

USSBS
File

U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY

APO 234, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

22 October 1945

Interview with Mr. AKABANE Yutaka, Vice-Chief of the Cabinet Information Bureau.

Preliminary Report

Interrogator - Lt Commdr Leighton,
Recorder - Major C. Arensberg,
USSBS - Interpreter Lt McCoy
Mr Akabane's Interpreter - Mr. Yokoyama.

Note: The following report is summary, not verbatim, though order of discussion and much of the actual wording of question and answer has been retained.

Time: 2:00-3:45 pm. 22 October

Place: Office of Mr Akabane, Home Office, 5th floor.

General: Led into AKABANE's private office by his interpreter, Yokoyama, the three USSBS officers introduced themselves by name, and took seats in armchairs grouped round a circular table upon which cigarettes and ashtrays were laid out. The interpreter then informed us that Mr. Akabane would give us a prepared statement of the development of morale among the Japanese during the years of the war. Before he should so, however, he wanted to know if we were putting questions to him in his official capacity, to which we replied both official and private views were welcome to us, and whether we were interested in circumstances during the war or after it, to which we replied "during". The interpreter was easy and assured with Mr. Akabane, but respectful and formal enough to refer to him in the third person to us. Mr. Akabane acted as if he knew no English, and we as if we knew no Japanese, with the exception of Lt McCoy. Major Arensberg took notes while the interpreter spoke in English; Lt McCoy took notes while Mr. Akabane spoke in Japanese. Mr McCoy's notes will be checked against this record at some future time.

Interpreter: Mr. Akabane will give us a prepared statement of the changes of the morale of the Japanese in the years of the war...The situation as regards morale fell naturally into four periods, from the time of general confidence in the outcome of the war in early 1941-42 to the complete collapse of fighting spirit at the end of the war. (Omitting the detailed dating of these periods, the salient features of the account of the development of public attitudes through them all were:).....

The first appearance of a lack of confidence in the public view of the war was to be felt in February 1943. It was connected with the assumption by General Tojo of four principal ministerships: the Prime Ministry, the War Ministry; the Home Ministry, and the office of Chief of the General Staff. A feeling developed among the intelligentsia first, in the big cities, to the effect that something must be wrong to make it necessary for General Tojo to assume so many posts at once.

Question: What class was this intelligentsia, and what classes does Akabane have in mind?

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24 Oct 45

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2nd Interview with Mr. Akabane, Yutaka, Vice-Chief of the Cabinet Information Bureau.

Interrogator: Lt. Cmdr. A. H. Leighton
Recorder: Major Conrad Arensberg
Interpreter: Mr. Yokoyama (on Mr. Akabane's staff.)

General

In accordance with agreement at end of previous interview, we arrived at 2 o'clock to continue inquiry. As soon as we were seated, Mr. Akabane produced a list of names which he passed to the interpreter and the interview began.

Key

A - Akabane
I - Interpreter - (passages in which interpreter speaks on his own are marked thus.)
CA - Major Arensberg
AHL - Lt. Cmdr. Leighton
B of I - Board of Information (Mr. Akabane's Office)

General Notes on the Setting of the Two Interviews with Mr. Akabane, Yutaka, 22 and 24 October.

The office of Mr. Akabane is on the 5th floor of the Home Ministry, a gaunt building, hollow, dark, damp and smelling of fish, delapidation and lack of cleaning. From the hall you enter an outer office in which a number of young men and women sit around a large table in rather threadbare clothes. They are apparently clerks and seemed to be writing and sorting papers. There are 6 or 7 telephones on this table and in one corner of the room a desk and a table near it with a tea pot and cups. The floor is stone. An elderly woman in slacks acted as greeter and may have been in charge of the office. When we entered for the second interview, the interpreter was sitting at the desk, and on seeing us, rose, shook hands, went into Mr. Akabane's office which opened from the left, and after conferring with him, ushered us in. In Mr. Akabane's office there are a number of low chairs, two couches, a desk in a bright corner by the window, and a table with a bright green table cover which contrasted like a Christmas decoration with the bright red carpet on the floor. Mr. A is a thin man, in a herringbone, brown salt and pepper business suit, who wears a perpetual frown on his face except when he laughs. The scowl seems more one of concentration than ill humor. He had heavy horn-rim glasses. From time to time during the interview he smoked cigarettes and his fingers on his right hand were stained brown. When thinking, he often threw

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his head back and stared at the ceiling.

