | Naval battle fought in Coral Sea in connection with MO operation; MO operation ends in failure | Naval General Staff approves operation |
| 06/05/1942 | Crushing defeat in Battle of Midway | |
| 06/21/1942 | Rommel's forces in North Africa capture Tobruk (key British position) | |
| 06/24/1942 | 4 th Fleet announces plan to reclaim base at Guadalcanal | |
| 07/07/1942 | | Decision made to halt Operation FS and proceed with Port Moresby overland offensive |
| 07/11/1942 | | Chiefs of Naval General Staff and Army General Staff report to Emperor about Indian Ocean operations |
| 08/07/1942 | US troops storm Guadalcanal Island | |

*Imperial General Headquarters

**Fiji-Samoa

***Port Moresby

Pearl Harbor strike: tactical victory, strategic defeat

The huge victory at Pearl Harbor energized the Japanese people, relieved their pent-up frustration, and instilled them with a new confidence. But that same confidence brought on victory disease and its disastrous consequences.

A friend, Mr. Kuchiishi Osamu, has written about battles planned by Commander Yamamoto, or with which he had some involvement. He has rated each one from two viewpoints: tactical victory and strategic defeat. See Figure 13 for his evaluation of the Pearl Harbor strike.

Pearl Harbor was, without a doubt, a tactical victory, a magnificent one. But what we learned later is that although the Japanese did sink five battleships and half-destroyed one more, only two were decommissioned. The remainder were recovered and repaired.

Figure 13: Pearl Harbor Strike: A Tactical Victory and Strategic Defeat⁵⁴

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Objective | <p>To cause the US Navy and the American public to lose, once and for all, their determination to wage war against the Japanese.</p> <p>Commander Yamamoto made the decision to attack without consulting the government, the Army, or the Foreign Ministry; the Naval General Staff gave formal consent after the fact.</p> |
| Tactical victory | <p>The surprise attack was accomplished by six Japanese carriers; of eight targeted battleships, five were sunk (including one disabled ship), two were half-destroyed, and one slightly damaged.</p> <p>However, only two (the <i>Arizona</i> and the <i>Oklahoma</i>) had to be scrapped. The other six were recovered and repaired.</p> |
| Strategic defeat | <p>Commander Yamamoto's objective notwithstanding, he ended up fueling the American people's bellicosity to an alarming extent.</p> <p>Storage tanks holding 4.5 million barrels of fuel oil were undamaged, enabling the Americans to conduct several months' worth of operations.</p> <p>Naval shipyard facilities were undamaged: six battleships sunk by the Japanese were repaired and used in naval gunfire support. The aircraft carrier <i>Yorktown</i>, later severely damaged in the Battle of the Coral Sea, required emergency repairs.</p> <p>The carrier <i>Enterprise</i> was at sea nearby at the time of the attack. A second strike aimed at the <i>Enterprise</i> never took place, and her task force was safe.</p> |

Mr. Kuchiishi also explains how (and why) Pearl Harbor was a strategic defeat. Since the base's oil tanks and shipyard were unharmed, the Americans were able to recover and launch a counteroffensive after a brief hiatus. But more critical is the fact that the original objective (cause the US Navy and the

⁵⁴ Kuchiishi Osamu, *Yamamoto Isoroku to teikoku kaigun (senjutsuteki shori to senryakuteki haiboku)* (Yamamoto Isoroku and the Japanese Imperial Navy: tactical victory and strategic defeat) (report submitted to Modern History Study Group).

American public to lose their determination to wage war against Japan) totally backfired on Yamamoto. Horrified by the attack and swayed by Roosevelt's cunning propaganda, the American people, 85% of whom had been opposed to war, were now up in arms, ready to "kill the Japs."

No insight gained from a visit to the US

Since Commander Yamamoto had spent some time in the US, he fancied himself a connoisseur of Americans, an illusion shared by his aides. In actuality, he never gained an understanding of Americans. He certainly didn't realize that they were not the sort of people to be cowed by an attack like Pearl Harbor.

On the contrary — Americans are wont to embark on vendetta campaigns: Remember the Alamo! Remember the Maine!

Obviously (and unfortunately), Yamamoto was not aware of this aspect of the American mentality.

Some are of the opinion that the blame rests on those who delayed presenting the declaration of war, not on Yamamoto. But if he had been aware of the American mindset and the power of public opinion (opposed to war at first), he would not have waited until the last minute to declare war. He would have consulted with the Foreign Ministry to ensure that the declaration would not be delayed.

Others think that it was impossible to issue a declaration of war with plenty of notice because Pearl Harbor was a surprise attack. Then, instead of launching a surprise attack that was a gamble at best, why not just brazenly attack the Philippines? As I demonstrated with my simulation in Chapter 3, that would have resulted in a much more advantageous war situation for the Japanese.

In the aforementioned war diary penned by Lt. Gen. Tanaka Shin'ichi, the writer states that the Navy favored decisive battles because "the only hope of winning the war was causing the Americans to lose the will to fight the Japanese." The whole issue boils down to Commander Yamamoto's mistaken judgement about the Americans, which the Navy swallowed whole.

Did Yamamoto Isoroku spy for the Americans?

Yamamoto Isoroku kept pushing forward with his operations: Pearl Harbor, Midway, Guadalcanal, as if he was hoping Japan would be defeated. Or at least, we can make that claim on the basis of his results. There are more than a few people who suspect that he was an American agent.

Surprisingly, even Hayashi Chikatsu, the author of the ground-breaking *Outbreak of War Between Japan and the US*, writes, "Some believe that Yamamoto Isoroku spied for the Americans. This writer has found no resources that would repudiate that accusation."⁵⁵

It is important to remember that whether the subject at hand is Pearl Harbor or another operation, no one thought they were misguided.

In retrospect, however, we can surmise that those operations sealed Japan's defeat, but that was certainly not the prevailing mood then. The Japanese people were wildly enthusiastic about them.

⁵⁵ Hayashi Chikatsu, *op. cit.*, 218.

