

Politico-Military Problems in the Pacific: "Strategic Plan to Effect the Occupation of Japan."

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6 April 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR: Rear Admiral H. C. Train, U. S. N.
Room 6166 New War Department Bldg.
Washington 25, D. C.

Subject: Strategic Plan to Effect Occupation of Japan.

Enclosure: (A) Three copies of paper "Strategic Plan to
Effect the Occupation of Japan" (Serial
Nos. 1, 2, and 3).

1. The enclosures, which are of Navy origin, are
forwarded in the belief that they may possibly be of
value in conjunction with the work of the State-War-
Navy Coordinating Subcommittee for the Far East.

Respectfully,

A. F. RICHARDSON
Commander, U. S. N.

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POLITICO-MILITARY PROBLEMS IN THE PACIFIC:
STRATEGIC PLAN TO EFFECT THE OCCUPATION OF JAPAN

Any invasion of Japan is assumed to be based on three major premises:

- (a) That we seek no material gain whatever in Japan.
- (b) That occupation is for the purpose of effecting the peace and taking the necessary steps to ensure its permanence.
- (c) That it is desirable to effect the occupation of Japan with the least possible loss of life consistent with the early termination of the war.

Premises (a) and (b) are generally accepted and require no comment. Premise (c) prompts the consideration of plans which might make it possible to effect the occupation of Japan with the minimum use of armed force. This would be possible only if the will of the Japanese High Command could be broken prior to the normal time when full-scale invasion is indicated. This would require the four following lines of action:

1. The continuation of our advance through adjacent islands, particularly the Ryukyus, and selected coastal areas of China, in order to continue our pressure against all communications between Japan and the continent.
2. Increased pressure against the "life-line" of Japan by concentrated bombing of Japanese western and southwestern port terminals in order to prevent shuttle traffic with the continent.
3. The avoidance of all attacks upon the Imperial Palace, the Ise Shrine, and the Imperial Family.
4. Intensive psychological warfare designed (a) to discredit individuals in the Japanese High Command, thus

S E C R E T

reducing its effectiveness through indecision and internal conflict; and (b) to discredit the High Command in the eyes of the Japanese people.

Course 1.--The necessity for this line of action has undoubtedly been covered in previous estimates of the situation. It is sufficient to say that it will be necessary in the carrying out of any plan, and is supplementary to (2), (3), and (4) as herein proposed.

Course 2. The Bombing of Western and Southwestern Port Terminals.--The western and southwestern port facilities of Japan are stressed because they are within easy reach of important shipping points on the continent, which are presently out of convenient bombing range. The bombing of these terminals in Japan would have not only the effect of actually destroying facilities but would produce psychological demoralization as a result of the severance of Japan's "life-line" to the continent, on which she has long been dependent for sustenance. This plan, like Course 1, is assumed to have been fully covered in current estimates of the situation, but it is mentioned in order to point out its potentially important contribution to the final yielding of Japan without a full-scale armed invasion.

Course 3. Safeguarding the Imperial Palace, the Ise Shrine, and the Imperial Family.--The problem of bombing or safeguarding the Imperial Palace, the Ise Shrine, and the Imperial Family is one which requires most careful consideration. The Emperor is considered by the Japanese as a divinity descended from an unbroken Imperial Line over 2600 years old. Regardless of the facts which contradict this belief, to the great majority of the Japanese, it is eternal truth itself, the catalyst which has made

S E C R E T

possible the efficient cohesive factor in Japanese military morale and discipline.

If an Emperor should die or even if his immediate family should be entirely wiped out, precedent is such that there will always be some individual, no matter how distantly blood-related, who will succeed as Emperor, and who will be the Imperial puppet available for use by the High Command for their own purposes. Thus the Japanese concept of the "One Imperial Line" which is "Unbroken for Ages Eternal" is, particularly in time of war, extremely difficult to destroy. However, the tremendous effect upon the Japanese of an enemy destroying the Emperor and his immediate family by force would be used by their High Command to produce a determination on the part of every man, woman and child to fight such an enemy to the last and thus gain a "glorious death". Against such fanatical resistance, the cost to us of a full-scale armed invasion in lives would be prohibitive.

