

## 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 the 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; 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 proportionate 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 these 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 the other, 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."<sup>1</sup>

But when the base was completed, on August 7, the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 to build 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!

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<sup>1</sup> Sato Akira, *Teikoku kaigun ga Nihon wo hametsu saseta* (Incompetent Japanese Imperial Navy), vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2006), 84.

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.”<sup>2</sup>

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

To recover lost ground, the Japanese Navy first dispatched the 8<sup>th</sup> 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 materiel and provisions.

The Japanese people cheered when they learned of Admiral Mikawa’s great victory, but 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

When the enemy’s 1<sup>st</sup> 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

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<sup>2</sup> Wood, *op. cit.*, 65.

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 it 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. Ishiwara 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. Ishiwara Kanji<sup>3</sup> and asked

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<sup>3</sup> Ishiwara 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, Ishiwara 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. 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 1<sup>st</sup> Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War," his riposte was, "Haven't you heard of [Commodore

him to state his opinion about the 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,<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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 his 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.

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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?"

<sup>4</sup> Now Papua New Guinea.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

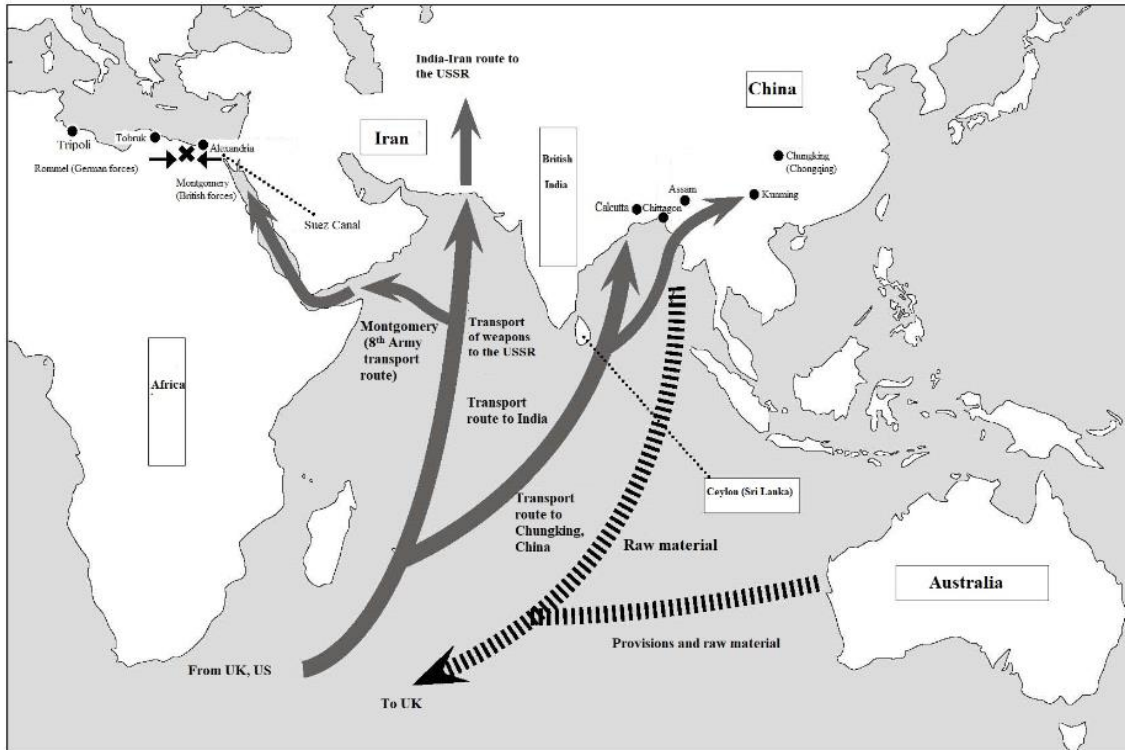
Seventy percent of American aid, goods bound for the USSR, traveled over the Indian Ocean. If that had been blockaded, the chance of a Soviet victory would have been greatly reduced. I will provide more details later.