Please allow me to digress for a moment to address the notion of espionage. It is my belief that people become spies for three reasons: (1) they are attracted by the promise of financial reward; (2) they are under duress of some sort (e.g., threats); and (3) they are motivated by reasons of conscience (ideology). Take the Sorge incident, which is a good example of (3). His informant Ozaki Hotsumi wanted Japan to fight an all-consuming war in China; then the USSR would deal the final blow, and then a revolution would ensue in defeated Japan. Ozaki himself admitted in court unashamedly that that was his plan. This was a strategy often used by the Comintern, which Ozaki embraced wholeheartedly.

Groundless suspicions of espionage and conspiracies: signs of idiocy

First of all, Commander Yamamoto would never have spied for monetary gain, so we can eliminate (1). Also, the mere notion of his participating in activities that might lead to his falling victim to blackmailers is absolutely ridiculous. It is impossible to say that there was no chance whatsoever of his being caught up in something of the sort. But if we consider the social environment in those times, we realize that there was very little likelihood that someone of Yamamoto's rank would become a target.

Could he have been blackmailed into arranging for the Combined Fleet operations to fail? Yamamoto was not the only person involved in the operations, so we must reject this ridiculous accusation as well.

As for (3), Yamamoto as Comintern agent: another impossibility, given the prevailing ideological environment. Besides, there is no evidence to support this accusation.

Some may think he was a Freemason, which is a possibility. But Freemasonry gained popularity as a group of organizations that served as an international social club for upper-class men; quite a few Japanese notables were members. Freemasons did not adhere to a strict hierarchy or chain of command. In such an organization, schemes like those conceived by the Comintern would not be possible.

Are Yamamoto's detractors claiming that he became a fanatical adherent of Freemason thinking, and a spy in his determination to destroy Japan? There is no evidence that supports such an idiotic accusation, so we must dismiss it.

The trouble with these espionage and conspiracy accusations is that no one bothers to investigate them. The "theorists" simply make up their minds in a vacuum and pronounce Yamamoto guilty. No further thought. Problem solved. This is suspension of disbelief (or more accurately, suspension of thought).

The real reason for Yamamoto's failures

Yamamoto Isoroku is remembered today as an enlightened member of the Japanese Navy elite. He is also remembered as a pioneer who steered the Navy from its traditional big-ship, big-guns policy to one that gave precedence to aircraft.

It is very possible that Yamamoto had outstanding perception, tactical knowledge, and operational capability, as far as naval battles were concerned. But he had many failings when it came to strategic concepts.

Figure 13 shows that the Pearl Harbor attack was a tactical victory but a strategic defeat. However, Mr. Kuchiishi's paper also analyzes 10 other operations in which Yamamoto was involved. He demonstrates that there were quite a few tactical victories, but the vast majority of them were strategic defeats.

Operation I-Go,⁵⁶ conducted April 7-14, 1943, was the last operation overseen by Commander Yamamoto. It involved an air attack launched from Rabaul to Guadalcanal. His men used 190 aircraft from a land-based air unit and 160 landed from a carrier, for a total of 350 aircraft.

Normally an aircraft carrier is used to assemble planes at a location near a faraway enemy base. However, the strategy of landing planes from a carrier and using them together with land-based aircraft is extremely problematic. Though the pilots who would fly them possessed skills that ordinary pilots lacked, using them together was very wasteful. Later on there was a sharp decrease in the number of airmen who could fly from carriers.

Additionally, at the time Yamamoto had access to plenty of aircraft carriers; why didn't he put them to use?

“Send 5 divisions to Guadalcanal all at once”

In *Why Did the Imperial Japanese Navy Suffer Defeat?* Navy General Staff officer Yoshida Toshio writes that on the occasion of the Battle of Guadalcanal, Commander Yamamoto Isoroku telegraphed the following report to Headquarters:

For the upcoming hostilities, the Army and Navy must sufficiently prepare their forces and their minds, just as they did in Phase 1 operations, and then confront the enemy.

The Army must provide five elite divisions from the outset (*italics mine*).⁵⁷

Five divisions?! It does make sense to approach a battle with as much manpower as possible, but the Americans had landed only one division on Guadalcanal. And more is not always better. What was this nonsense Yamamoto was spewing like an irrational child? Did he even consult a map? Did Yamamoto believe that Guadalcanal was a strategic, critical location that would determine the course of the rest of the war? If so, he was a poorer strategist than I thought. His telegram reveals the astonishing truth for all to see.

Had anyone thought of the need for supplies?

In Chapter 3, I.2., to illustrate the principle “war potential is inversely proportional to the square of the distance from base to battle site,” I cite the Battle of Guadalcanal, explaining that the problem was one of supply and of exceeding the offensive terminal point.

The Japanese finally landed two divisions (30,000 men) at Guadalcanal, but very little in the way of heavy weapons or provisions. Consequently, 5,000 of those men were killed in action, but 15,000 starved to death. Ten thousand sailors managed to escape with their lives, but looked like wraiths when they were repatriated. This same principle tells us that the distance from Rabaul (1,000 kilometers) is prohibitive, when it comes to transport and the delivery of supplies within the enemy's sphere of

⁵⁶ Operation I-Go was a Navy operation that took place April 7-15, 1943. It was an air attack executed by the 11th Air Fleet and carrier-based aircraft attached to the 3rd Fleet. Targets were Guadalcanal, Port Moresby (in southeast New Guinea), Oro Bay, and Milne Bay.

⁵⁷ Yoshida Toshio, *Nihon teikoku kaigun wa naze yabureta ka* (Why did the Imperial Japanese Navy suffer defeat?) (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 1995).

influence.

If Yamamoto had been even minimally aware of what is involved in supplying troops, he would have been aware of the difficulties involved in transporting five divisions to Guadalcanal Island. But whatever the case, his order specified landing five divisions there in one fell swoop. Transport and supply are strategic linchpins in a world war. But Commander Yamamoto was woefully ignorant in this respect.

And for that reason, the strategy employed during the attack on Midway Island comes to mind. If the Japanese had managed to occupy it, how would they have supplied their troops? It seems that they did not give much consideration to that aspect. Furthermore, they should have been thinking about how to prevent the enemy from receiving supplies. That apparently wasn't part of the thought process, either. I don't believe I'm exaggerating when I say that the only aspect of waging war in their minds was fighting battles.

