

HEADQUARTERS

U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY  
(PACIFIC)

APO 234 C/O PM San Francisco

INTERROGATION NO. 523

Date: 11 December 1945

Place: Tokyo

Division of Origin: Military Analysis

Subject: Japanese aims in China and Korea.

Personnel Interrogated and Background: General ABE Nobuyuki

Governor General of KOREA. Former PREMIER. Graduate of Military Academy 1897. Studied in Germany. Commander FORMOSA Garrison 1932. Member SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL 1933 to March 1936. Resigned following Tokyo Army Revolt of 26 February 1936 and retired during 1936. August 39-June 1940, PREMIER, and for a few weeks concurrently MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. April-December 1940 Special Ambassador to NANKING. 1942, President of National Service Council. May 1942, Appointed to House of Peers by EMPEROR. 1943-44, President, Imperial Rule Assistance Political Society. Since 23 July 1944, Governor-General of KOREA.

Where INTERROGATED: At the home of General ABE.

Interrogator: Maj Gen Orvil A ANDERSON, USA

Interpreter: Lt Cmdr Walter NICHOLS, USNR

SUMMARY

General ABE discusses his part in the Korean and Chinese operations of the Japanese Army.

- Q. May I explain briefly to the General that our questions treat with the employment of air as we employed it in this war, beginning with the Japanese employment of air, then we follow up later with our employment of air; that we are trying to get a military evaluation of the air weapon in war and that, in approaching this, we feel that the General isn't going to give us a terrific amount because it was during the early phases when he was in the war in CHINA, in which we are interested. We also have a degree of interest in the CHINESE THEATRE and the objectives there in the matter, prior to our entrance into the war and afterward, in order to determine the amount of diversion of effort you were having to give to CHINA after we became engaged (in the war).
- A. I regret that I retired in 1936 and since that time have not had much to do with military affairs. I want to explain my retirement as being the direct result of the revolt of the young Army officers in TOKYO, if you will recall, in February 1936. I resigned, feeling that I was personally responsible for the irresponsibility of the younger officers in the Army; that was the cause of my resignation. Since that time I haven't been in touch with military affairs. However, I will be glad to answer any questions which I am able to answer, so please go ahead and ask them.
- Q. I would like to ask the General this question: What do you consider to be the major underlying causes of that revolt in 1936 by the younger echelon of officers? What were the basic underlying causes of that, almost, insurrection?
- A. The revolt in February of 1936 came as a complete surprise to me. Up to that time neither I nor anyone else in high military authority had been aware of this great dissatisfaction among the younger officers. However, it developed that the cause of the revolt was the younger officers' dissatisfaction with the loose policy of the Government and the lack of thoroughness, as they believed, of the military officers of old standing. They wanted a much firmer Japanese military policy, and they believed the only way to accomplish a change was to demonstrate, as they did, by killing senior statesmen and high ranking army officials who were then in power. I myself escaped assassination but I believed, as I said before, that it was my responsibility because, despite the feelings of the younger officers, they had no right to commit such acts so contrary to Japanese military discipline. I felt that it was due to lack of thorough training in the military indoctrination of the younger officers that this had come about: therefore I myself voluntarily resigned, feeling it was my responsibility that such a thing could have happened in Army circles.
- Q. Was it a policy that treated purely with internal organization or was it a policy that pointed toward straight objectives, to a war program, an objective program from a straight concept?
- A. The revolt was caused more or less by internal policies and not necessarily by foreign policies. At the time, both the Government and the military authorities in power were in favor of reducing the size of the Army and cutting down on military expenditures for various reasons, the chief one being economic. As a matter of fact, seven or eight years prior to that, there had been a substantial cut in the Japanese armed forces. At the time there had been no objection. However, as the years went by, leading up to 1936, the MANCHURIAN INCIDENT had occurred, and younger officers in the Japanese Army felt that it was going to develop into an important turn in Japanese foreign affairs and did not believe that Japan was fully prepared to carry on the military responsibilities which it was taking upon itself. Therefore a great dissatisfaction arose among the younger officers with the policies of the senior statesmen and of the military authorities; seeing that nothing was being done to provide for a larger scale military operation which they believed was impending, the younger officers--and I stress the youth: first lieutenants chiefly--took it upon themselves to make known to the whole

nation the state of affairs and the state of unpreparedness by demonstration in this fashion. I believe it was chiefly a lack of appreciation of the state of preparedness of the nation which caused this; however the MANCHURIAN INCIDENT had a direct bearing on it because that was the immediate cause of the dissatisfaction.

