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Division of Origin: Military Analysis

SUBJECT: Japanese Army and Air Force operations in China and Manchuria,
1939-1945, and Japanese preparedness for Allied Invasion.

Person Interrogated and Background: Field Marshal HATA Shunroku

Graduate of Military Academy and Staff College. Studied in Germany 1920. Inspector General of Artillery 1931. Director Army Aviation Dept 1935. Commander Japanese Garrison FORMOSA 1936. Member SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL and Commander Japanese Expeditionary Forces in Central China 1938. Principal Aide-de-Camp to EMPEROR 1939. WAR MINISTER in ABE and YONAI Cabinets 1939-40. Member SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL 1940-41. Cinc Japanese Forces in China 1941-44. Inspector General of Military Education Nov 1944; in April 1945, given one of two General Army Commands in Japan, directly responsible to EMPEROR.

Where Interrogated: Japanese War Ministry

Interrogator: Col Ramsay D. POTTS, IC

Interpreter: Lt. Comdr. Walter NICHOLS, USNR

SUMMARY

Field Marshal Hata discussed the mission of the Japanese Armies in CHINA during the early stages of the CHINA INCIDENT, and described the forces involved. He commented on Japanese war aims in the CHINA INCIDENT, the economic exploitation of CHINA, various engagements during the war, and the role of the Japanese Air Forces in CHINA. He outlined the policies he advocated as WAR MINISTER and discussed the American entry into the war in relation to its effect on planning and on operations in China. He reviewed the circumstances of the NANKING INCIDENT in regard to Russo-Japanese relations and in regard to its effect on the expansion of the Japanese Air Forces. He outlined the preparations made by the 2nd General Army, under his command, to repel Allied landings in southern Japan. He also described his experiences in HIROSHIMA when the first Atomic Bomb was dropped and concluded by attributing Japan's defeat to general inferiority, and underestimation of American power.

- Q. I'd like to ask the General some questions about his tour of duty as Commander of the Japanese Expeditionary Forces in Central CHINA beginning with his assumption of command replacing Gen MATSUE.
The first question is: What were you directed to do when you were sent out to assume command of the Japanese forces in CENTRAL CHINA in 1938?
- A. At the time I was sent to take command of the CHINA Expeditionary forces, the forces under the command of General MATSUE were called the SHANGHAI Expeditionary Forces. When I took over, the force became known as the CENTRAL CHINA Expeditionary Force and covered a triangular area from SHANGHAI to NANKING to FOOCHOW, known as the DELTA AREA. The purpose of my duty was to secure that area and control preservation of the peace in that area.
- Q. What were the forces under your command at this time, air and ground?
- A. I had four divisions under my command, but no air fleet.
- Q. Was it your purpose simply to hold this triangular area and maintain peace inside that or was there some plan to bring the whole CHINA INCIDENT to a close at this time?
- A. At that time we had no intention of proceeding further inland than NANKING. Our purpose was just to hold this area and preserve peace.
- Q. How did you hope to end at this time, the CHINA INCIDENT? Did you visualize it just going on and on in a state of armed truce on both sides, or what was to be the outcome?
- A. I believed at this time that the CHINA INCIDENT would not spread any further and believed my duty was merely to hold that area. I understood that the GERMAN AMBASSADOR, TROUTEN, was negotiating for peace between the CHUNGKING Government and the JAPANESE Government.
- Q. The idea was, then, to negotiate a peace between CHUNGKING and JAPAN?
- A. Yes, and JAPAN as far as I know had no intention of proceeding further into CHINA.
- Q. What was the economic program in CHINA at this time? What were the economic goals?
- A. There was no change in the economy of the area in which I served.
- Q. Well, I know, but you just don't occupy an area in order to occupy it; you've got to have some goal. Why were you occupying this area--what did you expect to get out of it?
- A. As far as I know there was no large-scale plan for removing raw materials or anything to JAPAN. The Army itself lived off the land but got a large quantity of supplies from JAPAN. As for economic aims and plans went, we were trying to establish a provisional government in CHINA under Mr. LU in NANKING.
- Q. What was the aim of this provisional government?
- A. They were going to negotiate a treaty with CHUNGKING.
- Q. Would CHUNGKING then maintain control over the one area of CHINA while the provisional government had control over another area?

