

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

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PLACE: Tokyo, Japan.

DATE: 19 Nov. 45.

INTERROGATION NO. 419

Division of Origin: Morale.

Subject: Wartime Morale.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Dr. Kawai, chief editorial writer of the Nippon Times, who holds a BA, MA and PhD from Stanford. From 1932 to 1940 taught history at the University of California at Los Angeles. Was in Japan on a year's leave of absence when the war broke out.

Where interviewed: Tokyo, office of the Nippon Times.

Interrogator: Mr. D. B. Truman.

Allied Officers Present: None.

Summary:

Topics

1. Changes in popular morale.
2. Popular support of governing groups.
3. Morale of government people and intellectuals.
4. Black listening.
5. Political moves for a peace.
6. Operations of the Board of Information - lack of coordination of Army and Navy news.
7. Radio monitoring organization.
8. List of possible informants from press and radio fields.

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T - represents Truman: K - represents Kawai

- T. We are interested in the effects of bombing upon the morale of the Japanese people. We are conducting a sample survey throughout the islands, but in addition we are seeking the observations of specially informed people, like yourself, on changes in morale. After we have discussed these matters, I hope you will be willing to suggest the names of others in the newspaper field with whom we might talk.
- K. I should be very glad to do what I can. I do not think that the popular morale was ever very high, even in 1941 at the beginning. It was as if the people were shocked by the Emperor's statement. I was surprised, as I expected to see bands, parades, cheering, and the like, But there was no deep emotion. It was in striking contrast to the Russo-Japanese War. The people then had been taught to hate the Russians and to regard them as enemies, so the war was popular. This time it was a matter of indifference and of shock. During the first few months this feeling changed to one of over-confidence as news of victories came in. But it was not a spontaneous feeling, rather one whipped up by propaganda. However, the over-confidence did not last long. The people did not know the true war news, but they began to feel the shortages.
- T. When did this feeling begin?
- K. From the second year of the war on. There was distinct dissatisfaction, though of course it was not open.
- T. What happened when the raids began?
- K. There was a big change with the beginning of the air raids. There was real terror then.
- T. Did this feeling begin with the Doolittle raid?
- K. No, the Doolittle raid was a farce. People looked on it as a curiosity and did not even bother to go to the shelters. At the same time there was considerable criticism of the Army for letting the Doolittle raid get through. The sirens did not even go off until the planes were over the city and the sky was full of anti-aircraft fire. I was out and saw the firing, but thought it was just practice, although it seemed strange to be practicing with what appeared to be live shells. Then I saw the planes and realized it was a raid. Then finally the sirens were sounded. There was considerable criticism after that.
- T. What forms did the criticism take?
- K. It was strictly talk, in the streets.
- T. Did criticism increase when the B-29 raids began?
- K. When the B-29 raids began the people really knew the war was lost. Before that they knew that some islands had been lost, but islands mean nothing to the ordinary man. When the big raids came, the feeling of defeat began. But the B-29 raids were beyond the point of criticism. People felt that they were all in for it, and there was no purpose in criticism.

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T. Did the big raids increase solidarity of the people and their leaders?

K. No, except on a neighborhood basis. Neighbors drew together more, to help one another, but outside of that it was every-one for himself.

T. Then criticism of the government was not increased?

K. No, excepting the A.R.P. They were criticized because they were always changing their directives and people came to think they didn't know what they were doing. But generally the raids were too big for mere criticism of the government. They were beyond that. People had completely lost confidence in the governing group.

T. Whom do you refer to as the governing group?

K. The military and the professional civil servants.

T. How about the present government?

K. The people have no confidence in the present government. They feel that it is made up of men of good will but very doubtful ability.