Q. Does the General have a fairly sound appreciation of Japanese national objective, i.e., your purposes at the time of the MANCHURIAN INCIDENT: What was the objective that you expected to achieve when that incident was initiated, was created:

A. In my opinion, it is a matter of great regret that the MANCHURIAN INCIDENT isn't given more consideration by historians as the primary cause of the present great war. In my opinion it was the sole cause of the war: the present great war of the GREATER EAST ASIA war, and the war with the UNITED STATES and BRITAIN, was a direct result of the CHINESE INCIDENT which in turn was a direct result of the MANCHURIAN INCIDENT. In my opinion the MANCHURIAN trouble started back before the RUSSO-JAPANESE war.

The main points of difference between RUSSIA and JAPAN were: (1) The boundary between MANCHURIA and KOREA; (2) more important, whether there should be a boundary at all and whether one country should control both MANCHURIA and KOREA; or whether both should control them. The RUSSIANS entered MANCHURIA and posed a threat to JAPAN, but even went further than that and were threatening to advance into KOREA. The Japanese demanded that the Russians move out of Manchuria. Negotiations were carried on unsuccessfully in that respect; therefore Japan made a proposal that a boundary should be drawn along the AMUR RIVER and that the Russians should control one side of that boundary and the Japanese the other, the southern side, Korea, with a boundary of "no-man's land" in between. However, in my opinion, the Russians never received this proposal because they continued hostile actions which seemed to indicate a coming invasion of KOREA. For that reason, Japan went to war with Russia and, as you are aware, won the war and, due to the help of the United States at the PORTSMOUTH TREATY, managed to control MANCHURIA.

The big bone of contention was the MANCHURIAN RAILWAY which RUSSIA had built and which Russia claimed had been stolen from her by the Japanese quite aside from the question of territory. Although Japan, with the help of President (Theodore) Roosevelt at the PORTSMOUTH TREATY won victory in the RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, it resulted in the long run in a failure for Japan because Japan's primary objective had been to secure independence from the Russians and from the CHINESE for the Koreans; another objective had been to secure independence for MANCHURIA. JAPAN'S main interest in these affairs was Japan's extreme need for food and raw materials from the Continent. One would think that Japan would look to China for manufactured goods and raw materials and food because China is so large and so densely populated. Unfortunately China was in no position to trade with Japan because it was not on an industrial basis and was in a state of confusion politically; therefore Japan intended to develop Manchuria as a large industrial nation and buy from Manchuria the goods it needed and also food it needed.

I believe that immediately after the RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR the feeling between the Chinese and the Japanese was one of friendship. The Chinese, I believe, at that time knew that Japan had done a good thing, and I myself feel no embarrassment in stating this opinion to even Chinese. I believe that there are still people in China alive today who have the same opinion regarding the developments of that time. However, as time went on, younger Chinese who had not had anything to do with the RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR and political developments at that time, began to grow up, and since China in days of old had been the greatest nation, militarily and politically and philosophically, and in every other respect, in the Orient, these people felt as they grew up and read Chinese History and looked back at China's glorious past, that Japan was a usurper, and as they had always looked down on Japan in the past they felt very keenly Japan's encroachment on the Continent and were determined to restore China to its former glory.

Shortly after the RUSSO-JAPANESE war there was a civil war in China of large proportions in which these younger people participated. Their doctrine spread all through China, and the feeling between China and Japan gradually grew worse and worse, particularly in Manchuria where younger elements grew up which allied themselves with the Chinese Insurgents. As a result of disturbances in Manchuria, Japan had to quell rebellions and uprisings inside the borders of Manchuria, and gradually this feeling between the Chinese and Japanese in this area was lost. The principles for which the Japanese had fought the RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR went by the board.