## **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.



**FIGURE 8: Indian Ocean: main artery of Allied transport**



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 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.<sup>6</sup>

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 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

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<sup>6</sup> Wood, *op. cit.*, 9.

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.

**FIGURE 9: Japan’s Merchant Shipping Losses: December 1941 – August 1944**

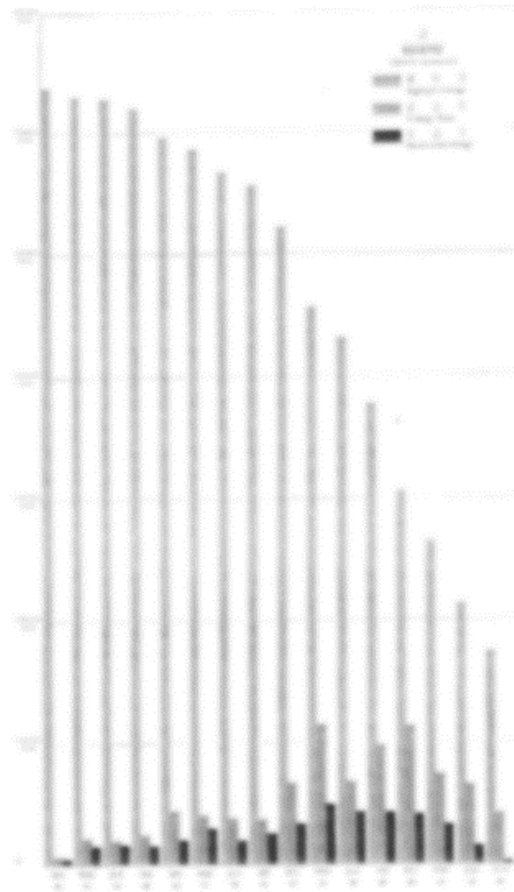
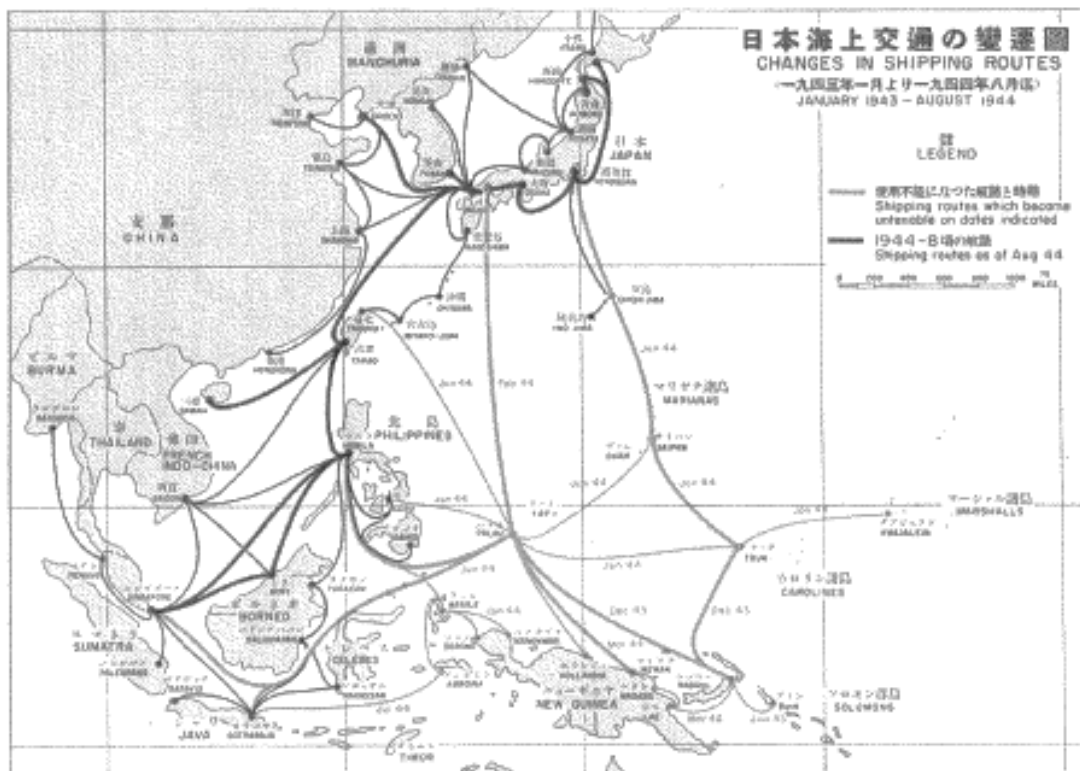


Figure 4.1. Japan's Merchant Shipping Losses, 1941-1943. Source: Reports of General MacArthur, vol. 2, pt. 2, plate 151. Department of Defense, 1950.