T. How may this lack of confidence be shown in the coming Diet elections?

K. It may not be shown because it is not well organized. The liberal party undoubtedly will sweep the elections, since it is made up of old-line politicians who have their machines and plenty of money. It will take about 50,000 yen to be a serious candidate, and the liberals can easily get that. But they know nothing of the people's needs and are liberal in the sense of 19th century English liberalism - freedom for the individual and the big industrialist to do what he wants without interference from the government. The Social Democrats are the only ones who understand the people's needs, and they have little money or organization. I am confident that in the course of months, however, under their leadership this lack of confidence in the old-line politicians will make an impression. But the next Diet will not be a good one.

T. Would you tell me something of your own experiences during the war and in the raids?

K. Of course, I had access to outside news, so I knew pretty well what was going on. I knew the raids were going to be severe. At that time (beginning of the war) I was living close in town, this side of the Sinzyuku station. As soon as Saipan fell, I was sure this area was dangerous and I moved way out in the suburbs. As a matter of fact, the area I left was severely bombed in one of the early raids. My first experience was right here in December. I was working on some copy when the alarm sounded. I paid no attention, as I had observed that most of the bombs were being dropped on the airplane factories and fields in the Tachikawa area. The copy boys had fled, so I took my own copy to the composing room. There was an explosion nearby and I instinctively dropped on to my belly. Then there was a terrific explosion which shook the building like an earthquake and blew the north windows out. The bomb had landed 100 feet away. Then I was really scared.

- T. That was an HE raid, I guess. Which were worse for the people, the HE or fire raids?
- K. The fire raids, because they came at night. One night, one of the first raids, 100,000 people were killed when they hit a slum area.
- T. What was the morale effect of that raid?
- K. This was a slum raid, the early one, and it caused a hopeless feeling, but there was no panic yet.
- T. Why?
- K. Because the people were not influential. If the raid had come in a "better" section, the victims would have been able to spread more concern. There were many strange things after that raid. For instance, the victims were evacuated to private homes in a nearby good residential section. They were so pitiful that their hosts were kind and gave them all kinds of attention. But the reaction was just the reverse of what was expected. Instead of being grateful, the slum people resented the fact that in war, while they were suffering, people should be having such luxuries, ones they couldn't dream of having even in peace. So they looted houses wholesale, and the police could do nothing about it. They were tough people from one of the worst slum areas. After that people were evacuated not to private homes but to schools and public buildings.
- T. Did that function last?
- K. Oh no, the B-29s soon bombed the good section also, and then all were in the same boat.
- T. What were the reactions of the people in your class?
- K. I, of course, thought the war was hopeless from the start, I had been lecturing all over the country, telling about the United States. I was warned about being arrested before the war, and, of course, after it started I stopped all my lecturing. The amount of defeat feeling varied with the individual. By the time of the Marianas, the intellectuals were certain that the war was lost.
- T. But the people generally did not feel it that early?
- K. No, the real terror came with those leaflets naming the places to be bombed. When you did that and they bombed the places named, then there was real terror.
- T. What did the people do?
- K. They took to the hills.  
Some had access, like myself, to the monitoring reports.
- T. They were pretty careful of those, and it was risky, but of course the news leaked out on the short comings of the military.
- T. Did you get news from our short-wave or from the Saipan radio?
- K. No. Short-wave sets were forbidden, and I tried to get Saipan but it was impossible.

T. Jamming?

K. Jamming partly, but the reception was very bad. It is my guess that very few people heard the Saipan radio.

T. How about the government people?

K. The Army prevented the government people from expressing the feeling of defeat which they had quite early. The Army headquarters people themselves gave up hope early, but the official propaganda was effective with the middle office ranks, and these were stubborn. The lower officers were reserves, as in your army, and they early were defeated. Also the higher officers in the headquarters. But the field officers, who were regulars, had too little information to realize that the war was lost. Headquarters had a hard time controlling the enthusiasm of the field officers and keeping them from fighting a negotiated peace.

T. How early did this defeat feeling appear in the government and at headquarters?

K. There was some willingness to negotiate as early as the last days of Tojo, but especially at the time of the Koiso government's entry. There were, however, still many high bitter-enders.