To go back a little: One could not say with a clear conscience that Japan was fighting the RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR for the sake of the Chinese because Japan was naturally fighting for her own national existence and was trying to thwart the Russian threat to her security. However, the results of the Russo-Japanese War were certainly beneficial to the Chinese who were themselves threatened by the Russians, and at that time I believe the Chinese were more or less grateful to Japan for having settled the Manchurian problem. However, as I said before, the younger elements growing up forgot their former appreciation of Japan's having helped them in such a way and looked only upon Japan's occupation of Manchuria as an encroachment upon Chinese Territory; therefore difficulties were bound to spring up.

The Chinese themselves were frequently torn with civil strife and had no real central government, and the nation itself was composed mostly of warring bands and tribes. Eventually the Japanese were faced with a problem of fighting several enemies causing disturbances within Manchuria. Originally everything went very well.

The Japanese never looked upon their advance into Manchuria as a grandizement of Japanese territory; we regarded it merely as a stabilizing of one portion of China in order to secure it and develop it economically--of course for the use of Japan; however, with a sincere desire to develop it as a nation for the Manchurians themselves. Although other nations looked upon it as really a puppet state, the Japanese themselves regarded it as a truly Manchurian State, and our role in Manchuria was merely that of policing and supporting the Government and furnishing it with a necessary force.

The Chinese themselves, however, like most of the other nations in the world, regarded Japan as an aggressor nation and frequent disturbances broke out along the Northwest Manchurian border with Chinese troops in Northern China. Incidents were very frequent along the Northwest border, and the Japanese were constantly forced to quell rebellions and to throw out large forces of equipped soldiers who were disturbing the peace of Manchuria. The friction along that border became so great that eventually it turned into an organized warfare, as you know, in 1937 with the outbreak of the real China Incident, the original causes of which date way back to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war. The principal cause was, in my opinion the way in which the Chinese began to regard the Japanese as aggressors whereas formerly they had looked upon us somewhat differently. It was which was the great cause of misunderstanding.

Q. That was, up to 1937?

A. Yes, There was continuous strife all along the border there until finally it grew into the proportions of a major war.

Japan never looked upon Manchuria as a Japanese-dominated state; it merely looked upon it as an independent state supported by the force of Japanese arms.

Q. Would you treat very generally with the progressive occupation of Chinese Territory coming out of the so-called Chinese Incident of 1937--this Expansion militarily into China proper?

A. The original disturbance which led to the immediate outbreak of war between China and Japan was a very small incident in the vicinity of PEIPING on July 7, 1937 at the MARCO POLO Bridge. It was purely a local disturbance. The Chinese troops had been harrassing Japanese troops in the vicinity, and the Japanese tried to make an agreement with the Chinese, so that they would withdraw beyond the river and the Japanese would stay on their side of the river, and by such an agreement the Japanese hoped that friction could be avoided. On July 11 the Chinese made an agreement with the Japanese and yielded to these terms. However, they refused to carry out the terms of the agreement; therefore the Japanese were left with no choice but to fight the Chinese and push them back across the river.

Meanwhile negotiations were still going on with the NANKING Government. No matter how many proposals the Japanese made to the Nanking Government, the Nanking Government turned a deaf ear, and no negotiations could be made at all to settle this local disturbance. The Chinese were reinforcing their troops, and the Japanese, although they did not have a large force originally

in the area, were forced to bring in more troops and this grew into a minor war along the river bank. Eventually the Japanese were forced to push the Chinese even further back. Meanwhile, although we attempted to carry on negotiations with the Nanking Government, we met with no success in our proposals and had gotten in so far that in order to stop this disturbance completely, we had to go a little further, and gradually got sucked in more and more into a large-scale offensive.

Eventually we were attacked in SHANGHAI because of the ill feeling caused by the fighting around PEIPING. This forced the Japanese to land troops in SHANGHAI. These were purely local disturbances which the Japanese could not settle by negotiations and had to try to settle by force. Thus these local skirmishes developed into a series of major hostilities all over the country. The Japanese Naval Forces in SHANGHAI were attacked by the Chinese, and the Japanese were forced to bring in Army troops. Eventually they occupied the whole city and threw the Chinese forces out. Meanwhile the local warfare up near PEIPING had been continuing, so there was now heavy fighting on two fronts.