The interpreter, Yokoyama (Better known as Yokhama" he told us.) was a much more relaxed person, who yet paid close attention to what both he and his chief said and quickly translated in either direction. Rarely did he stop or fumble for words. He also smoked cigarettes and seemed friendly, easy, but respectful terms with his chief. During the first interview he always asked Mr. A's permission to make his own contributions, but in the second, he shoved in his ear when he wanted to without asking. Mr. A seemed pleased to have him do so. Y wore also a brown, almost grey and much worn business suit. He told us that he had spent 15 years in the US and had taken a B.A. at the University of Utah in Salt Lake and an M.A. at Chicago. He had done journalistic work on a number of Japanese news-papers in the US, and had planned to stay there but got called back to Japan in 1922 due to the illness of his father and had never returned. He looked to be in his middle fifties, perhaps 5 to 10 years older than A.

A: Here is list of liberals of all classes who are completely unbiased
(Last word emphasized by I.)

AHL: Addresses?

A: Classified according to occupation. Hard to get addresses. If you want contact I will arrange it. (conversation interrupted by earth-quake)

AHL: Effect of earth quake of Dec 7 1944?

A: I don't recall exact date. There was severe one in Shizuoka.

AHL: Significance of Pearl Harbor anniversary coinciding with the earth quake? Did this impress the people?

A: I think it was Dec or Nov--I am not sure.

AHL: Have you war-time reports on the topics you told us about last time?

A: Reports are in other ministries. Food from Agriculture, clothing in Welfare Ministry. The reports we have here might not satisfy you. This is Information Board and here are our reports--fully expressing attitude of the people toward all subjects.

AHL: For whose use?

A: Gov't officials. It is market secret. You may take all three copies. Only 1944 is covered.

AHL: We would like to have full series.

A: It began after war--much after. Only 3 persons, members. It is monthly so only 3 months preceding this.

AHL: Any after these?

A: Only few after this--shortage of paper, could not issue regul r.

AHL: We would like series complete.

A: I will do what I can.

AHL: How was material gathered?

A: The Board of Information made known through Shuko that it was ready to receive all kinds of grievances and complaints. All kinds of important questions.

CA: How many received?

I: It tells with each report. Each number tells how many letters rec'd on different topics.

AHL: Any work by investigators-to gather data on morale?

I: No.

AHL: Can you suggest other people we should see?

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A: Information of a general nature best obtained from Board of Information. For specific questions, may be able to get information from other Ministries

CA: Any reports made in various kens regarding Morale in each ken?

A: If you want to dig deeper you will have to go to Home Office.

AHL: Who there?

A: Police Bureau.

AHL: What about the Kempei?

A: You might try H.Q. of Gendarmay in Tokyo. Doubt if they have any information because they act under special instruction. Civilian police better.

AHL: Information on strikes?

A: Home Office. Function of Kempei primarily political.

AHL: (List shown Mr. A of sampling points in Japan.) Can you tell us people in these areas who will give the same kind of information you have?

A: Suggest you see prefectural Governor first. A letter sent from your HQ to Central Liaison Office, ask them to notify Prefectural Governors to be prepared to receive you.

AHL: Branches of Board of Information in the provinces?

A: No branches.

AHL: Do you have personal friends who might help us?

A: (Laughs) I know most of the Governors.

AHL: How can we get documents on the local situations?

A: Through the Governors. We have no reports on local areas here. Home Affairs has some.

AHL: Any people not now in Gov't whom we should see?

A: Newspapermen would be best--especially economic section. Some papers have good clipping files. Asaki has especially good library.

AHL: What can you tell us about methods of promoting good morale?

A: That was work of Board of Information--this office. We asked Prefectural Governors to enhance morale of the people. When Japan retreated from Guadalcanal, Prefectural Governors were asked to hold up spirits of people by saying that second defense line would be able to meet the enemy.

After Leyte it became very difficult because that had been called the battle of Tenno San.

AHL: How was Organization standard and policy determined?

A: The B. of I. had a meeting of responsible officials of B. of I. and representatives of Army and Navy and other Ministries. Subject matter explained and discussed. Decision sent out to regional Governors. These notified the Prefectural Governors. Each of these notified his branches. So on down to lowest branches. Controlled newspapers and magazines and also sent officials to lecture.

AHL: Were there meetings and orders carried out regularly?

A: No, but as occasion demanded. (a little general discussion of information systems in Government.) Did the US really tell the people about war reverses?

AHL: Yes, with exception of delay in reporting figures which might aid the enemy.

I; I could not help admiring how from the start the US publicity always spoke firmly of ultimate victory.