The advantage of bombing the Palace, the Ise Shrine (the so-called "Grand Shrine" of the Sun Goddess, believed to be the divine ancestress of the "Imperial Line") and destroying the Emperor could, at best, result only in the destruction of minor military targets consisting of anti-aircraft batteries. It is believed that there would be some mass harakiri, even in high circles, but that would further strengthen the determination of the Japanese people as a whole to resist to the end.

It is therefore proposed that the policy of avoiding these targets be continued.

(Note.--The present discussion does not take account of the disposition of the Emperor after the cessation of hostilities, since that problem will be dealt with separately in connection with the consideration of post-war problems.)

S E C R E T

Course 4. Intensive Psychological Warfare against the Japanese High Command.--Careful observation of the Japanese under varying conditions and activities, such as conferences, military inspections, and crises, has led to the inevitable conclusion that no Japanese, regardless of rank or position, is so constituted that as an individual he is willing or able to assume responsibility for important decisions without the benefit of lengthy and repeated discussions sufficient to convince him that he does not carry the responsibility alone. This continued demonstration of a feeling of individual inferiority--appearances to the contrary notwithstanding--is the Japanese weakness which must be exploited to the fullest.

For the High Command also shares this weakness. If suitable seeds are planted in the highest echelons and nourished by continual demonstration through facts easily substantiated by those within close range, it would be possible to produce doubt, debate, difference of opinion, and open disagreement of the most deleterious variety.

This possibility is supported by such evidence as the results of the extremely suppressive measures adopted by the Japanese government in the attempt to control "dangerous thoughts" and to deal with "thought problems". The efforts at control produced much quicker dissemination of these forces than would otherwise have occurred. Similarly, the susceptibility of the Japanese to the rapid spread of disruptive rumors by means of the intensive "grapevine" in ordinary domestic life is a matter of extensive personal observation.

Furthermore, when we consider that the Axis pact was signed, according to Admiral Nomura, "by the narrowest margin, and then only after extensive bribery and the distribution of large sums of money in Tokyo", and when we recall that bribery and blackmail have attained the highest degree of success in Japan, it is obvious

S E C R E T

that there were and still are groups in Japan who were opposed to the alliance with Germany. These factions must not be looked upon as "liberal" in our sense of the word, but rather as other nationalistic groups who preferred to promote the welfare of Japan by other means. These groups, now eliminated from active control and reduced in power by enforced resignations, are nevertheless still intact. And as the embarrassment of defeat gradually comes to engulf the High Command, these latent factions will be ever on the alert to regain their former position. It is believed that this situation is capable of effective exploitation.

The possibility of breaking through the censorship and control of the high command and thereby bringing about the disintegration at the top increases as the trend of events continue unfavorable for Japan and our forces approach the homeland. The method for bringing about this disintegration is one requiring the most precise technique of psychological warfare and is possible only through direct approaches to individuals in the high command whose individual characteristics are well known. The approach must be made by one who is known to them personally and who is respected by them. The language must be direct and forceful, but with the appeal that has been found to be effective by reason of its very difference from the usual approaches and verbiage.

The effectiveness of such an approach can be appreciated only by one who has personally witnessed the reactions of certain individuals within the Japanese High Command during repeated, intimate conversations with them over a long period of time, and who has carefully studied the record of their activities. When Admiral Nomura was enroute to Washington on a certain occasion, such an approach was effective in obtaining important information

S E C R E T

from him. Those who are now in command in Japan are no more astute than was he. The accurate prediction of past Japanese actions has been the result of such approaches. The activities of the next few months offer the greatest possibilities for effective psychological warfare with its attendant process of disintegration and submission.

To be sure, some will doubt the effectiveness of such a proposal, but only because they have a limited knowledge of Japanese military psychology, or because they have sought in the past only limited results through entirely different approaches. It must be emphasized that the ordinary methods customarily followed in diplomatic channels are based upon a common school of thought in which the Japanese have become masters themselves. It is true that such activities also have psychological implications, but they connote only a "peaceful" approach. As such, the goal is to enforce one's own will upon the adversary by peaceful means. In the event of failure, the consequences to the particular individuals involved are rarely serious. The "manoeuvres" are not the result of correlated actions in force or even of taking a firm position. The elements of both personal interest and combat are lacking. Often there is no alternative but eventual disagreement.