Immediately after the capture of SHANGHAI, the Japanese attempted to negotiate with the Nanking Government. The Nanking Government entered into negotiations with the Japanese, and a serious attempt was made to bring the trouble to an end. However, in the meantime, the troops in the field were continuing their action, and the battles eventually spread out over a large territory and it became a major conflict. The Japanese did everything they could to persuade the Chinese that it was necessary for the peace of ASIA for the Chinese and the Japanese to settle this problem amicably with no further bloodshed, and there were certain elements for the Chinese in the Nanking Government who believed that and made a sincere effort to reach a solution. However, there were other elements in the Nanking Government which now brought up the Manchurian Incident as the main cause of the trouble and accused Japan of dominating Manchuria and insisted that Japan give Manchuria its independence. The actual state of affairs was, of course, that Manchuria was independent and that therefore a lot of this talk went over our heads because, as far as the Japanese were concerned, Manchuria was independent and there wasn't much we could do to improve that, but the Chinese were insistent that the Japanese give Manchuria its independence. Therefore the negotiations broke down on the basis of a complete misunderstanding of the situation in Manchuria.

Meanwhile the fighting had spread out over a large area, and the Chinese were making desperate appeals to ENGLAND, the UNITED STATES and other nations for supplies and assistance, believing that, if they did obtain assistance in materials and supplies, they could hold out and continue the war. The Japanese eventually did everything possible to bring this matter to a close and had as a sign of weakness on the part of the Japanese and, not believing that the Japanese were sincere in their efforts, believed that these negotiations were the result of Japan's fear that it was not up to the task of conquering China. Therefore believing that, if they could hold out a little longer, Japan would eventually lose because of its inferiority, the Chinese decided to continue the strife as long as possible. The incident developed into a series of large-scale battles continuing with no particular aim as far as the Japanese were concerned, but definitely a type of warfare which the Japanese were powerless to bring to a close, having gotten in so far. This general trend continued all throughout the years until eventually it culminated in the GREATER EAST ASIA WAR.

That is my explanation of how the MANCHURIAN INCIDENT led directly up to the great war in ASIA.

- Q. During your tour as Premier of Japan, in 1939 and 1940 while you were in that key position, what were your plans at that time if you made plans to terminate the Chinese Incident? What action did you take as Premier to close that Incident, to reach a solution?

- A. At the time I became Premier in August of 1939, the war in China was still raging, Japan had continued to make proposals, and I believed that Japan was on the point of making some sort of negotiated peace with the Chinese because a certain group of men from Chungking--the Chinese Government having moved from Nanking to Hankow to Chungking by this time--had come to Shanghai with the intention of arranging a peace with Japan and establishing a government in China. However, no action was taken in settling up this government, for just at that time the war in Europe broke out.

There were various opinions in Japan about the war in EUROPE: There were those who thought that Japan should tie in with GERMANY and ITALY; and others who thought that Japan should stay out of the EUROPEAN WAR entirely. However I believe that the general tendency in Japan at that time was an inclination towards association with Germany and Italy which later bore fruit in the TRI-PARTITE PACT. I myself, however, was definitely opposed to that policy, and I issued a proclamation stating that Japan was to stay out of EUROPEAN Affairs, to take no part in this war, which was a war of aggression, and I made it very clear that Japan's main mission was to bring to a close the CHINESE INCIDENT which was unfortunate not only for Japan and for the Chinese but unfortunate for all the peoples of ASIA.

On this point I came to loggerheads with the Army and the Navy. I have been told of an article which appeared in American newspapers recently stating that I resigned as Premier and my Cabinet fell because I could not agree with the military, the Army and because the War Minister resigned causing the collapse of the Cabinet. But that is not true; actually I could not agree with either the Army or the Navy, and I resigned in January of 1940 after only a few months in office because of a complete difference of opinion between myself and supporters, and the Army and the Navy, regarding what should be done in ASIA. I resigned feeling that I accomplished nothing.

- Q. But you did not actually resign until June of 1940?

- A. I lasted only four months; August 30 I became PREMIER and resigned in January.

- Q. What were the major differences, the major factors, that interposed between your views on the settling of the China Incident and the Army views? Why did the Army oppose you--what were the Army's objections to your plan for closing the China Incident?

- A. The cause of my resignation was not so much connected with the Army and Navy on any specific point in my policy; it was merely the general attitude of the Army and Navy towards me. I myself had little support in the Parliament and had trouble enough getting the support of parliament for my own ideas, and the Army and Navy were opposed to almost everything I said. I resigned because I merely felt I was accomplishing no purpose whatsoever since, if I advocated certain policies I couldn't carry them out because of lack of support. Therefore it would be hard to select any specific point on which my cabinet fell. It was merely that I did not have the support of the Army and Navy or have strong support in the Parliament.