Commander Yamamoto derailed Japan's basic strategy not because he was a spy, but because his notions of strategy were flawed. And he wasn't the only one; there were others in the Navy with the same deficiencies. The Navy was accustomed to loading all necessary supplies into a ship, fighting a battle, and then returning home. Perhaps it is not surprising that its leaders did not give the proper weight to the supply aspect of logistics. But it is hard to forgive their failure to realize that they may under no circumstances exceed the offensive terminal point.

Why did the Army defer to the Navy?

As stated earlier, on February 16 and 27 everyone in the Army and Navy Operations sections in the Supreme Command ranking section chief or below participated in a joint research conference. Army personnel submitted their ideas for Phase 2 operations in accordance with the *Draft Proposal*, while Navy personnel favored head-on decisive battles designed to destroy the enemy's counteroffensive positions. The Navy's proposals were adopted in almost every case.

Those present agreed to attack the Port Moresby base on the Australian side of New Guinea, which was why the Army got mired in that bottomless swamp. The Guadalcanal defeat and the war of attrition were instigated by the Navy, but the Army had given its agreement on that. The Navy bore the bulk of the responsibility, though, because it had not given sufficient thought to the timing or the war situation; it simply proceeded to construct an air base on Guadalcanal.

This agreement among lower-ranking officers, reached at the Liaison Conference on March 7, took the form of "Guidelines for the Next Stage of the War," but as stated earlier, both Prime Minister Tojo and Operations Chief Tanaka Shin'ichi had misgivings about it. Nevertheless, since their subordinates had agreed upon it at a joint conference, they were helpless to object. Their worst fears had been realized, for they were about to plunge into a war that bore absolutely no resemblance to the *Draft Proposal*.

Why, then, did Army staff officers and their subordinates allow themselves to be led around by the Navy?

One reason is, as mentioned previously, that the Army did not have a firm grasp of the *Draft Proposal*. Also, they were overwhelmed by the great success at Pearl Harbor. The Army had its triumphs as well, landing on the Malay peninsula and heading straight for Singapore, which fell on February 15. Strategically, the capture of Singapore was exponentially more valuable than Pearl Harbor, though not as dramatic.

Accompanied by the strains of the "Warship March," reports of magnificent victories continued to emanate from the Navy Section of Imperial General Headquarters. The impact was huge, much greater

than it had been for the Army. The Japanese public was wildly enthusiastic about the Navy's spirited fighting.

Recommendations that Phase 2 operations focus on preparing an invincible defense do imply a certain passivity. Perhaps that is why Army staff officers found themselves acquiescing to the successful Navy's aggressive proposals. As I mentioned previously, Commander Yamamoto's feat at Pearl Harbor and the influence of his power were decisive factors.

Hyperbole in Navy's war reports

The Navy accomplished some sensational victories: Pearl Harbor, and the sinking of the British battleships *HMS Prince of Wales* and *HMS Repulse* off the coast of Malaya by dint of Japanese air power alone. But announcements of subsequent "great victories" became increasingly exaggerated. Furthermore, since these amplifications made the Navy look better and better, the Army had no choice but to follow the Navy's lead and stretch the truth in their reports.

Figure 14 shows the extent to which statistics issued by the Navy Section of Imperial General Headquarters⁵⁸ for 12 naval engagements were exaggerated. However, we must be mindful that it is quite difficult to get accurate figures for the number of enemy ships sunk or destroyed in naval battles, which can cover huge expanses of water. Also, since aircraft operate in even larger spaces and move at high speed, it is even more difficult to gauge the results of their activity.

However, a commanding officer must have the ability to grasp such information, and accurately so. When that ability weakens, reports of military gains gradually become overly optimistic. Then there is pride, which induces commanders to report favorable results. In other words, it is human to exaggerate.

And once you report a huge military gain, of course you want subsequent reports to be just as commendable. Consequently, figures provided by pilots were assumed to be accurate; they were not subject to careful scrutiny.

Even so, a look at Figure 14 tells us that the exaggeration of military achievements got out of hand. We also notice that as time went on, the hyperbole grew more frequent. However, Combined Fleet Chief of Staff Rear Admiral Ugaki Matome wrote in his war diary that "the fleet distinguished itself on many occasions during the effort to retake Guadalcanal. It was an annoying situation — no matter how many we shot down, the enemy never seemed to run out of planes." Adm. Ugaki seems to have believed that there had been a great victory.⁵⁹

Figure 14: Exaggerated Reports of Battle Outcomes from IGH*

1. Battle of the Coral Sea (May 7-8, 1942): Port Moresby offensive operation

| | Reported results | Actual results |
|--|------------------|----------------|
|--|------------------|----------------|

⁵⁸ Today the term "Imperial General Headquarters Announcement" is often used to describe an exaggerated claim. The correct term for this purpose is "Announcement Issued by Imperial General Headquarters, Navy Section." During the war, Army Section announcements were closer to the truth. Therefore, I think it is unwise to use Imperial General Headquarters Announcement to mean an inflated claim that cannot be trusted.

⁵⁹ Ogawa Kanji and Yokoi Toshiyuki, eds., *Sensoroku: Ugaki Matome* (War diary of Ugaki Matome), vols. 1 and 2 (Tokyo: Nihon Shuppan Kyodo, 1952:1953).

| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| Aircraft carriers | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Battleships | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Heavy cruisers | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Light cruisers | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Destroyers | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Oil tankers | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Aircraft | 98 (shot down) | | 69 (shot down) | |

*Imperial General Headquarters

2. Battle of Midway (June 4, 1942)

| | Reported results | | Actual results | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|-----------|
| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |
| Aircraft carriers | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Heavy cruisers | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Destroyers | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Aircraft | 150 (shot down or damaged) | | 150 (shot down or damaged) | |
| (Damage incurred by the Japanese) | | | | |
| Aircraft carriers | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| Aircraft | 35 (shot down or damaged) | | 322 (shot down or damaged) | |

3. First Battle of the Solomon Sea (August 7, 1942) Recapture Guadalcanal operation

| | Reported results | | Actual results | |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |
| Heavy cruisers | 8 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Light cruisers | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Destroyers | 9 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Submarines | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Transport ships | 10 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Aircraft | 58 (shot down) | | 21 (shot down) | |

4. Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands (August 25 – October 26, 1942): Battle of the Eastern Solomons

| | Reported results | | Actual results | |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |
| Aircraft carriers | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Battleships | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Cruisers | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Destroyers | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Aircraft | 200 (shot down) | | 74 (shot down) | |

5. Third Battle of Savo Island (November 12-14, 1942)

| | Reported results | | Actual results | |
|----------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |
| Battleships | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Heavy cruisers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Light cruisers | 8 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Destroyers | 5 | 4 | 7 | 2 |

6. Battle of Rennell Island (January 29-30, 1943)

| | Reported results | | Actual results | |
|--|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| Battleships | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Cruisers | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Destroyers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

7. Operation I-Go (April 7-15, 1943)

| | Reported results | | Actual results | |
|--|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |
| Cruisers | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Destroyers | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Corvettes | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Transport ships | 19 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| Aircraft | 134 (shot down) | | 25 (shot down) | |
| Japanese aircraft attrition: 61 planes | | | | |

8. Aerial battles over Bougainville (November 5 – December 3, 1943)

| | Reported results | | Actual results | |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |
| Aircraft carriers | 5 | 2 | Close to 0 | Close to 0 |
| Battleships | 1 | 2 | Close to 0 | Close to 0 |
| Cruisers | 4 | 5 | Close to 0 | Close to 0 |
| Destroyers | 2 | 2 | Close to 0 | Close to 0 |

9. Aerial battles over Gilbert Islands (Kiribati) (November 19-29, 1943)

| | Reported results | | Actual results | |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |
| Aircraft carriers | 7 | 4 | Close to 0 | Close to 0 |
| Battleships | 0 | 1 | Close to 0 | Close to 0 |
| Cruisers | 2 | 2 | Close to 0 | Close to 0 |
| Destroyers | 2 | 1 | Close to 0 | Close to 0 |

10. Battle of the Philippine Sea (June 19-20, 1944)

| | Reported results | | Actual results | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |
| Aircraft carriers | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| Battleships | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Damage incurred by Japan | | Damage incurred by US | |
| Aircraft carriers | 3 sunk | 4 slightly or moderately damaged | 2 slightly damaged | |
| Battleships | 1 slightly damaged | | 2 slightly damaged | |
| Cruisers | 1 slightly damaged | | 2 slightly damaged | |
| Aircraft | 476 lost | | 130 lost | |

11. Formosa Aerial Battle (October 12-16, 1944)

| | Reported results | | Actual results | |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |
| Aircraft carriers | 11 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Battleships | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Cruisers | 3 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| Cruisers/destroyers | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Warship type unknown | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 |

12. Battle of Leyte Gulf (October 24-26, 1944)

| | Reported results | | Actual results | |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| | Sunk | Destroyed | Sunk | Destroyed |
| Aircraft carriers | 8 | 9 | 3 | 1 |
| Battleships | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Cruisers | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Destroyers | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Aircraft | 500 (shot down) | | 125 (shot down) | |

In the last operation Commander Yamamoto oversaw, (7.) the I-Go Operation, the Japanese did not sink even one enemy cruiser. But the report makes claims to the contrary. Similarly, the report states that they sank 19 transport ships, when the correct number is two. The worst overstatement is the claim that they shot down 134 aircraft, when in reality, they shot down only 25. In other words, that operation produced almost no military gains. Military authorities believed that there had been a great victory. Yamamoto even received a commendation from the Emperor! He had intended to visit the soldiers on the front line and tell them about the commendation to raise morale. But on his way there he was ambushed and killed, almost as if to take responsibility for his own self-indulgence.

The report issued after the Battle of Midway stated that only one Japanese carrier was lost, even though four were sunk. The Japanese lost 322 aircraft, but the report said 35 (10% of the actual number). If the hyperbole was intended to keep morale at home from weakening (even so, it was still unforgiveable), the Army was given only the figures in the report. Since the Supreme Command of the Army and Navy were separate chains, the Navy was not obligated to report to the Army.

There is no evidence that the exaggerated gains were ever doubted by the Army until the very end of the war. Aroused by the spate of reports of great naval triumphs, the Army got caught up in the enthusiasm, and embraced the same decisive-battle doctrine. Army Staff Officer Lt. Col. Tsuji Masanobu went so far as to issue an order to “explore the overland route, together with Navy personnel already in place, in connection with the capture of Port Moresby.” Even though the results of reconnaissance had not been revealed, he issued an attack order.

Naval Zero aviator Sakai Saburo, dubbed the Attack Pilot King, commented as follows:

We did reconnaissance of that area any number of times, but it wouldn't have been possible for advancing units to use it. I reported to that effect, but a staff officer of the 25th Air Flotilla reported that there was a one-lane-wide path, which was a complete lie.⁶⁰

In the end, the Army became an accessory to the Navy; the decisive-battle doctrine had taken hold.

Most egregious instance of hyperbole: aerial battle off Taiwan

The most egregiously inflated battle reports were released after the aerial battle off Taiwan fought October 12-16, 1944. At home in Japan everyone was thrilled to learn that their men had scored a great victory, sinking 11 carriers, 2 battleships, and 3 cruisers. But in actuality, they had sunk no battleships, no cruisers, and certainly no carriers. Worst of all, Army staff officers believed that there had been a phenomenal victory, even at that late date.

⁶⁰ Sato, *op. cit.*, 83.

General Staff Headquarters assumed that thanks to the military feats of the Navy, the enemy's task force had been annihilated. Headquarters had been preparing for a decisive battle in Luzon, but on the basis of the "victory" off Taiwan, they made a mammoth shift in strategy. Then they ordered the 14th Area Army, which had been preparing for the Luzon hostilities by positioning its troops, building fortifications, and completing an airfield, in order to be prepared for a showdown on Leyte. Commander Yamashita Tomoyuki protested vehemently, but to no avail. He hurriedly shifted his men and his preparations as ordered.

But they were attacked on the way there, so were never able to even establish a base. Their fighting ability weakened, and they were soundly defeated. The enemy carrier battle group, which had supposedly been annihilated, was in fine shape, and proceeded to launch a powerful aerial attack.

Looking at these embellished reports after the fact, I find it hard to believe that no one doubted them, especially because the course of the war thus far made them seem all the more unbelievable. But that was the reality of the time.