It must be emphasized that such a characteristic diplomatic approach is entirely foreign to those whose military backgrounds enable them to envisage the saving of a hundred thousand lives, an achievement which might be possible if the will of the Japanese High Command can be broken.

We now face an enemy who knows that he is defeated. In spite of the fatalistic tendencies of the Japanese--involving individual disregard for life and appreciation of the glory of dying for their Emperor--they are nevertheless realistic people

S E C R E T

as regards the lessons of history and hopes for the future. They will want to salvage as much as possible when the opportunity is offered them.

Our terms are still unconditional surrender, and urging their withdrawal from the war will involve no conciliatory measures whatever.

In view of the manner in which the Japanese nation was forced into the war, the present state of their naval forces, and the effectiveness of our air attacks, we may be sure that with the collapse of Germany, the present Japanese High Command will be provided with a suitable pretext for withdrawal from the war. Every move made by us should be designed to facilitate this decision.

It is believed that by following the four courses outlined above, the desired results may be achieved. If we would avoid the necessity of an invasion of the Japanese homeland, involving very heavy losses to ourselves, such a program should be initiated at once. There is nothing whatever to be lost in the attempt, and the results may be of intestimable value to us.

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SECRET

APPENDIX

OPERATION PLAN 1-45

1. MISSION: (Policy Goal)

To make unnecessary an opposed landing in the Japanese main islands, by weakening the will of the High Command, by effecting cessation of hostilities, and by bringing about unconditional surrender with the least possible loss of life to us consistent with early termination of the war.

This to be accomplished by providing valid and powerful arguments for those in high places who are actually or potentially desirous of an early peace, and by canalizing their views which are divergent only as to means;

(Propaganda objectives)

- (a) To convince highly placed leaders of the hopelessness of further resistance,
- (b) To convince the High Command that there is an alternative to complete annihilation and enslavement,
- (c) To explain the meaning of "unconditional surrender",
- (d) To create dissension, confusion and opposition among those enemy leaders who remain adamant in their opposition to this plan

in order to impose our will upon the enemy.

INFORMATION:

- (a) The Japanese main islands are now isolated except to the continent and are faced with threats from all directions.
- (b) Our present and future positions outside of the Japanese main islands will afford means of exerting all coercive pressure necessary.
- (c) Certain members of the Japanese High Command realize that the war is irretrievably lost; and others of the High Command recognize the seriousness of the present situation which is bound to deteriorate in the future.
- (d) The plans for victory of the Japanese High Command are contingent upon continued unity of thought between the Army and Navy and upon an all-sacrificing prosecution of the war.
- (e) Great conflict of opinion exists within the High Command as to the past, present and future conduct of the war.
- (f) Field commanders in highest echelon are blaming the High Command for inept leadership in the war.
- (g) Great difference of opinion and dissension exists among commanders in the field and at sea.
- (h) For the first time since the Russo-Japanese war, the Premier has been instructed to participate in the deliberation of the High Command, thus establishing an immediate link between the political and military leadership of the empire, carefully separated since 1868.
- (i) For the first time in 24 years, criticism of the government and the High Command is openly voiced.

SECRET

(j) The Axis pact of September 27, 1940, was signed by Japan by the narrowest margin and only after extensive bribery in Tokyo and distribution of large sums of money. (App. 1.)

(k) There are a great many highly placed individuals in Japan who realized that war with the United States meant "the finish of the Japanese empire and a great loss to the United States".

(l) It is known that foreign broadcasts are monitored in Japan and transcripts have a comparatively wide distribution.

ASSUMPTIONS:

(a) That Japanese strategy anticipated fatigue of the United States in the prosecution of a prolonged war and consequent withdrawal therefrom.

(b) That unless the will of the High Command is broken their continued leadership will stimulate every man, woman and child to sustained resistance with its attendant cost in lives and money.