- Q. Was it support to you as a person, as an individual, or was it opposition to policies? Was it personalities and not policies?

- A. It was an opposition both to myself personally and to my policies, but the main point of difference in regard to my policies was my economic policy. The Army and the Navy were making large demands for financial support, economic support, to the war program and I was not in accord with their views. I had my own economic theories. I was myself personally at odds with Parliament. The Army and Navy stirred up Parliament against me, making a very difficult position for me. The thing really came to a head on the economic issue. If you will look at the papers of that time, you will see that they carried large stories about the great arguments going on in the Parliament, going on between, more or less, the whole Parliament and Prime Minister Abe. If you look at it with hindsight, you will find that now my views were the ideal ones for that time, but at the time

nobody agreed with me, and therefore rather than attempt to continue against such opposition and being unwilling to yield on my own ideals, I thought it was best for me to resign. I myself made the comment then that there was a sort of miniature China Incident inside the Cabinet, where each side lined up with verbal guns and pistols, weapons, and everything, but couldn't reach any arrangement at all. I resigned feeling that I couldn't give way to their policies and couldn't carry my own through.

Q. I gather that there was a demand for more economical support to the military war machine, building up the machine?

A. It is exactly as you said: The Army and Navy were demanding more funds for the greater expenditures they were having to meet because of the China Incident. Naturally they had to get permission for the allotment of funds from Parliament, and were trying to get their enlarged expenditure program through against much opposition. The Army and Navy actually were anxious to get this appropriation without causing the collapse of the Cabinet because they knew if the Cabinet fell it would require the formation of another Cabinet before they could get their appropriation granted. However, it came to the point where either the Army and Navy would have to withdraw their demands or Premier Abe would have to yield on his views. Therefore, rather than yield to a policy which I myself did not believe in, I resigned and let YONAI carry on.

Q. Were either the Army or the Navy at this time opposed to the policy of closing the Chinese Incident short of complete military victory or were they in general harmony with the matter of terminating the Chinese Incident? Were either Army or Navy taking an active stand against the Premier at that time in his efforts to settle that incident?

A. The Army and Navy from the very beginning had been anxious to bring the China Incident to a close, and I believe that was the case up to the very end. I had the support and emissaries making negotiations with CHUNG-KING had the support of the Army and Navy in attempting to reach a settlement. However, the economic question arose merely because the military believed a solution was impossible and that military expenditures were going to increase.

Q. In what way did American pressure affect? Where was it a factor in the desire of the Japanese to affect a termination of the Chinese Incident? Did American pressure constitute a factor in any way? If so to what degree?

A. I believe the chief result of American pressure was the continuation of the Chinese Incident, as far as Japan itself was concerned, I feel that none of the people, or the people in responsible positions in the Government desired to go to war with the United States. At that time, I myself did not think that this would develop into a war with the United States. I believed that right up to the very end, until the pressure became so extreme that Japan had no way of backing out, the people of Japan had no desire to fight a war against the United States. On the other hand to my statement that American pressure served to continue the Chinese Incident, American support to the Chungking Government, both in regard to sympathy and supplying of materials, gave the Chinese encouragement and thwarted any Japanese attempt to reach a settlement with them because they felt that if the United States and other countries were supporting them in their cause they could continue the war pretty safely from Chungking and that eventually they could win out. This bolstered up Chinese morale and ability to carry on the war to such an extent that, no matter what proposals Japan made, the Chinese were unwilling to listen to them.

Q. How did the Chinese Incident affect or influence relations between Japan and Russia, particularly the Manchurian Occupation? How did it affect Russia relationships with Japan?

A. At the very beginning of the Chinese Incident, one of Japan's main purposes had been to guard against the Communist element in China. One of our great talking points in the negotiations with the Chinese Government was cooperation of the Japanese and Chinese Governments against the Chinese Communist

parties. We reached no success in those negotiations with the Chinese Government; however when we established the Nanking Government one of the most important points of our agreement with the Nanking Government was a common defense against the Russian influence through the Chinese Communist Party. I know that the Russians were very much opposed to the Japanese attempts to control Russian activities in China; therefore there was a great difference between Japan and Russia on that point, although it never came to a head. However, throughout this whole incident and throughout this war, the Japanese felt that this question of the Chinese Communists might very well bring the Russians into the Japanese war--that the Russians might take an active part in the war because of Japan's attempt to control political affairs in China by opposing the Chinese Communists who were sponsored by Russia.