AHL: Can you give me examples of morale control--Leyte or bombing reactions something specific?

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A: Pearl Harbor--people have nothing but belief in absolute victory. But with Midway, people wondered if this was complete victory even though announcement said so. The various battles of the Solomon Islands, people were optimistic due to lack of full information. But after loss of Guadal-Canal, people came to have serious view. People expected that a firm defense would be maintained at Rabaul. But American forces by-passed this. Came into inner defense lines and people were rather disappointed. Then came sea battles off Philippines, those people thought would be decisive. In Japan, Battles of Philippines and Formosa were reported as victories, but foreign information said they were American. Thinking people in Japan became suspicious. Then came battle of Leyte.

AHL: How was this handled in the Board of Information.

A: No other method than the idea that Japan could win by total effort although Gov't had little confidence (laughing) to tell the truth, what the Gov't had been saying up to that time did not win the confidence of the people. Each time the Gov't said "next time we win"--that process was repeated until people ultimately lost confidence--what HQ said.

AHL: Were propaganda policies put in writing?

A: Chiefly done verbally to officials concerned.

AHL: Where are statements in writing that you should handle this situation in such and such a way?

A: Perhaps--I came late into this work.

AHL: I would like to get them.

A: We will try--may be hard because they scattered, perhaps many such documents destroyed.

I: Psychological reaction of Japanese to air raids would make a very interesting PhD thesis, wouldn't?

A: In recent times only 70 newspapers in Japan and supplied only by Domei which facilitated Gov't action. Unity of information was very easy.

AHL: ("Scape-goat" term explained) Any Scape goat during the war? A: Japanese people as a whole was scapegoat. Military were criticized for their failure. Fighting forces told people ultimate victory would be theirs, but with reverses people began to criticize military. About time of Battle of Iwajalein and Tarawa militarists blamed the people for not working enough.

AHL: Any other?

A: Friction? - Not much between various classes, mostly between people and fighting services.

AHL: Army-Navy?

A: May have been some difference of attitude but these were strictly secret.

AHL: Rich and poor?

A: Heard almost nothing of this.

AHL: Urban and rural?

A: Some; rural people tho't city folks had luxurious life, thought city folks deserved the hardships they suffered during the war. Tokyo had 7 million. I was faced with job of scattering this population. Decreased to 2 million as a result of evacuation.

AHL: Resident-evacuee friction?

A: (Laughs) Yes, yes, many cases: 1st Gov't considered population too

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large to handle and so evacuation was planned. Thought to move people by families as a unit--tried to move to relatives. Planned in latter part of 1943 and carried to June of 44. At that time this was practically no trouble. Moving to relatives--or people who are rich enough to move to country and carry on there. In latter half of 1944, Gov't began moving people to rural areas with the individual as the unit instead of the family especially old people and primary school children--3 to 6 grade. Younger children could not be moved as individuals, of course. Not much trouble with children because the country people were rather in sympathy with them.

At end of 1944 Gov't decided to restrict Tokyo to 2 million as maximum. All limitation on evacuation were lifted. This was cause of friction with rural people because many of the Tokyo people had no friends or relatives in districts to which they went. Different opinions and attitudes, trouble over food. Naturally ~~xx~~ rural people were envious of the metropolitan citizens. Country people were living on humble food. Tokyo citizens had better clothes and many of them did not work and paid high prices for food. Farm produce prices soared due to high prices paid by evacuees.

I: I myself was told that by my relatives in the country.

A: Take for example price of rice; an Isho (rice measure) ought to cost 50 to 60 sen. Actually sold at 60 yen.

I: In fact, I went to my native city and my sister told me prices went up, up, up, due to evacuees. Farmers would not part with vegetables unless she paid so much, this was in Ibaraki prefecture. Farmers no longer had to carry food to Tokyo but shoppers came to the door.

A: Food was most serious question. The best policy would be to have food come to market through proper channels and have fair distribution and then if not enough to ask, supervise a HQ to have food imported. Farmers must be persuaded to put out some of their crop for public consumption but their cooperation is doubtful because they are apprehensive for future. Once they were promised that there would be importation from abroad they would be willing to have some of this food assigned for public consumption. Rice harvested now will last till April but after that, situation will be bad unless some importation to carry through to next harvesting period.

CA: Did Board of Information have any program about sharing food with evacuees?

I: To enlighten people?

CA: Yes.