- A. I'm not certain as to what the higher plans were. My duty was just to preserve the peace in that area and to support the government that was being set up.
- Q. You made no offensive move while you were commander of the forces, then?
- A. We made no attacks outside that area.
- Q. Were any attacks made on you?
- A. By May of 1938 two peace negotiations had broken down between CHUNGKING and TOKYO. The situation was that my forces were in the SHANGHAI area and General TERAUCHI's forces were occupying the Northern area, JOSHU; the CHINESE forces were concentrated around TUNGSHAN which cut off communication between the Northern Army and the Southern Army. Therefore, as ordered by DAIHON EI we began a northern drive into this area; that was in May.
- Q. What was the outcome of that drive?
- A. Both the Northern Forces and the Southern Forces attacked the CHINESE Forces in the middle and tried to surround them. However, the Southern forces were not strong enough, and the CHINESE were able to escape to the southwest, and those forces which escaped concentrated around HANKOW.
- Q. What was the size of those CHINESE forces?
- A. I think there were about 30 divisions--a tremendous force.
- Q. And the 30 divisions ran away from your four divisions?
- A. I didn't have enough troops in the south to catch them so they got away. The CHINESE also were much more heavily equipped and armed than our forces.
- Q. Why were they running away then?
- A. There's a railway connecting TUNGSHAN with KAIFENG, and in order to surround these forces, the Southern Army sent one group directly up to attack them, and another, an armed force, around to cut the railroad. The Northern forces did the same thing, came straight down, and also sent a detachment around the flank. When the CHINESE ran into these forces, they evidently thought they were cut off from supplies and ran for HANKOW.
- Q. Did you have any airplanes supporting this drive?
- A. There was a certain amount of air support, but I don't think it was very much. I do not recall.
- Q. What was the tactical doctrine with respect to the use of air forces at that time? How did you use it? Were they used as air escort?
- A. The air forces at that time were supposed to be only supplementary to ground forces to cover ground operations and were used mainly for ground support. At that time, most of the Army planes involved in the battles were reconnaissance planes, and most of the bombers were Navy bombers, cooperating with the Army. There were very few bombers.
- Q. Mostly reconnaissance aircraft?
- A. Yes.

- Q. Now, with that as more or less of a background, what I am leading into, wanting to build up, is the background of your appointment as WAR MINISTER in the two cabinets. I'd like to have you explain the plans that were made during this period with respect to CHINA while you were WAR MINISTER?
- A. At that time, when I became WAR MINISTER, the situation had deteriorated in CHINA, and the Japanese were determined to put a stop to the CHINA affair as soon as possible. Everything was so confused; we were carrying on negotiations with a representative from the CHUNGKING Government in an attempt to stop hostilities; however, the big trouble was, we were not sure if this representative was a real agent of the CHUNGKING Government, but we believed that he was a Government agent. The negotiations eventually broke down because we lost confidence in this representative.
- Q. What was JAPAN willing to accept as a solution to the problem?
- A. Evidently the Japanese had made no decision as to what arrangements could be made. Our main object was to stop the fighting and then we wanted to make the decision and make arrangements afterwards.
- Q. When you resigned, we had information to the effect that you presented these four demands. Would you check those and comment on each one of them? Is it true that you presented any of these demands to the PRIME MINISTER?
- A. At no time did I insist upon a speedy disposal of the CHINA INCIDENT because that was already an established policy. In my opinion, it was agreed (1) to settle the CHINA INCIDENT; (2) to strengthen JAPAN's political structure in a new single party. I did not suggest a single party; however, I did suggest a more unified Government. I did not exactly intend to create a new single party, but believed a more unified government with more popular support would become similar to a new single party.
- Q. You wanted stronger government control, in other words?
- A. Yes; a unified control from behind the scene with popular support.
- Q. You wanted a united JAPAN, a united front, rather than the various factors fighting against each other?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How did you hope to achieve this united front?
- A. There was no particular plan.
- Q. Was there any dissension between the Army and the Navy which prevented a united front at this time?
- A. There were no points of disagreement between the Army and the Navy on the subject.
- Q. On this, or any other subject?
- A. During my tenure of office as WAR MINISTER, there were no real fundamental differences between the Army and Navy. At that time the PRIME MINISTER was a NAVAL officer, and therefore we wouldn't have presented much opposition.