- Q. I'd like to just touch on the political and military significance of the Manchurian Incident on the AMUR RIVER in the fall of 1939 and the reasons behind the solution that Japan made to terminate that incident. What were your objectives?
- A. The incident broke out before I became Premier, but was settled while I was in office. The Japanese feeling on the matter was that this was purely a local incident which arose because of the extreme proximity of the large forces of the Russian and Japanese armies along the border. The Japanese looked on it as a local incident and wished to do everything in their power to prevent it from growing into a major conflict. It turned out in the negotiations that the Russians seemed to have the same attitude and wished to localize the conflict; therefore there wasn't too much difficulty in arranging a peaceful settlement.
- Q. That's what I wanted to get, whether or not there was an objective on the part of Japan to, if necessary, yield a bit to prevent a military clash with Russia at the time, what your objective was, whether it was or was not to do what you could to prevent a collision with Russian military forces on the Northern flank?
- A. The Japanese viewed the incident from an overall point of view and were determined to do everything in their power to settle it as a local incident rather than let it grow into a conflict between Russia and Japan. Therefore in our negotiations at MOSCOW through our ambassador, we were willing to yield to a certain extent if a solution could be arranged. It turned out that the Russians were also willing to settle it locally, and therefore where we had more or less an established border previously, at the conclusion of the settlement had gained a little in territory and Russia had gained a little so that there was no longer the same boundary but an agreement had been reached as to where the border should be, both sides gaining and losing a little. Japan's attitude had been that she was willing to yield a little bit if a settlement could be reached.
- Q. I take it from that that the policy of Japan at that time was to avoid war, avoid a major collision with Russia?
- A. Yes, that is exactly right.
- Q. I'd like to touch for just a brief period on KOREA and the time that the General became the Governor-General--just a general statement as to the state of Korea at the time during which you served as Governor. When you took over in July 1944 as Governor-General of KOREA, what condition did you find Korea in, its general state, particularly in respect to the responsibilities and general attitude of the people to the government that was being maintained by Japan. Then I'd like to get your views on the future of Korea as you saw it both in an economic and a political manner--how you viewed the future of Korea, economically and politically in its relationship to Japan?



- A. This is an extremely difficult problem and one over which I have been very concerned. Since you have asked the question I will answer it, but I would like to point out that I am going to give you my own personal views.

To understand the situation in KOREA one would have to study Korean history and know all about it. Generally speaking, however, Japan has had close political relation with Korea for from four to five hundred years, and Japanese commercial and political influence in Korea have been strong for at least that many years. In the 35 years of Japanese occupation Korea has been improved considerably. The Japanese have used Korean labor; however we have poured into Korea our own resources and our own technicians and have improved the lot of the Korean farmer, have developed Korean mining, have developed Korean education. Whereas before the Japanese occupation the had no money at all, he now represents a fairly solid economic group. Previously there had been very little mining; now mining is done on a large scale in Korea. Prior to Japanese occupation there had been virtually no schools of anykind: by last year the Japanese had finally built enough schools --middle schools and grade schools--to assure a fair proportion of the Korean people a general education. However you still have in Korea a vast number of people who can neither read nor write.

To go back a little, the only Koreans who at present know what Korea was like before the Japanese occupation are those over 50 or 60. You have a large group of younger men, say from 30 to 40, who know Korea as it is today, who look at Korea as a country which has always been in its present condition, and who are not at all appreciative of Japan's development of their country. Therefore they are naturally under the impression that Japan merely captured the country in its present condition and they give no credit to the Japanese effort to develop the country.