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

**FIGURE 10: Changes in Shipping Routes**



Map 4.1. Changes in Shipping Routes, 1943-1944. Source: *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. 2, pt. 1, plate 75. Department of Defense, 1950.

### 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 response to a fervent plea from Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku. But because the outcome was so impressive, more deviations from the Draft Proposal 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.<sup>7</sup>

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.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

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.

### **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.

### **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 of 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.”<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup>

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.

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. However, unfortunately, the operation was never executed because participants became mired in the Guadalcanal disaster. Even so, my simulation

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<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> Sato, *Senryaku Daitoa senso* (The Greater East Asian War: a war of strategy) (Tokyo: Senshi Kankokai, 1996), 38.



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!<sup>10</sup>

### **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.<sup>11</sup>

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

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<sup>10</sup> Sato Akira, *Teikoku kaigun ga Nihon wo hametsu saseta* (Incompetent Japanese Imperial Navy), vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2006), 78.

<sup>11</sup> Kimball, *op. cit.*, 452-3.

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.<sup>12</sup>

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)**

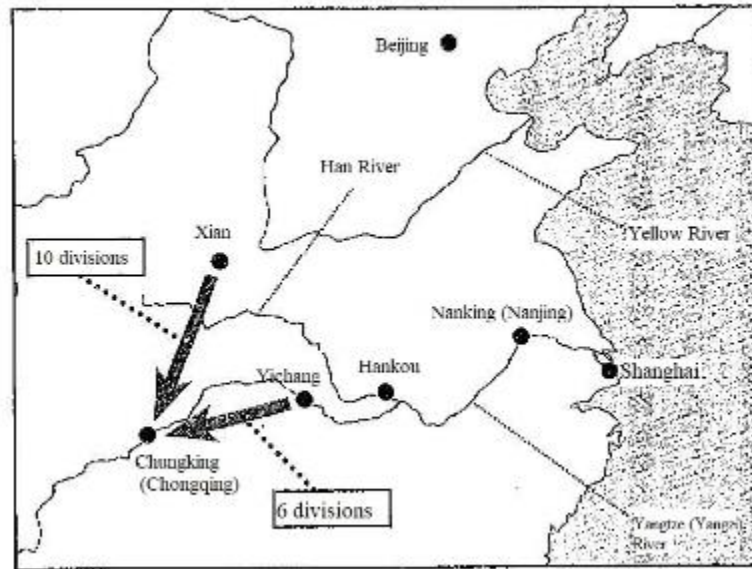
The Japanese Army General Staff was planning an operation, Operation 5, intended to attack the fortress that was the Nationalist government in Chungking.

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.

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<sup>12</sup> Russell Grenfell, *Main Fleet to Singapore* (London: Faber & Faber, 1951), 161-2.

**Figure 11: Operation 5**



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.

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 down 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.”<sup>13</sup>

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.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191826719.001.0001/q-oro-ed4-00002969> (retrieved 08/19).

## **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.<sup>14</sup>

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

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<sup>14</sup> Hoover, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, 701.

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;<sup>15</sup> its terms were very generous, acceding to almost every one of China's demands.

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<sup>15</sup> 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 Tatsuichiro, 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 Tangu 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 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.

## **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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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, 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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,”<sup>16</sup> 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 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.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Docs/Hiroshima/Potsdam.shtml> (retrieved 9/2019).



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.<sup>17</sup>

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.

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<sup>17</sup> Yokoyama Shinpei, *Hiroku Ishiwara Kanji* (Confidential papers of Ishiwara Kanji) (Tokyo: Fuyo Shobo, 1971), 29-30.