(Note by Col POTTS: The Naval officer spoken of is Admr YONAI.)

In the Parliament sessions where the military sat, there were civilian representatives. Regarding your question, we had arguments on wartime military expenditures. The civilians asked complete explanations for the use of military appropriations. If we revealed the specifications, all the secrets of the military would leak out. We did not like civilians questioning us on our appropriations. The argument dissolved into a point of whether the Army was going to disclose its military secrets to the politicians.

Q. The expenditures were mainly for building up forces and buying war materials. What were the construction plans; what types of weapons; what were the armament plans during this period?

A. Principally air.

Q. You began to expand your air force?

A. Yes.

Q. I wanted to ask some questions about this air expenditure. What plans were made during this period to use the Army Air Forces independently of the ground forces?

A. The main plan was merely to enlarge the air force, and there was no change in the policy of the use of the air force with respect to the support of ground forces--just to increase the number of airplanes. I'm not too familiar with the exact details.

Q. What types of planes did you build mainly during this period? Were they bombers, fighters, reconnaissance planes?

A. I know only about the policy. You can find people in SAMBO HOMBU who were there at the time and could tell you that.

Q. I'm just wondering if you had any arguments as to what types of planes--bombers, fighters--

A. I know of no differences of opinion. If you want to know about that, please go ahead and inquire of SAMBO HOMBU about it because I do not have any records. Enlargement of the air force was one of the things I was advocating. It wasn't so much a policy of making a super-National Defense; I was only advocating this expansion in response to the demands from the field on the armed forces we had. I therefore thought it was necessary that these forces be built up.

Q. Where were these demands coming from?

A. The demands came from SAMBO HOMBU.

Q. But what did they want to do with these? Did they want to put these forces into MANCHURIA, CHINA? Why were they asking for these forces?

A. I am not able to answer that question. Operations are planned by SAMBO HOMBU whereas the RIKUGUN SHO is merely concerned with the study of whether those demands from SAMBO HOMBU can be met; RIKUGUN SHO controls education of the armed forces, and handles supply of equipment for the armed forces. In other words, we acted on the proposals of the General Staff. I was merely voicing the demands made by the SAMBO HOMBU, and I am not certain what SAMBO HOMBU's plans were.

- Q. What were your opinions as to the foreign policy that JAPAN should pursue during this period?
- A. The HIRANUMI Cabinet established the TRI-PARTITE Pact, and at that time there was no war with SOVIET RUSSIA; there was no war in Europe. Therefore there was no feeling in JAPAN of any emergency or any immediate endangering of our own national existence due to this TRI-PARTITE Pact. However, by the time ABE had become the PRIME MINISTER, the war in Europe had already started. When YONAI became PRIME MINISTER, of course the situation had deteriorated even further. I felt at this time that JAPAN's main purpose was to settle the CHINA INCIDENT. Therefore I felt that in our international relations it was endangering JAPAN's own position to get too much involved in foreign affairs. I felt that the main purpose of the moment was to end the CHINA INCIDENT before getting too enmeshed in events abroad. I was opposed to any political disagreements inside JAPAN because the situation abroad was very changeable, and we had to prepare for the future; anything could happen to endanger JAPAN's position.
- Q. With that as background, I'd like to go on to some more detailed questions; especially do I want to talk about what effect our air attacks had on the Japanese ability to accomplish their tactical aims in CHINA during the period when you were in command of the Japanese forces in CHINA. What were the forces under the command from March 1941 up to the time you left, and what areas in CHINA did you control with your military forces?
- A. At the time I took charge in CHINA, I was in command of the Northern Army which was around PEKING; also of the 13th Army which was in SHANGHAI; the 11th Army which was in HANKOW; and the 23rd Army which was in CANTON.
- Q. Were those all the forces in CHINA at that time?
- A. Those were all the forces in CHINA.
- Q. What was the size of the Japanese forces by numbers--how many troops did you have under your command?
- A. You wanted the total overall strength?
- Q. In ground units and in air.
- A. About 300,000 men.
- Q. And how many air units did you have?
- A. I had about one air brigade.
- Q. During this period from March 1941 to December 7, 1941, what were the Japanese forces in CHINA attempting to accomplish?
- A. The mission of the Japanese Armies in CHINA was to station troops in an area from INNER MONGOLIA (from P. otow) down the YELLOW RIVER as far as KAIFENG, and then to HANKOW, with a deep bulge in towards the CHINA SE., to cover SHANSHI Prefecture, HUPEH Prefecture, a part of HONAN Prefecture, the HANKOW Area, and from HANKOW down the YANGTZE RIVER to the SHANGHAI Area, in addition to which we were to police the CANTON Area. At that time the Japanese forces preferred not to use the word "OCCUPATION" because this was considered a temporary occupation, and the main purpose was merely to maintain peace in that area, and only when possible did we attack the forces of the Central Government of CHUNGKING.
- Q. Were any attempts being made at this time to expand the area that you were policing--that is, between March and December 1941?
- A. It was not up to the commander of the CHINA Area Army to decide the policy. When ordered by DAIHON EI we would send out advance forces.