Korea has always been a country dominated by foreign influences. Whereas now you have the years counted by, say, MEIJI and SHOWA--which is the system the Japanese use for counting, giving the years as the such-and-such year of a reign of the EMPEROR, prior to the Japanese occupation the Koreans used a similar Chinese calendar, using the Chinese Emperors. Throughout Korean history you get a strong foreign influence with literally no Korean independence of political or economic thought. As a result of this, I believe that Korean political thinking at the present time is generally speaking one which is definitely dependent upon any strong influence from abroad. There are in Korea those who have been educated by the Japanese and who appreciate what Japan had done from a technological point of view, for instance, and perhaps ten percent of the people therefore believe and possibly still do believe that Korea should string along with Japan and cooperate in the development of ASIA. On the other hand, you get ten percent, perhaps, of the people believing that Korea should break away from Japan entirely and become independent.

Actually the situation in Korea as it existed during my Governor-Generalship was that, on the upper levels you had very little disagreement between Japanese and Koreans; however you had minor unpleasant incidents occurring all the time. There were naturally small officials in the Japanese Government there who took advantage of the situation and took advantage of the Koreans; so you had graft down in the lower level. You also had uneducated Koreans who were very bitter about such activities on the part of the lower Japanese officials and so we constantly had strife on a very low level between Koreans and Japanese, mostly localized arguments with the police or the military authorities.

However, since, as I explain before, the younger group of Koreans felt very strongly that Japan had taken over Korea as it is now and, not realizing the gradual development of Korea, felt very strong about such conflicts with the Japanese authority. This feeling spread from them to larger groups so that, at the time I was Governor-General, there was a considerable degree of unrest and a very strong feeling among the Koreans generally that the Japanese were taking advantage of them and that it was an oppressive Government. I believe that, largely speaking, Korea was willing to go on the winning side, whichever side it was; that there were those who just sat and thought, if Japan wins, that's fine, we'll stay with Japan, and if somebody else wins, we'll tie in with them.

I became Governor-General of Korea at a very difficult time because it was August of 1944, at a time when it was becoming obvious even to the Koreans that the Japanese were losing the war. Therefore there was naturally a strong feeling of anxiety among the Koreans as to what was to become of them.

Meanwhile the situation in Japan had deteriorated to such an extent that Japan had to make greater demands upon the Koreans for rice and laborers and it was my duty to provide Japan with larger shipments of rice from Korea and with more laborers. Unfortunately, for three years prior to 1944 the Koreans had experienced very unfavorable weather and the crops for those three years had been extremely poor so that, at the time when Japan made demands for larger shipments of rice, they were very much troubled to feed themselves, let alone feed Japan. An attempt was made to offset this shortage by shipping into Korea beans and wheat from Manchuria, but still there was a great food shortage in Korea itself, and the people felt very keenly that Japan was depriving them of their food supplies. In the question of laborers, the Japanese did not necessarily require skilled labor, and some very low-class people were taken in large quantities and shipped to Japan. However these people were extraordinarily difficult to deal with because they could neither read nor write--they couldn't read newspapers, didn't know what was going on; they had no concept of what the war was about and even had no concept of what war actually is so that we were unable to explain to them the reasons for their transshipment to Japan. When you tried to explain what war was about, they thought it was something like a street fight, on a similar scale, and couldn't understand why they were being dragged into it. I myself, knowing what the situation in Korea was and being very sympathetic myself toward the Koreans, found myself in the very difficult position of forcing upon them the demands of the Japanese Government. I myself wrote various editorials and articles in newspapers trying to explain to the Koreans what the policy of Japan was and that Japan wasn't really trying to take advantage of the Koreans. I even sent representatives out to give lectures at different gatherings to explain Japan's policy. I believe if you could search through the records of Korean newspapers of that time you would find a clear representation of my policies.

However, I met with reproof from the Japanese Government because there were large elements in Japan which said, "Why worry about the Koreans? After all we're in a war, and if they're not willing to cooperate with Japan, don't worry about them, just make them cooperate." I myself viewed this whole war from the point of view of the benefit to all the peoples involved; whereas I myself felt that this war should not only benefit Japan but also the Koreans and other peoples fighting on Japan's side, I was forced to deprive the Koreans of any hope of any benefit, which put me in an exceedingly difficult position personally. However, being a representative of the Japanese in the Korean Government I naturally had to instrument the policy of my government.