Possible violation of Emperor's position as commander in chief

The independence of the supreme command prerogative is one of the salient features of the Meiji constitutional system. The Meiji Constitution arose from a warrior-led feudal culture that had prevailed for centuries. But because of the world situation at that time, its drafters wanted to extricate Japan from that era to prevent powerful forces from interfering in or gaining control of military affairs. Accordingly, independence of the supreme command prerogative had little connection with Japanese tradition.

Rather, this is an instance of a presupposition's taking precedence. It appears that the idea of supreme command prerogative as a symbol of the Emperor's absolute authority had gained wide acceptance. Executive power and supreme-command authority within the bounds of sovereignty ultimately reverted to the Emperor. But in actuality, the prime minister and his subordinate ministers assisted the Emperor by doing the actual work required of the executive branch; the Emperor would then approve whatever they had accomplished.

A system that combined executive power and supreme-command authority should have been established as time wore on. But the idea that no permanent code of law should ever be altered (that one must never doubt the absoluteness of supreme command) prevailed, and a presupposition notion became conventional wisdom.

Then in 1930 an incident occurred involving possible violation of the Emperor's supreme command prerogative. This was essentially a dispute between the Ministry of the Navy (which was entrusted with overall management and governance within the Navy) and the Naval General Staff (which was in charge of the military command). During negotiations for the London Naval Treaty (signed on April 22, 1930), the Japanese government requested 70% of the tonnage allotted to the Americans, and the Ministry of the Navy compromised at 67.5%. The Naval General Staff expressed its dissatisfaction with those figures and announced its intention to submit a direct appeal to the Emperor.⁶¹

⁶¹ This was a political dispute relating to the conclusion of the London Naval Treaty for the Reduction of Naval Armament. The London Naval Conference began in January 1930. After difficult negotiations, a compromise plan was reached between Japan and the US on March 13. The head of the Naval General Staff, Kato Kanji and others requested abrogation because the "three great principles" had not been included. But Prime Minister Hamaguchi Osachi, with the cooperation of Adm. Okada Keisuke and others, obtained the agreement of the Navy General Staff, sent instructions, and the treaty was signed on April 22. However, Kato pointed out defects in naval strategy and conveyed them to the Emperor. At a special Diet session held on April 23, opposition party Seiyukai representatives stated that by not incorporating the

Since decisions regarding the scale of military forces fell under the Emperor's prerogative over the organization and administration of the armed forces, the ministers of the Army and Navy gave the Emperor advice; in other words, these matters fell within the jurisdiction of the ministers of the Army and Navy. The Naval General Staff claimed that they were in *its* jurisdiction, because it bore the responsibility for the supreme command, and they would guard against flaws in operations, even if it meant ignoring past precedents.

But in the end, this was an internal naval dispute, and had no connection with the Emperor's authority. Nor did the Emperor ever complain that he was dissatisfied because someone had infringed upon his authority. In other words, the Naval General Staff broached the subject of the Emperor's authority, which had become a presumption, because they wanted to get their way. Bringing up the Emperor's authority in order to advance one's position, is arguably the height of disloyalty. It is wrong to interpret this as government vs. supreme authority, or government versus the Emperor's sovereign authority.

As far as the relationship among the Emperor, the military, and the government is concerned, there is one thing I am unable to comprehend even now. That concerns the rule stating that ministers of the Army and Navy must be officers on active duty. This rule was abolished during Prime Minister Yamamoto Gonbee's administration (1913-14, 1923-24), but was revived during the administration of Hirota Koki (1936-37). It states that even someone appointed minister of the Army or Navy by a candidate for prime minister could be rejected if the military disliked him, and that is how the military came to control politics.

But the Emperor chose the prime-ministerial candidate by issuing an imperial command. It would seem that if the Army or Navy rejected a candidate chosen by the Emperor, they would be committing an act of disloyalty. Therefore, I wonder why this type of situation was tolerated and not given a second thought. It looks as though a presumption, once formed, began to resemble the abnormal hypertrophy of the supreme command authority.

Split in supreme command authority of Army and Navy

At a liaison conference held by the Japanese government and Imperial General Headquarters, those present officially approved the *Draft Proposal for Hastening the End of War Against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek*. In this book I have presented my opinions about the failure of the Japanese military to abide by it, instead waging a war that in no way resembled it. I have found reasons for some deviations from the *Draft Proposal* that I can accept, some more than others. But at the heart of the matter lurks a huge problem.

No one on the staff of Imperial General Headquarters or among the attendees of liaison conferences between Imperial General Headquarters and the government had the authority to enforce decisions. Imperial General Headquarters comprised the Army General Staff Office (supreme command of the Army) and the Naval General Staff (supreme command of the Navy). But no one involved in these bodies issued orders to take action on a decision reached at an Imperial General Headquarters conference. Therefore, both the Army and Navy implemented decisions that had been made according to their own preferences on some occasions (or failed to implement them on others). Also, since the Army and Navy had separate supreme command authority, they reported to the Emperor separately.

Perhaps readers will think, "What is your objection? After all, the Emperor is at the top of the chain of command." But the Emperor simply grants the final approval; he does not issue orders with specific or

opinion of the Naval General Staff, the government was infringing on the Emperor's supreme command. Right-wing members also harshly criticized the government.

functional instructions. It seems that many people misunderstand his role, but he was not a dictator or absolute monarch. Participating in the liaison conferences were Imperial General Headquarters, the prime minister, and key government officials. That is why they were called liaison conferences.

A major flaw of the Meiji Constitution was its failure to have the government participate in the supreme command authority. But more than that, the problem was that the supreme command authority governing the Army and Navy was completely separate. I often hear it said that the relationship between the Army and Navy was a rocky one, but we are not talking about a tea party. When a nation is waging war, it is vital to know whose orders take precedence.

In actuality, under the Meiji Constitution during the 1st Sino-Japanese War, according to wartime Imperial General Headquarters regulations, the chief of the Naval General Staff was subordinate to the chief of the Army General Staff. In other words, the chief of the Army General Staff enjoyed the right to issue orders to both the Army and Navy. During the Russo-Japanese War, Admiral Yamamoto Gonbee⁶², unhappy with this system, submitted a proposal requesting that equal status be afforded to the two branches of the military. At that point in history, fortunately, so-called elder statesmen took it upon themselves to help the Army and Navy to reach agreements, so major problems were avoided.