Q. What were the aims of these forces; to defeat CHINESE forces in the field or to gain access to rice crops or other resources?

A. We never advanced except in order to repel attacks by the CHINESE ARMY. Even when we did advance to meet threats by the CHINESE Army, we had to have permission of DAIHON EI. Once in 1940 and once while I myself was in command of the Area, the forces in HANKOW advanced up the YANGTZE RIVER as far as ICHANG in order to destroy Chinese forces in that area, which were the best the Chinese had and which had been causing us a lot of trouble with sporadic attacks, and with the secondary purpose of obtaining food for the Japanese Army.

Q. Did they attain their objectives; first, of destroying the Chinese Army, second, of obtaining food?

A. In the attack in 1940, before I became Commander of the Area, we had great success with these attacks. We not only repelled the Chinese but were able to obtain food.

Q. Why, then, didn't you continue up the river to CHUNGKING in an effort to seize the CHINESE GOVERNMENT and bring an end to the war?

A. We didn't have sufficient strength to carry the attacks as far as CHUNGKING.

Q. Would you have had sufficient strength if there had been no air opposition of any kind whatsoever?

A. In reference to the Japanese attempt to bomb CHUNGKING, in the first place, even when we advanced as far as ICHANG, our bombers did not have sufficient range to attempt bombing attacks on CHUNGKING with safety. In addition to which the fighters we had were so short-ranged that they couldn't accompany the bombers; therefore, the bombers, when they went, had to go unescorted and a good proportion of them were shot down by CHINESE fighters for that reason. Therefore we had to give up our attacks on CHUNGKING from the air. The air attacks carried out by the CHINESE Air force did not have much influence on plans for ground operations. The only respect in which they were extremely annoying was in interception of the attacks on CHUNGKING by the Japanese Air Force.

Q. This was in what period--up to December 1941?

A. Both in 1940 and 1941.

Q. After 1941 when the United States entered the war, were there any major changes in the aims and objectives in CHINA that the Japanese Army was trying to achieve there?

A. The original commission of the Japanese Armies in CHINA was not changed as a result of American entry into the war. However, the Japanese Armies withdrew slightly towards the Coast except in the HANKOW Area, and whereas previously we had occasionally gone out to attack the CHINESE forces, we were now instructed to provide merely adequate defense against them and to more or less just hold the areas we were occupying. At that time there was considerable fear in Japanese Army circles that RUSSIA would enter the war, in which case we intended to abandon almost the entire CHINA CAMPAIGN and withdraw our armies, particularly from the HANKOW Area, to MANCHURIA.

Q. Did this fear persist all through the rest of the war until the end of the war?

A. The fear persisted throughout the war that RUSSIA might enter. However, the plans were changed to some extent because a large portion of the forces in CHINA were withdrawn to the Southern Pacific Area, and also a large proportion of the Air forces in CHINA were withdrawn to the Pacific Area, so that, at the time I left my post in CHINA in 1944, there was already considerable talk about giving up ICHANG and the HANKOW Area--abandoning them.