A: B. of I. played some part but largely done by Agriculture and Forestry. There were 3 important items: 1) Increased production of airplanes, 2) production of food and 3) maintenance of morale. These, the three Gov't always had in mind. Most posters were devoted to this.

AHL: Friction with Koreans?

B: There was during the war-time practically no friction with Koreans who had been in Japan for long periods. Trouble arose with Koreans brought in for mines and working in harbors. They did not know our customs, demanded higher wages and better treatment. Many were promised return to Korea after a year, but due to war situation they could not be returned.

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AHL: Riots?

A: In no case of violence. When you go to Kokura in Fukuoka you will get that information. Many miners there.

AHL: How many Koreans in Japan?

A: About 3 or 4 million as a rough estimate. That figure available at Ministry of Public Welfare.

AHL: Friction with Chinese?

A: Practically no trouble with Chinese in Japan. Some later imported and they were in some cases troublesome but not so much as with the Koreans.

AHL: Eta?

A: Idea of Eta has almost disappeared. Years ago that term was often on lips of people, but term now under bann; now no feeling of descrimination.

File G-2

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HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
APO #234
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

ANNEX B

Home Ministry
Room 501

INTERROGATION NO. 109
(Obtain from G-2)

PLACE _____
DATE 22 October 1945

Division of Origin Morale Division
Subject: Changes in Morale under Bombing

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Mr. AKABANE Yutaka, Vice-Chief of the Cabinet Information Board, an official of the Home Ministry, lately Executive Officer, Air Raids Protection Headquarters His office, in the Home Office building, Tokyo.

Where interviewed _____
Lt Commander Leighton and Major Arensberg

Interrogator _____
Lt McCoy

Interpreter _____
see Interrogators

Allied Officers Present _____

Summary: Mr. Akabane discussed changes in Japanese civilian morale, factors effecting such changes, and the relative importance of the factors springing from strategic bombing and those of other origin. Among the latter were the United States propaganda pamphlets, the long and short radio waves broadcasts of the US, the news of Japan's successive defeats, and the cutting off by submarine of Japans overseas connections with China and the southern regions.

Japanese morale moved from a level of high confidence into a feeling of doubt of either victory or draw by the time of the loss of Saipan. But morale did not break until the great B-29 raids, particularly not until after the fire-raid of March 10th. With the continuance of the raids, and with their powerful effects upon civilian livelihood, morale sank into complete demoralization, fear, and insistence upon bringing the war to an end. Sufferings over lack of fuel, food, water; disruptions of transport and work; and fear of the raids spread by evacuees and by news of damage were the chief secondary factors of demoralization brought about by the bombings.

Distribution: All Personnel

120
HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
APO #234
c/o Postmaster, San Francisco

INTERROGATION NO. 137

PLACE: TOKYO
TIME & DATE 24 Oct. 45.

DIVISION OF ORIGIN: MORALE.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Mr. AKABANE, YUTAKA, Vice-Chief Cabinet Information Bureau.

Where interviewed: Home Ministry, Mr. AKABANE'S Office.

Interrogator: Lt. Comdr., A.H. LEIGHTON

Interpreter: None.

Allied Officers Present: Major Conrad ARENSBERG.

SUMMARY:

Morale control described - From a meeting of the Board of Information with Army, Navy and other ministry representatives, decisions in regard to propaganda problems would be achieved. Board of Information would then instruct all organs of publication, radio, and the regional chiefs, who in turn instructed the prefectural governors and so on down the line to the lowest branches of the Government. The Board of Information also sent out men to lecture in different parts of Japan. The policy-making meetings of the Board were not regular, but called when the occasion dictated.

The Japanese policy of always promising that the next battle would be victorious and of claiming victories where there were none gradually undermined the confidence of the people. This began at Guadalcanal, but became most marked after Leyte.

During the last year of the war there was considerable friction between the people and the ministry, each blaming the other for defeats. There was no important friction between upper and lower classes, or between the Japanese and the Chinese or Koreans in Japan, though some of the imported labor from both China and Korea gave some trouble. In the last year of the war, there was a good deal of ill-feeling between the residents of rural districts and small towns on the one hand and the evacuated city dwellers on the other. The evacuees crowded the country people, caused prices to soar and did not contribute useful work to life in the country.

The main propaganda lines of the Board of Information were (1) To increase the production of planes, (2) increase the production of food, and (3) to maintain morale (confidence in victory)

G-2

*Summary
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U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
APO #234
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

ANNEX B

INTERROGATION NO. 137
(Obtain from G-2)

PLACE Tokyo
DATE 24 Oct 45

Division of Origin Morale

Subject: Morale and Propaganda during the war.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Mr. Akabane, Yutaka, Vice-Chief Cabinet Information Bureau.