But during the Greater East Asian War, as we have seen, there was no one who could fulfill that function. Without someone who could unify the two forces and issue orders, errors were made and some perfectly good strategies were wasted.

As I mentioned earlier, Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, and Chiang all had unchecked power, and thus held sway over the armies and navies of the nations they controlled. But Japan not only lacked a ruler with unchecked power; it also lacked an entity that could jointly oversee both its army and navy.

Why Saipan fell so quickly

One instance in which the lack of a coordinating authority caused great harm was Saipan. The largest island in the Marianas, Saipan held the key to the defense of the archipelago. It was also a strategic point, a last line of defense for the homeland. Readers may recall that in Chapter 3 I provided part of Lt. Gen. Ishiware Kanji's response to questions from UPI and AP reporters. Here is an expanded version.

I said that we needed to strengthen islands near Japan (Saipan, Tinian, and Guam) until they were impregnable. We should fortify them to the point where we could prevail for any number of years. Furthermore, we should have made a concerted effort to resolve the China Incident (2nd Sino-Japanese War) through diplomacy.

We should have taken special care to make Saipan invulnerable. If we had done that, US troops could not have advanced that far. If they hadn't captured Saipan, they couldn't have bombed Japan proper.⁶³

Then, how far did the Japanese get with safeguarding Saipan? The main strength of the 43rd Division,

⁶² Yamamoto was a native of Satsuma Province (today Kagoshima Prefecture), who became a very influential figure. He rose to the rank of admiral and served as the 11th, 12th, and 13th Minister of the Navy, as the 16th and 22nd prime minister, and as the 37th minister of foreign affairs.

⁶³ Takagi Kiyohisa, *Toa no Chichi: Ishiware Kanji* (The father of East Asia: Ishiware Kanji) (Tokyo: Kinbun Shobo, 1985).

ordered to perform that task, landed on Saipan approximately two weeks prior to the enemy's arrival.

Army fortification specialists were sent to investigate the situation in the Marianas. They reported that units already there had not built anything resembling a fortified military camp. Construction work began immediately, but the enemy attacked before much progress had been made.

Prior to the US Army's landing, supported by air attacks and naval gunfire, the Japanese were unable to put up much of a fight. Twenty-one days after the enemy landed, on July 6, 1944, the Saipan garrison committed suicide *en masse*.

Because of the split between Army and Navy supreme command, the Pacific Ocean became the domain of the Navy. Therefore, the Army was unable to send troops to Pacific islands until requested by the Navy. To begin with, fortifying Saipan, a crucial base in the Marianas and a strategic point in the defense of Japan proper, should have been done during the latter half of first-phase operations. But the Navy ignored it, attacking the outer islands instead.

Even so, I find it odd that Prime Minister Tojo was forced to take responsibility for the fall of Saipan by resigning. Odd, because it was Navy elders who orchestrated the collapse of the Tojo Cabinet. I suppose it never occurred to them that they were the responsible parties.

Violation of absolute defense perimeter

Furthermore, on September 24, 1943 when the overall war situation was worsening for Japan, the concept of an absolute defense perimeter strategy was adopted at a government-Imperial General Headquarters liaison conference.

The idea was to shrink the military front and, after firming up the defense, counterattack.

For that reason, the South Pacific Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Guam, had to be fortified immediately so they would be unassailable. But the Navy paid no attention to that directive; nor did they ask the Army for assistance. In March 1944 an Army advance party landed on Saipan, but the main strength of the assigned unit did not arrive until June had come and gone.

In other words, in the year following the decision to create an absolute defense perimeter, the objectives had not been met, even though there was enough time.

As it was, Saipan, the greatest fortress in the Marianas, fell in about 20 days.

If, as Ishiwara stated, Saipan had been transformed into an impregnable fortress, what would have happened? Since there was a year's leeway, fortification was certainly possible.

If the Japanese had been prepared, how difficult would it have been to breach Saipan? Here are three examples that will answer this question: Biak, Peleliu, and Iwo Jima.

Biak

Biak is an island just off the western edge of New Guinea, on the route to the Philippines. It was an important island in 1944. On May 27 of that year MacArthur's invading troops reached the island.

The Japanese garrison defending Biak was the 10,000-strong 22nd Infantry Regiment commanded by Col. Kuzume Naoyuki. They had good fortune in the form of five months until the enemy landed, during which time they fortified the island by preparing a network of underground caves and tunnels.

Accompanied by bombardment and shelling, the Americans landed, 30,000 of them (one and a half divisions). But the Americans were unable to build even a bridgehead, and withdrew to the seas to plan a new attack. MacArthur replaced Maj. Gen. Horace Fuller with Robert Eichelberger as commander, and the Americans made another landing. The Kuzume unit defended Biak for more than a month, until July 1, when its men committed suicide.

Peleliu

Peleliu is an island off the western side of Palau; the Japanese Navy had an air base there. Adm. Chester Nimitz, who had been entrusted with the recapture of the Philippines, launched an attack targeting the air base. The Japanese garrison, comprising some 10,000 men and led by Col. Nakagawa Kunio, commander of the 2nd Infantry Regiment from Mito, fought with all its might. Its men repelled the 20,000-strong 1st Marine Division, then fought a pitched battle against the 1st Army Division for 71 days. The Americans had boasted that they would clean the place up in two or three days, but they were now facing their most difficult opponents in the Pacific. Even after



Figure 15: Commander in Chief Nimitz's encomium to the Japanese military men who defended Peleliu.

the organized aspects of the 71-day battle had ended, the commando unit continued to fight until the war ended.

How was this possible? Col. Nakagawa had completely fortified the island over a period of four months. That is the beauty of fortification. The island is 13 square kilometers in area, and its highest mountain is 50 meters above sea level. Those were the conditions, and they enabled the Japanese to fortify the island, which made it possible to fight such a battle.

Chester Nimitz, commander of the enemy forces, wrote an encomium citing the bravery of the Japanese soldiers. A monument with the English text, along with a Japanese translation, on it stands in memory

to the troops of both sides, on Peleliu Island (see Figure 15).