- Q. This was when you left in 1944?
- A. That discussion had persisted from the very beginning of the war.
- Q. During this period, 1942, 1943, and in 1944, until you left, did you encounter any significant opposition from AMERICAN and CHINESE Air forces in any of these areas?
- A. We received severe air attacks which caused great changes in our operations.
- Q. What were the natures of these air attacks? Were they attacks on your rail transportation systems, on your water transportation, on your troops, or on what?
- A. These air attacks affected our sea and land transportation, and our method of supplying our forces. Also we suffered from air attacks on our airfields.
- Q. What period was this in which these air attacks were severe enough to cause you to change your supply system?
- A. Generally speaking, you might say that this great change in the opposition met by the Japanese air forces was experienced after the entry of the United States into the war. Gradually throughout the war, the Chinese air forces which, at the beginning of the war, had not been too powerful, became more and more powerful.
- Q. Our forces?
- A. Yes, in comparison to the Japanese Air Forces.
- Q. In what way did these air attacks cause you to change your operational plans and tactics?
- A. The best example of the way in which Allied air attacks affected Japanese operations was in the attempt the Japanese made to build the supply route from HANKOW straight down to the Coast. Between HANKOW and CHENGSHI, our supplies were demolished in attacks on ground transport. Also at the same time we had many barges on the YANGTZE RIVER bringing up supplies from the Coast to HANKOW.
- Q. Did you intend to open up this line and maintain in the supply route?
- A. The plan was to link PEKING and CANTON by an overland railroad to transport supplies, because the sea routes had been interdicted by Allied attacks. The railroad between PEKING and CHENGSHIEN was already in existence. Our intention then was to build a railroad between CHENGSHIEN and HANKOW and then to continue it on down to CANTON. However, south of HANKOW was where we experienced particularly heavy Allied attacks on our transport system, and even up at CHENGSHIEN, the southern terminal of the railroad from PEKING, we had very heavy attacks, and no matter how many times we rebuilt the railroad bridges, they were no sooner rebuilt than they were smashed again.
- Q. Did the Allied air attacks, then, pose the main problem in preventing you from carrying out your plans and policies in CHINA.
- A. I would say, generally, that it is true that the air attacks posed the main problem in carrying out our planned operations.
- Q. I want to get this straight now: The air attacks first of all interdicted your river transportation; secondly, interdicted your rail and road transportation; and thirdly, destroyed a lot of your equipment on your air fields?
- A. Yes, that is right; you could divide it into those three categories.

- Q. Were there any other categories, any other things that air attacks interdiction?
- A. In addition to the three main effects felt by the Japanese Army as a result of the Allied air attacks, we also experienced great difficulty in carrying out operations because of the frequent Allied air attacks on troop dispositions and concentrations like HANKOW and other large cities. Since these attacks were so severe, the Japanese were forced to operate chiefly at night, particularly since our own air forces were inferior in number to the American air forces and could provide very little protection.
- Q. Did you lose very many of your good pilots in the air fighting in CHINA?
- A. Practically all of Japan's first-line pilots operating in the CHINA were lost as a result of operations against the Allied air forces.
- Q. In airplanes?
- A. In aerial combat.
- Q. Now I'd like to go back and try to pin down a little more closely these factors, these results of Allied air attacks: First, the attacks on water transportation, on the waterways: During what period was that severe? When did it become an important factor in your plans?
- A. The greatest effect on water transportation was felt after June of 1944. The destruction of our water supply routes continued until the time I left. Particularly, our water routes south of HANKOW were affected by Allied air attacks since that route was essentially one supply route and was mostly a water supply route.
- Q. Were the attacks before June of 1944 of any significance?
- A. Previous to June, the attacks were not severe. However they were frequent, as a result of which most transportation had to be carried out at night rather than in the daytime.
- Q. In other words they didn't stop any transportation, they simply slowed it down by forcing you to ship supplies at night?
- A. As a result of these attacks the supply routes were not completely cut off. However the quantities of material shipped over them were reduced to 40% and at the best, 60%. One effect felt by the Allied bombing was the stopping of small vessel transport because we were using largely Chinese small boats, and when there were air attacks, the Chinese boatmen would run away, and the traffic would just get tied up for lack of personnel.
- Q. Did you know, while you were commanding these forces, that we were transporting supplies via air to the Chinese?
- A. Yes, I was aware of that.
- Q. Did you know what was the scale of our effort?
- A. I knew that at the beginning you were transporting oil, then later, equipment and supplies of various sorts.
- Q. What was the source of your intelligence--how did you find out we were doing these things--that we were transporting oil and later transporting supplies? How did you know?
- A. It was really a guess. We had no way of knowing exactly what supplies were being flown in, but we knew the number of planes that passed over the route each day, and because they were large-type planes we presumed that they were carrying these types of equipment.