Where interviewed Home Ministry, Mr. Akabane's office.

Interrogator Lt. Cmdr. A. H. Leighton

Interpreter none

Allied Officers Present Major Conrad Arensberg

Summary:

Morale control described - From a meeting of the Board of Information with Army, Navy and other Ministry representatives, decisions in regard to propaganda problems would be achieved. Board of Information would then instruct all organs of publication, radio, and the regional chiefs, who in turn instructed the prefectural governors and so on down the line to the lowest branches of the Government. The Board of Information also sent out men to lecture in different parts of Japan. The policy-making meetings of the Board were not regular, but called when occasion dictated.

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The main propaganda lines of the Board of Information were 1.) To increase the production of planes, 2.) increase the production of food, and 3.) to maintain morale (confidence in victory.)

Distribution: all divisions

9-2
UNITED STATES STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
MORALE DIVISION
(Pacific)

INTERVIEW: Fifth Interview with AKABANE, Yutaka, Vice-Chief, Cabinet Board of Information. The 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviews were held 22, 24, 31 October, and 19 November).

SUBJECT: Securing information on source data dealing with information and propaganda control.

TIME: 9-10 AM 8 December 1945
INTERVIEWER: Capt. Wm. Magistretti
INTERPRETER: Mr. Henry Shimanouchi

SETTING: Formal Interview in Mr. Akabane's Office

SUMMARY: Description of organizational changes within the Bureau of Information during wartime.

REPORT:

Mr. Akabane was first asked about the minutes of the meetings of the Deliberative Chamber. He stated that they were not available -- they had been burned. The same was probably true of the directives from the section in charge of newspapers (Dai Ni Bu). Mr. Akabane stated that Mr. MUTO, Tomio, of the Japanese-American Conversation Institute might have some knowledge of these subjects.

Mr. Akabane was then asked about the changes in the organization of the Bureau of Information as shown in charts 1 through 3, submitted following interview #4. He stated that Chart #2 was the organization of the Bureau for the longest period of time. This was the time during which the Army and Navy officers were put in as heads of some of the Sections.

Under Chart #1 the Bureau was made up of representatives of four ministries of the Japanese government. The first division was headed by the Navy; the second by the Army; the third by the Foreign Office; the fourth by the Home Ministry; and the fifth division by the Ministry of Communications. In general, the functions of the Ministry of Information consisted of handling all internal news, external news, propaganda in line with national policy, censorship and general cultural activities.

The reason for the expansion of the Bureau from Chart 1 to Chart 2 was to make for a better organization and to put the Army and Navy Pro together. However, it should be noted that the Army strength predominated in all phases; the Army's political strength was greater.

The Deliberative Chamber was made up of representatives of the Army, Navy, Foreign Office, the GEA Ministry, the Home Ministry and the

Bureau. Their function was to decide on and set up general policy. They met frequently. The functions of its business office were the ordinary functions performed by any government personnel and/or records section.

With reference to the Censorship operations, Akabane pointed out that there were two sections charged with those duties. One in the Bureau of Information and the other in the Home Ministry. However, in actuality, these were one and the same organization, inasmuch as the head of the section in the Home Ministry performed both duties. The distinction as to function was that censorship under the Home Ministry laws pertained to tranquility and to morals, whereas censorship under the Bureau of Information pertained to military secrets and general wartime secrets.

With regard to the research activities, Akabane stated that the internal research activities consisted of a perusal of various newspapers, Domei reports, Army and Navy war results reports, and reports from the Peace Preservation Section of the Home Ministry.

The Foreign Affairs Section's function consisted of an examination of monitoring reports and Domei international news coverage. Mr. Akabane stated that there was merely a reading of these various reports in both sections by the experts and an oral discussion of the news. There were no written reports of any kind. He gave the Imphal campaign on the border of India as an example. This campaign was discussed for a week as to policy and then when the time for a decision came it was made in an hour's time.

Mr. Akabane gave Mr. HISATOMI, Tatsuo, who was formerly with the Japanese Radio, as a man well-versed in propaganda affairs. Mr. Hisatomi was Akabane's predecessor in office.

In discussing Chart #2 he stated that Col. Matsumura headed Division #1 and Capt. Kurihara was his deputy. Col. SASAKI headed the first section and a naval officer named Takase headed the Second Division.

Due to the time limitations this was all that was covered in the interview.