The situation in Korea deteriorated to such an extent that the Koreans began to have a very strong antipathy toward the Japanese because of the demands for more rice and more laborers. However I myself would like to say that I feel very deeply hurt by statement made, for instance, by General MacArthur regarding the treatment of the Koreans by the Japanese in which MacArthur has described the condition of the Koreans as nothing more than slavery. I myself feel that, although there were naturally examples of Japanese conduct and Japanese activity in Korea which could be looked on as exploitation by the Japanese with no benefit to the Koreans, I believe that if you see the picture as a whole it is undeniable that Japan has done a great deal towards the development of Korea. As an example you could take the hydro-electric power development up in the Northern section of Korea where Japan built many large dams--for instance the second largest dam in the Japanese Empire was in the Northern part of Korea. The Japanese have developed Korea from a technological point of view and in another way as I have mentioned before. In the same way Japan developed Manchuria.

In the 35 years Japan had Korea, I believe we could not have done more for the people; the same applying to Manchuria. Why? You take a country like Manchuria which had absolutely nothing, not even a form of Government before the Japanese took over and in these few years it has become a very productive and independent nation. The same applies in a lesser extent to Korea, but I believe that this is due largely to the problems of education in Korea. Therefore I feel myself that, no matter what is said on the subject, Japan did everything in its power to help the Koreans, and although it is unfortunate that toward the end there was a strong antipathy because of Japan's policies in the emergency, I myself am of the opinion that it was a very fair policy towards the Koreans, and I feel nothing but regret over the attitude to Japan's policy taken by foreigners.

Regarding the present situation in Korea, and probable future developments, I believe there will be two causes of a great deal of trouble: (1) The Past history of Korea before Japanese occupation. If you look through Korean history you will see that you had the vast majority of the people uneducated with a small group of ruling people, the princes of blood, who controlled finances--almost the entire finances and capital--of the country. Inside the ruling class there were also factions and in this sort of feudal state in which you had a complete suppression of the farmers, you had various political factions among the moneyed classes which were rivaling each other for power over the people. The people themselves never had anything to do with the Government because the Government was always taxing them very heavily and always confiscating their money. Whenever farmers began to gather personal fortunes these were immediately taken away from them. So you had a system of feudal government in which the people themselves had nothing to say about the way in which they were ruled and had not no power to or money with which to combat the factions which were ruling them. On the other hand you had within the ruling groups a continuous inter-factional warfare so that there was a very unstable form of government persisting throughout recent Korean history.

I believe that now it is extremely important for the Koreans to set up immediately a truly representative form of Government of all the people, otherwise they will revert to the type of Government they had before, particularly because of the money and educational problems involved. (2) Another factor is the Russian domination of Northern Korea above Lat 38. The people, as I understand it, who are now in power in that area are the COMMUNISTIC KOREANS. This is going to present a great problem if Korea is to become a single, unified, independent nation, because you will have not only the tendency of the Koreans as a people to combat each other, but you will have the additional influence of the Communists in the North.

Generally speaking I believe that the Koreans are still incapable of ruling themselves and that through any form of independent Government set up now might provide a temporary solution to the problem, eventually all the factors which I have mentioned previously will come to the fore and the system will break down again into the same type of inter-factional warfare within the Korean Government. For that reason I believe it is extremely important for the United States to assist the Koreans in setting up a sound Government immediately, and not only to set up this Government but also to supervise it for the time being; otherwise, if it is allowed to go its own way, it will just fall apart.

Q. At the time you were Premier, was there any special emphasis from the Army and the Navy to accelerate the development and the expansion of their two armed air forces, if necessary at the expense of the ground? Was there special emphasis placed on the development and expansion of their air arms, if you recall?

A. Since, by this time, the CHINA INCIDENT was in full swing, the Japanese had set up a military government on a wartime basis. The Government, even the Premier, had no specific knowledge of what the Army or Navy wanted its appropriations for. Ordinarily, in a peacetime Government the Army and Navy would have to submit a request for funds to enlarge, say, the air force, to enlarge this or that, build more battleships, and so on, specifying the purpose. However the minute the Nation is declared in a state of war, on a wartime footing, the military authorities are no longer required to explain what they need their funds for, the principle being that if such debates occur in the Parliament, foreign powers will know what Japan is doing from a military point of view. Therefore I can't tell what those expenditures were to be used for; all I know is that the Army and Navy requests for large appropriations. The military had built a great wall of secrecy around themselves and none of us in the Government on the outside knew what was taking place inside the wall.