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

INTERROGATION NO. (USSBS 192)
(NAV NO. 43)

Place: Tokyo
Date: 30 October 1945.
Time: 1400

Division of Origin: Naval Analysis Division.

Subject: Japanese Naval Planning.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Captain OHMAE, Toshikazu, IJN, is a Naval Officer of 25 years service. In June 1942 he was transferred from the Bureau of Military Affairs to the Staff of the Southeast Area Fleet, in which capacity he planned and directed the First Battle of SAVO ISLAND. From December 1943 he was on the Staff of the First Mobile Fleet and took part in the planning and execution of the operations for the defense of the MARIANAS and of the PHILIPPINES as Chief of Staff to Vice Admiral OZAWA, CinC First Mobile Fleet and Third Fleet. From January 1945 he has been attached to the Naval General Staff. He was also Staff Officer 11th Air Fleet and 3rd Mobile Fleet.

Where interviewed: Naval War College.

Interrogator: Captain T.J. Hedding, USN

Interpreter: Lt. (jg) R.P. Brown, USNR

Allied Officers present: None

SUMMARY

The chief objective of this interrogation was to clarify and amplify the answers to the questionaire on Japanese Naval Planning. Captain OHMAE is probably the most intelligent and well informed Japanese Naval Officer that has been interrogated by this section. His background of assignments in this war have given him exceptional qualifications on this subject. He participated in many of the important campaigns and completed his war duties as Chief of the 1st Section of the Naval General Staff. It is considered that the opinions expressed by Captain OHMAE are indicative of the opinions of responsible and informed Naval Officers.

TRANSCRIPT

Q. In regard to the answers submitted by The Historical Research Department of the Naval General Staff on the subject of Japanese Naval Planning, is the basis factual, are the opinions expressed your own and do you consider these opinions represent the opinions of The Naval General Staff?
A. That pertaining to specific operational plans, and the descriptions of these plans are factual; they are based on records. The opinions expressed are my own, and I feel that they do represent in general the opinions of the members of the Naval General Staff.

Q. You have stated that there was a plan to attack HAWAII in March 1942 by shore-based aircraft. From what bases were these attacks to be launched?
A. After the occupation of MIDWAY, attacks would be launched from there.

Q. I would like you to amplify the remarks on the effects of the air raid on TOKYO on 18 April 1942.
A. This raid, though in itself not very destructive, caused considerable discussion and confirmed the need for eastward expansion to acquire bases to protect the home islands, the mainland.

Q. When was the original plan for the Greater East Asia war conceived?
A. I believe about 1938. It was revised and modified from time to time.

Q. In the "Z" Operation Plan, it was planned for the fleet to participate. When U.S. Forces attacked the MARSHALLS in January 1944, why did the fleet not participate in accordance with the plan?
A. At MIDWAY, although we lost some of our carriers, a large percentage of the pilots were recovered. As there were no carriers for these pilots, the air groups were reorganized and sent to RABAUL where these groups sustained very heavy losses. At the time of the MARSHALLS Campaign there were no qualified air groups for our carriers, and we could not commit the fleet without carriers.

Q. Did the "AGO" Plan supercede the "Z" Plan?
A. As a result of the RABAUL operations in which the Japanese Naval Air Force was depleted, the "AGO" Operation Plan was evolved.

Q. In your opinion what were the basic causes for the failure of JAPAN to carry out her views in the Greater East Asia War?
A. First, the Japanese were short on spirit, the military spirit was weak, our people were too concerned with their individual problems. The military were too concerned in their own spheres. The Japanese really did not have the true "Bushido" Secondly, the leadership was weak. The Army was the true leader, and theirs was a selfish attitude. This was also true to some extent of the Navy.
Specific causes were: first, the defeat of the Japanese Air Force, the lack of materials, the lack of mechanical skills and the lack of transportation. They were in that order.

Q. Was the failure military or economic?
A. I believe the economic failure was more important. The failure of air power was the reason for the military failure. I believe too much emphasis was put on the offensive in our

Naval thinking and in our War College training.

Q. At what point in the war did it become evident to the Naval General Staff that failure was inevitable?
A. As for myself, after CORAL SEA and MIDWAY, I still had hope; and after GUADALCANAL in the later part of 1942, I felt we could not win, only we would not lose. After the MARIANAS, we had little chance. After OKINAWA, it was all over.

Q. Do you think that JAPAN was decisively defeated?
A. We lost.

Q. Was the Japanese Navy as a group, the responsible officers, eager to start this war?
A. The Navy was not very eager, but the Army was. The Navy had no voice in the formulation of National policies, the Army had the most influence. I believe that was due to their previous successes in MANCHUKO and CHINA. The Navy was opposed to the TRI-PARTE PACT.

Q. What influence did the Navy have in the prosecution of the war; on the termination of the war?
A. The Army influence was always the stronger; however, at the end, I believe the Navy had more influence. The Emperor trusted the Navy more than the Army at the end. He trusted Admiral SUZUKI and Admiral YONAI.