(c) It is known that groups already exist whose position in favor of a cessation of hostilities would receive the required stimulus and support for concerted action in the direction desired by this plan.

(d) That cessation of organized resistance in Germany or a request for peace by Germany would give the Japanese High Command the pretext for withdrawal from the war, particularly if such a "face-saving" course is encouraged.

(e) The execution of this operation plan will offer the encouragement and suggest the means to those in the highest echelons to exert their effective influence and cause the cessation of hostilities before Japan is totally destroyed.

(f) The increasing dependence on law-enforcement agencies for the execution of the total mobilization plan and the general reaction to recent air raids indicates the deterioration of Japanese morale on the home front with its resultant effect on the High Command.

(g) That enemy statements regarding means with which to repel landings on the main islands and new secret weapons indicate a realization of inherent weakness.

2. DECISION:

The United States will conduct an intensive psychological campaign against the Japanese High Command through an official spokesman of high rank in order to accelerate and effect the unconditional surrender of Japan without the necessity of an opposed landing in the Japanese main islands.

3. COURSES OF ACTION: (Implementation)

The official spokesman will:

(a) Lay the groundwork for the implementation to follow by addressing personally individual naval, military, political and economic leaders in a factual, direct, intimate and suggestive type of speech which experience has shown always

S E C R E T

commands their attention. He will carefully discuss their accomplishments or failures in order to enhance the prestige of desirable individuals and discredit those who hold the reigns of remaining power and are in favor of continuing the war.

(b) Exploit the cliques and groups, formed and forming in the High Command, who feel that the war is irretrievably lost or disagree with present strategy.

(c) Explain in the most detailed and concrete terms the hopelessness of the situation for Japan and the futility of continued resistance.

(d) Exploit all Japanese admissions of their own weakness and the confessed impossibility of remedy.

(e) Exploit the loss of Japanese seapower and its relation to an island empire. Couple with this their inferiority on land and in the air.

(f) Emphasize by detailed casualty lists of ships and personnel the progressive reduction of Japan's war-making capacity.

(g) Emphasize the tremendous power that will be added to that great force already being exerted against the Japanese homeland, upon the collapse of Germany.

(h) Exploit the desertion of their ally Italy and the return of France as a powerful war factor with its direct bearing on and interest in Japanese controlled areas.

(i) Exploit Japanese inability to evaluate the Russian position in the war, particularly the startling events immediately preceding Japan's entry into the war.

(j) Exploit existing and potential friction between Japan and Germany on all levels.

(k) Exploit Japanese fear of invasion evident from bombastic predictions of action to be taken for defense of the main islands. (These duplicate the utterances of Germany military and naval leaders prior to the Normandy landings.)

(l) Explain that unconditional surrender does not mean other than complete cessation of hostilities and yielding of arms as outlined by President Roosevelt to the Congress of the U.S., in order to clear out the destructive forces now entrenched. He will cite examples of Germany and other occupied territories, including Japanese territories already occupied, to prove that no violence has been or will be practiced against any individuals unless found guilty by a legally constituted War Crime Commission, and emphasize with authority what we will not do, but avoid any specific commitments as to what we will do, in order to combat present Japanese atrocity predictions.

(m) Exploit the existence of alternatives for the Japanese as contrasted with the hopelessness of Nazi leadership in Germany.

4. LOGISTICS:

No additional machinery or personnel will be required for the execution of this plan.

5. This plan will be effective immediately upon promulgation.

This plan will not prejudice any existing policy regarding peace terms or the conduct of the war.

SECRET

All psychological operations will be co-ordinated both as to times and trends in order to avoid reduction of effectiveness of this main operation.

The official spokesman will broadcast three times a week for a period not exceeding fifteen minutes each. The broadcast will be repeated at least twice. The Japanese text will always be followed by the same speech in English in order to obtain maximum clarity and effectiveness, and to enhance the authenticity of the talks.

APPENDICES

(Note: Not attached at this time but will be prepared and furnished if desired for details of important features, objectives, etc., such as

- (1) Signing of the Axis Pact by Japan, and bribery involved.
- (2) Jingoistic utterances common to both countries.

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