Q. You got this information from posts in BURMA?

A. We got that from radio reception.

Q. Oh, I see, you monitored our radio conversations?

A. Yes. We were aware of the numbers of planes which flew from INDIA to KUNMING, so that at times when there were a lot of planes on the route and other times when traffic became thinner, we would decide that a lot of supplies were being flown in or that supplies were not coming in, and just made guesses at it.

Q. What efforts did you make to stop this flow of supplies we were shipping in by air?

A. We made no attempt to stop the supply because we didn't believe it was possible, since our air forces were not sufficient.

Q. Did you feel that it would have been worth while if the flow of supplies could have been stopped, to put on some military campaign to stop them, through BURMA, let's say?

A. Decisions as to that sort of planning were made in DAIHON EI. However, in the field we felt that to cut off the air route from either BURMA or FRENCH INDO-CHINA was beyond the scope of our capabilities.

Q. Does the General feel that the supplies we shipped in by air were a main reason for the continued CHINESE resistance?

A. I do not feel that without air supply the Chinese would have had to give up fighting. However, I do feel that your supplies stiffened their resistance and helped them carry on.

Q. But without these supplies you feel they still could have fought?

A. Yes. I would like to add something to the discussion by pointing out that the Allied forces had B-29 airfields just North and West of CHUNG-KING with which they were bombing JAPAN. We planned to use our air forces in CENTRAL CHINA to intercept the B-29 raids. However, since our air forces in that area were insufficient, their mission became more and more difficult when this added mission was given to them.

Q. In other words, the addition of the B-29s to this force made it much more difficult for your forces to accomplish any one of their objectives?

A. Yes.

Q. I'd like to pass on to the period when you had returned to Japan, in December 1944. At the time you returned to Japan, I would like you to give us a resume of the military position that you considered JAPAN to be in at that time and what your own personal opinion was as to what course JAPAN should pursue?

A. While I was in CHINA I was unfamiliar with changes going on in JAPAN, and when I returned to JAPAN and saw for myself the effect of the war on JAPAN proper, I felt that JAPAN's fighting strength had been diminished considerably.

Q. What was your estimate of the position in the areas that JAPAN had lost-- in other words, how did you then conceive of JAPAN's holding on and continuing to fight? What method did you advocate for continuing the fight?

A. When I first came back to JAPAN I was of the opinion that the only thing JAPAN could do was to fight a decisive battle in defense of the homeland alone, and I felt there was nothing else left to do. As commander of the Second General Army I repeatedly stressed the point to those under my command that JAPAN would win the battle of the homeland and must make every effort in that respect. However, I myself had little confidence that

JAPAN would win in the battle for the homeland. Also, I would like to point out, when I first came back to JAPAN in December 1944, I was only concerned with training; therefore, until I took command of the General Army I did not have much to do with operations.

Q. Did you make any changes in the training program when you took over as INSPECTOR GENERAL of MILITARY EDUCATION?

A. I made no changes in the training. However, before I took over training of the Japanese Armies, the Japanese had decided to concentrate in anti-tank warfare because of the overwhelming tank forces which the United States was able to put into the field, we also stressed defense against bombing.

Q. What sort of tactics did you teach as defense against bombing?

A. To go underground.

Q. You were concentrating even then on training the various elements of your forces to go underground--digging in--dispersal?

A. Yes, the training consisted largely in digging in and dispersing forces.

Q. Did the increased scale of B-29 attacks starting in March of 1945 affect your opinions as to the ability to go ahead and continue the war?

A. The increased scale of bomb attacks in March caused a great change in Japanese planning of defense because, where as previously we had planned to defend centers like OSAKA, and TOKYO--principal cities--and other areas, those principal cities had now been destroyed, and the AA batteries with which we had ringed those cities were now dispersed to defend the transport system, chiefly railroads. We also felt an extreme necessity for dispersing our military stores and putting them underground.