T. What can you tell me about the maneuvers connected with the government's suing for peace?

K. By the time of the Koiso cabinet, the government was working toward attempting a peace of some sort. They put a good deal of hope in the U.S.S.R. But even more they hoped for a peace with China, to be used as a lever for negotiated peace with the U.S. The Suzuki cabinet was recognized as a peace cabinet, but it balked at unconditional surrender. The Foreign Office was committed to unconditional surrender, while the Army held out for a bargain of some sort. The fight was between these two.

T. From what groups did the peace group draw adherents?

K. They early had the support of the professional diplomats, virtually all of them. Then they began to draw from the business interests, even the Zaibatsu pretty much, excepting on the munitions industry. (These new Zaibatsu will certainly be wiped out by property and war income taxes.)

T. What can you tell me about the measures used to control information and morale?

K. The theory of the Cabinet Board of Information was censorship, not much of a positive sort. Actually the Board had little authority. It was a sort of clearing house for the Ministries. For example, the censorship section was divided into 3 parts -- an Army unit, a navy unit, and a Home Ministry (Police) unit.

T. Were these coordinated?

K. There was almost no coordination. Often we would print something released by the Navy section and the Army censors would raise hell with us and vice versa. For example, when the Aleutians were lost, the Navy wanted to release the full story, but the Army refused. It was compromised in some way. At the time of Okinawa there was a difference between the Army and the Navy. The latter wanted to make it a last ditch battle and throw everything into it -- asking for peace if it failed. The Army wanted to hold out for a last stand in the home land. The Navy sent in Kamikazes and used everything, while the Army held back planes. So they would issue contradictory statements on the number of planes available. I recall one day when we carried two such contradictory statements on the front page.

T. Did the Board issue any sort of directives?

K. I am almost sure there were none. They operated rather on the basis of official handouts. All news was official or it wasn't issued.

T. Your operations must have been pretty difficult.

K.. They were, but we actually enjoyed an increase in circulation, as we were the only paper which tried to print the original English texts of foreign speeches. Many intellectuals wanted original texts. Of course, they were censored, but we printed what we could, when we could go through the red-tape of getting them.

T. Where might I check on the availability of written records?

K. Your best bet would be the minutes of the Board of Information. They would be the nearest thing to directives. You see, the Ministries were represented on the Board. They agreed on general policy, and each of them carried it out as they saw fit. But there was little coordination.

T. What can you tell me about the radio monitoring and analysis set-up?

K. There was no single service. The Army, Navy, Foreign Office, and Domei each had one. There was no coordination among them. The Foreign Office set-up was the most complete, even the Army and the Navy used its reports. Domei was the poorest.

T. How about analysis?

K. There was no analysis attempted, so far as I know.

Dr. Kawai suggested the following as informants:

1. Mr. Kabayama, who was head of the Foreign Office Monitoring Station, now in the Publicity Bureau of the Foreign Office (Kohobu).
2. Mr. Isamu Inouye - was in charge of foreign cables (including radio) at Domei. He is now with the Jiji agency.

3. Mr. Bunshiro Suzuki, who was at Asahi. He was recently ousted in the shake-up at Asahi. I believe he is one of the stockholders or directors still. He was head of the publications department, other than daily publications. Speaks English.
4. Mr. Yasutaro (?) Kusuyama, managing editor of the Mainichi Shimbun. He knows plenty, but he is not talkative. Knows some English.
5. Mr. Goro Nagano, Asahi.
6. Mr. George Nakamoto, formerly of Radio Tokyo. Was in charge of the "zero hour", Tokyo Rose, etc., and other features. Columbia graduate in journalism. May be with one of the U.S. news services, papers, or radio, probably an American broadcasting company.
7. Mr. T. Shimanouchi, Board of Information. Not talkative. Knows some English.
8. Mr. Aritake, Chief Columnist at Asahi. Ranks as editorial writer. Good. Knows no English.

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