Iwo Jima

Since the Americans needed an airfield for takeoffs and landings of escort fighter planes for the B-29s used to bomb Japanese targets, the Americans decided to attempt the capture of Iwo Jima. On February 19, 1945 they began their landing. Engaging the American forces were Lt. Gen. Kuribayashi Tadamichi and his 13,000 troops, reinforced by 7,000 Navy men. They resisted the Americans bravely, using the caves and tunnels they had prepared to advantage. For one month and eight days, they fought the Americans, inflicting more damage than they suffered. The surviving Japanese soldiers committed suicide.

Their resistance was possible because Lt. Gen. Kuribayashi, who had been named commander of the Ogasawara Corps in June 1944, decided to fortify the island by digging tunnels rather than preparing a beach defense, which was the usual method. And they had time to accomplish the task.

Iwo Jima is about twice as large as Peleliu, with an area of 24 square kilometers. It has a mountain with an altitude of 170 meters. But it was very difficult to dig tunnels there because of the volcanic soil. Even so, once the fortification had been planned, it turned out to have

considerable defensive strength. Saipan has five times the area of Iwo Jima, and a mountain that is 473 meters high. If it had been fortified, the Japanese could have held out for at least six months. Unfortunately, it had not, and fell in 20 days.

As I mentioned earlier, one's point of view notwithstanding, this was not Prime Minister Tojo's fault. But the Tojo Cabinet was forced to take responsibility for the fall of Saipan by resigning.

As Ishiwara Kanji indicated, if Saipan had not fallen, B-29s could not have bombed Japan. Some time ago, someone came up and said to me, full of confidence, "The US had the atomic bomb, so Japan was bound to lose the war, no matter what." But if, as Ishiwara said, Saipan, Tinian, and Guam had been fortified, the Americans would have had great difficulty capturing them. And in that case, they couldn't have firebombed Tokyo, and they could forget about their atomic bomb.

Defense of Pacific islands required Army-Navy cooperation

If the strategy for the defense of the Marianas, as Ishiwara Kanji urged, had been one where the supreme command of the Army and Navy worked hand in hand, it probably would have been possible to proceed in the direction suggested by Ishiwara. It certainly would not have been impossible in terms of financial, technical, manpower, or temporal resources. Defense of the Pacific islands was the jurisdiction of the Navy. The Army didn't make a move until asked by the Navy. That is how the separation between the two branches worked, and how the trouble began. With such an arrangement it was not possible to protect the Pacific Ocean.

After all, without a long, hard look at the separation of supreme command, it is impossible to take a correspondingly thorough look at the way the war was conducted. I think more than a few readers will agree with me.

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 then 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.⁶⁴

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.

Takemura Tadao was absolutely unrivaled as far as knowledge about the Nazi controlled economy and the theory behind it was concerned. He was eminently able to gauge Germany's ability 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

⁶⁴ Hayashi, *op. cit.*, 20.

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.⁶⁵

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.⁶⁶

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*.

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

⁶⁵ Hayashi, *op. cit.*, 250-253.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 125.

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*,⁶⁷ 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.

⁶⁷ 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).

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 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 US-UK Allied 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.⁶⁸

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 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

⁶⁸ Rofu was a pen name bestowed on Akimaru by a poetry society.

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.⁶⁹

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.

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.⁷⁰

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."⁷¹

D. Total War Research Institute

⁶⁹ Hayashi, *op. cit.*, 27-32.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 32-33, 35-37.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 33-35, 37-39.

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.⁷²

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.

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. On that occasion he did not say 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.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 159-160.

Figure 16: Comparison of Japanese and US Economies⁷³

| 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 |

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.⁷⁴

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.⁷⁵

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 facts

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.

⁷³ Iwakuro Hideo, *Showa rikugun: boryaku hishi* (Japanese Army in the Showa era: secret history of intrigues) (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbun Shuppansha, 2015).

⁷⁴ 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.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 139.

It is likely that those who were most embarrassed by these revelations were economists and historians connected 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 sham 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. For the most part, they reported 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 and they would face professional ruin.

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 Unit’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? That date marked the 70th 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 Japan’s fortunes would enter a downward curve, while those of the UK and US would begin to rise. 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 current perceptions firmly entrenched, the conclusion of the war was disastrous.

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 — a dearth of 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 edges 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 was vast, 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, producing 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.”⁷⁶

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 31st US President Herbert Hoover

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Herbert Hoover, the 31st 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*

⁷⁶ Edward T. Imparato, ed., *General MacArthur Speeches and Reports 1908-1964* (Nashville: Turner Publishing Co., 2000), 170-71.

*War Between Japan and the US?*⁷⁷ Subsequently, in 2018, Watanabe Soki translated the book in its entirety; it was published by Soshisha.

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.⁷⁸

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 of "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 Hoover Institution, a first-class think tank.

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 50th 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 have been.

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

⁷⁷ Japanese title is *Nichibei senso wo okoshita no ha dare ka*, published by Bensei Shuppan (Tokyo).

⁷⁸ Hoover, *op. cit.*, 833.

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 survey's "judgment" ("shipping capability between the UK and the US is a weak point, 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 to advantage 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.⁷⁹

It would seem at first glance that the author has assumed a rather fair stance. Unfortunately, Makino ignores the fact that Arisawa and Akimaru provided the foundation for the *Draft Proposal*. He refuses to recognize the untruths that came into existence during the postwar period (that Arisawa and Akimaru were trying to prevent the war) as what they most definitely are — lies. Just like other postwar intellectual turncoats, they were attempting to rationalize their newly created views, but they were 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,

⁷⁹ Makino, *op. cit.*, 102-3.

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, Makino 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.

(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 had executed the already scheduled Western Asia operations in July 1942, Rommel would have defeated the British Navy at the Suez Canal 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 was 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.

I hope readers understand that 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.

(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 proved to be both 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 German Economic War Potential is significant. Even if Japan broadened the battlefield 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, though we may find that part of the argument is based on fact, we must discredit that argument to avoid becoming accomplices to those 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 31st US president, wrote in *Freedom Betrayed*, "[T]he whole Japanese war was a madman's desire to get into war."⁸⁰

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 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

⁸⁰ Hoover, *op. cit.*, 833.

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 often seems interminable, but I believe that justice will prevail.