Q. Did you disperse these to the point where you felt that they were safe from air attack--military stores and supplies?

A. I felt that if you dug your holes deep enough you were safe from bombing attack. However it was extremely difficult to carry on such large-scale digging-in operations, and the war ended before we completed our digging-in.

Q. Did you feel that this dispersal of supplies and materials would have made it more difficult for you to resupply and reinforce the armies that were going to resist invasion?

A. I do not feel that the dispersion would have caused any delay in operations and bringing up supplies because most of the material was dispersed in the immediate vicinity of the forces which were to use them.

Q. In drawing up your plans to repel an invasion, would you just give me a brief overall idea of how you intended to use your forces? What was to be the scheme of repelling the invasion, the overall plan?

A. During the war our military experience in the Pacific Area taught us that if the enemy once landed, the outcome was already decided, so that, where as previously we had dug in away from the beaches and had let the enemy land and then attacked him, our theory for the defense of the home islands was to dig in right along the beaches and dig in deeply in order to avoid destruction by preliminary bombardment and bombing. We intended to stand and fight on the beaches in an attempt to repel the invasion at the first landing because the lessons learned during the war had taught us that we were beaten if the enemy landed in force.

Q. What provisions had been made to deal with paratroopers that were dropped behind your lines in force?

A. We did not feel that we had sufficient strength to protect against parachute attacks in all areas. Therefore our plan was to wait for the parachute drops and as soon as force landed, attack it by bringing in forces from other areas, not previously allocated.

Q. Now, what was the area that the General had command of?

A. I had the southern area; I was going to repel the landing on KYUSHU.

Q. What size forces did you have under your command?

A. I had very little force under my command when I first took charge. However, at the end of the war I had about 20 divisions made up of raw recruits who had neither equipment nor experience. At the time I took charge in April I do not believe that there were more than five or six divisions, and by the end of the war that number had increased to about 20, although I am exactly certain of figures. However, there was very little artillery in any of these divisions.

Q. Were the plans for the KAMIKAZE air attacks integrated under your command or was that a separate command?

A. When I took charge in April I had two flying divisions under my command which were held for the purpose of air defense against air raids. However in about July, both those flying divisions were taken away from me so that I was left with no air under my command at all.

Q. The KAMIKAZE units were entirely under separate command?

A. The KAMIKAZE units were entirely under separate command--were not under my command at all.

Q. If the United States forces had announced that they were not going to invade but were simply going to increase the scale of the air attack throughout by ten-, twenty-, fifty-fold and destroy everything on the island by air, what then would have been your estimate of the situation?

A. If such an announcement had been made it would naturally have complicated the situation of the ground forces, simply because we had no means of defending ourselves and would have suffered losses to our troops and losses in our supplies. I believe that the question of whether JAPAN would have yielded had such an announcement been made is one of degree. However, when the atomic bomb was dropped on HIROSHIMA, I believed "there is nothing more we can do, we might as well give up." However, as commander of the General Army, I myself, had there been no order from the EMPEROR to end the war, would have continued fighting to the very end in defense of the homeland.

Q. When did you first become aware of the fact that peace negotiations were being carried on?

A. I was aware that peace negotiations were going on after August 10. I don't know of any before that. The first time I was told officially of the surrender negotiations was when I was called to TOKYO from HIROSHIMA on August 13.

Q. Did you visit HIROSHIMA just after the atomic bomb had been dropped there?

A. The atomic bomb was dropped while I was in HIROSHIMA, I experienced it.

Q. Would you just briefly review your experiences there when the bomb was dropped?

A. On August 6 the weather was very clear and there was absolutely no wind. At about 8 in the morning there was an air raid alert. At 8:20 the air raid alert was cancelled. Very shortly after the air raid alert was cancelled, the ATOMIC BOMB exploded, at the time when the people of HIROSHIMA felt that everything was safe and were relieved that there was to be no air attack.

At the time, I was in my own house, and since it was summer I had on only a thin kimono. My house was located about 2KM from the spot at which the ATOMIC BOMB had most effect; it was a brand-new Japanese house. I was walking down a hall right in the center of the house when the bomb fell. In one instant the roof fell in and all the glass in the house was shattered into small fragments, and all the sliding doors and windows were blown all over the place. I was covered by dirt and plaster which had fallen in from the second floor. Simultaneously white smoke filled the whole garden. I believed at the time that the bomb had fallen directly on my own house. I myself was not wounded and the house did not actually fall over, although it was pushed so that it leaned to an angle away from the center of the blast. In my garden there were a number of pine trees which, as a result of the blast, were twisted and broken off as if they had been turned like a key. The bamboo trees were stripped of their leaves. In my victory garden all vegetables protruding above the surface were destroyed, although the potatoes, which were still in the ground, were unharmed. In no time a tremendous fire sprang up from the center of HIROSHIMA. My house was near the headquarters; they were old buildings although they were large. One building was blown up by the blast; the other building burned an hour later, having caught fire. I observed that the damage caused by this bomb was far beyond that caused by any direct hit of an ordinary bomb, and although I wasn't able to guess what sort of a bomb it was I knew that some special new development had been used--a new type of bomb, a new explosive.

- Q. Was there a fire in your own house? Did any fire spring up in your own house?
- A. My house did not burn down because it was sheltered by a hillside. The time was 8:20 so that in every Japanese house breakfast cooking fires were burning. Therefore I believe that the fires in HIROSHIMA might have been caused by all these breakfast fires, and I am not certain if they were started by the bomb.
- Q. Do you believe then that the ATOMIC BOMB was the cause for the Japanese surrender?
- A. It was a key point, but not the cause of the surrender.
- Q. If the ATOMIC BOMB had not been dropped, do you believe that JAPAN would have surrendered anyway?
- A. It was a question of time, depending on the extent to which the bombings would have increased in force and what the situation would have been at the time of landings. It would be hard to say.
- Q. Do you believe that without the ATOMIC BOMBING, with just the increased scale of the fire raids and the GP bombing that the surrender would have taken place before November 1?
- A. I believe that would depend upon the situation--the scale of landings. I believed that you would land some time in July, so that by the end of June we had made all preparations. I was not in TOKYO and so I myself can't say what the feeling in TOKYO was on the subject and what the ordinary people thought. I didn't know how the national life of JAPAN was being affected in an overall picture.
- Q. Would you like to make any general observations about the war of any kind?
- A. In the first place, JAPAN lost the war because it was inferior in National strength; and second, at the beginning of the war it was not well-enough informed about the strength of the Allied armies. In comparison with the Allied power, the Japanese National strength was quite low; the difference was very great.

- Q. One question that I have on that point. Why wasn't JAPAN informed of the National strength of the United States?
- A. We didn't investigate the matter thoroughly enough.
- Q. Were you deceived by an outward appearance of soft living? Did that lead you to the wrong conclusion about our capability to fight?
- A. I'm not too familiar with what estimate was made of the American character because I myself was in CHINA. However I would say that the GREATER EAST ASIA WAR was the direct result of the MANCHURIAN and CHINESE INCIDENTS. Since the Army was responsible for operations in MANCHURIA and CHINA all throughout the fighting on the Continent, everything possible was being done to bring it to a successful conclusion in order to avoid it developing into something more. However, we were unable to bring it to a conclusion, therefore it dragged out until it eventually became the GREATER EAST ASIA WAR.
- Q. Do you believe that the Japanese Army, then, is responsible for this war?
- A. I believe that the operations in CHINA and MANCHURIA were largely the responsibility of the Army. However I wouldn't say necessarily that the GREATER EAST ASIA war could be blamed entirely on the Army.
- Q. It was equally the responsibility of all the other elements in the national life, the Navy, political parties?
- A. Yes, I would say that was my opinion. I want to point out that there are no records left, and so the statements that I have given are merely based on my memory. However if you wish I could perhaps reconstruct more accurate figures by thinking it over.
- Q. Especially of the operations in CHINA and the effects that Allied air operations had on your operations and problems of supply: I'd like you to write a critique on that if you would?
- A. I have told you generally what the effects of American operations in CHINA in the air were, and I don't think I could add much to that.

NOTE: Accuracy of Chinese place-names cannot be guaranteed.