AFTERWORD

I imagine that your reaction (and that of most readers, for that matter, when they first saw the title of this book, *Japan's Master Plan for Victory*), was disbelief. Perhaps you wondered, "What lunatic was responsible for this nonsense?"

Did your disbelief persist as you read on? Or did your first impression change as you realized that there was another aspect to the war that was totally unfamiliar to you?

As I stated in the Foreword, Japan's master plan for victory was a grand design for war. Entitled *Draft Proposal for Hastening the End of War Against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek*, it was adopted at a liaison conference between the Japanese government and Imperial General Headquarters on November 15, 1941, three weeks before the Pearl Harbor attack.

The essence of this master plan is set forth in the *Draft Proposal's* first strategic principle:

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.

Moreover, the second paragraph of Tactic I, which describes methods to be used against the US, reads as follows:

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.

Unfortunately, soon after war broke out, the Japanese launched an assault on Pearl Harbor, a complete departure from the master plan for victory. The phenomenal success of that operation brought about a shift in Japanese strategy, which for all intents and purposes abandoned the master plan. Consequently, a tremendous amount of war potential was squandered on the vast Pacific Ocean, and the Indian Ocean operation, absolutely crucial to a Japanese victory, was doomed to oblivion and with it, the master plan itself.

In this book I have demonstrated that had the Japanese waged a war focusing on the Indian Ocean, the likelihood of their prevailing was very high. Japan's strategic triumphs two years into the conflict, in early 1942, clearly exasperated George Marshall, the US Chief of Staff, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. And on April 7 and 15 Churchill wrote to Roosevelt, asking for his help in halting the westward Japanese advance (see Chapter 3). There is no better testament to Japanese strategic prowess than the frustration expressed by the enemy.

The Japanese had been provided with superb strategies, but the success of their first deviation from the master plan, the Pearl Harbor strike, went to their heads. They succumbed to what Professor James Wood calls "victory disease." As a Japanese, I am bitterly disappointed by the failure of the Japanese military to implement strategies that would have brought them victory. Instead they allowed themselves to be distracted by short-sighted goals.

The topic of Japanese victory conjures up images of brutal tactics used in attempts to dominate the world

in the minds of many people. However, the ultimate objective of Japanese victory as defined in the *Draft Proposal* was the attainment of the objectives set forth in the Joint Declaration adopted at the Greater East Asia Conference⁸¹ held in Tokyo in 1943. This was the first ever Asian summit conference; it was attended by representatives of seven independent nations.⁸² The highest priority stated in the Joint Declaration was the achievement of racial equality. Subhas Chandra Bose, who headed the Provisional Government of Free India, made the following statement about racial equality in a speech he delivered at the conference.

I pray to God that this Joint Declaration which this historic Assembly has unanimously adopted this afternoon may prove to be a charter for the nations of East Asia and, what is more, a charter for the suppressed nations of the whole world. May this Joint Declaration prove to be in the world's history, the charter, the new charter of liberty for the year 1943 and after.

It is a sad state of affairs that Japan's master plan for victory is virtually unknown, even in Japan. There are those who have heard of the *Draft Proposal for Hastening the End of War Against the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Chiang Kai-shek*, but it has not been evaluated or analyzed with any seriousness. Since the conventional wisdom is that the Japanese were inexorably dragged into a war they could not win, no one has taken the trouble to examine the merits of the *Draft Proposal*.

Tokyo University Assistant Professor Arisawa Hiromi, the Akimaru Unit's chief researcher, muddled the waters by resorting to deceit. Convinced that there were no copies of his "Survey of US-UK Allied Economic War Potential, Part 1" extant, Arisawa capitalized on the (assumed) destruction of his work, altering the report so as to give the impression that the report was intended to serve as a warning of the perils of going to war against the US and UK. His "revised version" appeared in a Japanese magazine.

⁸¹ JOINT DECLARATION OF THE GREATER EAST ASIAN CONFERENCE

1. The countries of Greater East Asia through mutual co-operation will ensure the stability of their region and construct an order of common prosperity and well-being based upon justice.
2. The countries of Greater East Asia will ensure the fraternity of nations in their region, by respecting one another's sovereignty and independence and practicing mutual assistance and amity.
3. The countries of Greater East Asia by respecting one another's traditions and developing the creative faculties of each race, will enhance the culture and civilization of Greater East Asia.
4. The countries of Greater East Asia will endeavour to accelerate their economic development through close co-operation upon a basis of reciprocity and to promote thereby the general prosperity of their region.
5. The countries of Greater East Asia will cultivate friendly relations with all the countries of the world, and work for the abolition of racial discrimination, the promotion of cultural intercourse and the opening of resources throughout the world, and contribute thereby to the progress of mankind.

⁸² Representatives of seven nations:

Hideki Tojo, Prime Minister of Japan

Wang Ching-wei, President of Executive Yuan of China

Prince Wan Waithayankon, Representative of the President of Council Ministers of Thailand

Chang Ching-hui, Prime Minister of Manchoukou

Jose P. Laurel, President of the Philippines

Ba Maw, Prime Minister of Burma

Subhas Chandra Bose, Head of the Provisional Government of Free India

As a matter of fact, this same report served as the basis for the master plan, the *Draft Proposal*.

But after Arisawa's death, family members found the report among his papers. Unaware of its significance, his relatives donated it to Tokyo University's Library of Economics. As I stated in Chapter 5, writer Hayashi Chikatsu discovered the report and after doing some investigative and analytical work, wrote about it in *Outbreak of War Between Japan and the US: Japanese Army's Chances of Success: Akimaru Unit's Final Report*.

Yet, in Japanese academic circles Arisawa's lies continue to hold sway.

I have arranged to have my book translated out of a desire to make the facts about the Greater East Asian War available to readers outside Japan. It is high time for the world to realize that the (unfortunately, widely accepted) claim that militarist psychopaths hell-bent on world domination dragged Japan headlong into war is completely spurious.

Furthermore, I urge members of Japanese academic circles to, once and for all, sever the ties that bind them to flawed, preconceived notions such as "Japan fought a reckless war" and "Japan was bound to lose." It is my hope that they will then reengage with their consciences and direct their attention to serious research on the important strategies set forth in the *Draft Proposal*.

October 5, 2020

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