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HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
APO 234 c/o PM San Francisco

INTERROGATION NO. 497

PLACE: Tokyo
DATE: 3 December 1945

Division of Origin: Military Analysis Division.

Subject: Effect of Allied air activity on Japanese planning of the Solomons, Rabaul and New Guinea operations and on Japan's ability to carry out those plans; planning and objectives of the Burma campaign.

Personnel Interrogated and Background: Lt General MIYAZAKI Shuichi

Understands but does not speak English. Graduate of Military Academy and Army War College. 1938-39, Staff Officer with Army in CHINA (Hankow). Regimental commander with KWANTUNG ARMY, MANCHURIA (Chichibar) from 1939-1940. Instructor at War College 1934 and for 1½ years 1940-41. From 1942-43, SOLOMONS Area; finally assuming position of Chief of Staff, 17th Army, GUADALCANAL. 1943-44, Chief Secretary, War College. Sept-Dec 1944, with the KWANGTSE ARMY, South China. Since 14 Dec 44, Chief 1st Section (Operations) SAMBO HOMBU.

Where Interrogated: WAR MINISTRY

Interrogator: Col Ramsay D POTTS, AC

Interpreter: Lt Cmdr Walter NICHOLS, USNR

Allied Officers Present: Col Philip COLE, GSC

SUMMARY

General MIYAZAKI stated that notes of staff meetings on operational plans were not available since they were all burned on August 16th. He could not give a detailed account of the manner in which allied air activity forced the Japanese to alter their basic plans. However, he gave a brief history of the Guadalcanal operation, describing the effect of bombing on the Japanese attempt to retake the island. Destruction of supply lines as a result of the sinking of transports was the biggest problem. Four engine bombers caused the principal damage to ships in Rabaul Harbor and "small-type" planes caused most of the damage to ships along the sea route to Guadalcanal. The General promised to provide the Survey with a record of his personal experiences in the Rabaul-Solomons campaign and an analysis of why the Japanese failed to hold in that area. He also contracted to have a similar document written about the New Guinea campaign by someone who knew of the operations in that area from the Tokyo point of view. He explained that detailed information about actual operations in New Guinea was not available in Tokyo, since due to the interdiction of shipping routes there had been virtually no communication with New Guinea for almost three years. He stated that the Solomons, Rabaul and New Guinea were considered one theatre of operations by the Japanese High Command. The original purpose of the Burma Campaign, he said, was to cut the Burma Road, but little is known in Tokyo about the situation because it was planned by the field commanders in Saigon. He does not believe the Japanese even intended to capture Ceylon or invade India.

RESTRICTED

497 -1-



Q. We expected that General MIYAZAKI would have notes on the IMPERIAL STAFF conferences.

A. Operational plans?

Q. Yes, operational plans throughout the war.

A. All the detailed records of the staff meetings and plans of operation were destroyed by burning at the end of the war so that we have on hand no records. However, I received information that the subject would be Staff Planning, so I have prepared some notes on the subject which I would like to discuss.

Q. First of all can you give us a biographical sketch of your career, going back as far as 1926?

A. From 1929 to 1933 I was with SAMBO HOMBU as a Captain and Major. My chief duties were in connection with Military History. After that I became an instructor in the War College, in 1934. In 1938 I went to CHINA as a Staff Officer with the Army, operating around HANKOW. I stayed in CHINA until 1939. Then I became the Commander of a Regiment for one year in MANCHURIA, at Chichihar. That would bring me up to 1940. For a year and a half, from 1940 to 1941, I was an instructor in the War College.

Q. What subjects did you teach?

A. I was teaching both tactics and military history.

Q. What sort of tactics: ground tactics, ground air tactics, infantry?

A. Ground tactics. From Sept 1942 to May 1943 I was in action down in the Southern Area on GUADALCANAL. I was the Chief of Staff of the 17th Army which was operating in the SOLOMONS: I became Chief of Staff just at the time of the withdrawal from GUADALCANAL. I had some harrowing experiences down there.

Q. In what way—because of air bombardment or surface action or what?

A. The chief difficulty was lack of food.

Q. You couldn't get your transports through?

A. No, no transportation, no supplies. For four months, from May to August 1943 I was attached to SAMBO HOMBU. Two of those four months I spent in a hospital due to stomach trouble from malnutrition. For one year after that I acted as the Chief Secretary of the WAR COLLEGE. From September 1944 to December 1944 I was in SOUTH CHINA with the KWANGSI Army operating chiefly with the purpose of capturing your airfields in that theatre.

Q. September to December of '44?

A. Yes. Then on December 14 I was recalled to SAMBO HOMBU to become the Chief of the First Section, which is concerned with Operations.

Q. Did you hold that on through the war?

A. Yes.

Q. In the matter of records, notes, etc., we were told when we interrogated General UMEZU that you would try to get for us personal records that were kept as to the proceedings in these planning conferences, not just from December '44 on but all the way back to the beginning of the war, and I wondered if you have had any success in that?

A. These are not official records.

RESTRICTED

- Q. No, just memoirs, records that we could microfilm then return the original documents to the owner.
- A. General UMEZU had a talk with me about it, but I do not recall his having said anything specific about trying to collect records. I was asked to get opinions and information, if possible, from people who were in SAMBO HOMBUR before my time. The specific assignment given me was to reconstruct from memory and any available source, the history of the planning from December 1944 to the end of the war.
- Q. Only from '44 on?
- A. Yes, I understood that it only covered my period, and I have therefore attempted to reconstruct such information.
- Q. We are more interested in the planning in the early stages of the war because we have a fairly good record of the planning from 1944 on; we know pretty well what you were trying to do. It is in the early part that we have some doubts as to why you did this, and why you did that; was it the lack of shipping, was it lack of appreciation of the speed with which we would move into NEW GUINEA, or other outposts, etc.? Can you secure for us not only the opinions which would be valuable, of course, but also records which would be useful in reconstructing the plans of operations which were going on in NEW GUINEA, the SOLOMONS, BURMA, etc., particularly those three areas I have just named?
- A. At the present moment there are no really important people in Tokyo who were on the planning staffs at that time, but there are some members who know quite a few things about those campaigns and the planning phases of the campaigns. From now on if you will give me more or less of an outline of the kind of thing you would like to know, I will see that an attempt is made to reconstruct those three campaigns.
- Q. We have already submitted questionnaires on the activities of the Japanese Air Force and what effect our operations had on that. What we want is a reconstruction from the Japanese point of view of what our air--accomplished in bombing you, in strafing you, in knocking down your airplanes in the air, in bringing up supplies for our own troops, and in sinking your transports--or, in other words, the Japanese estimate of what our air power did to stop your advance and then to push you back in those three areas?
- A. This is mainly from the point of view of the ground forces?
- Q. Yes, from the overall standpoint, the Supreme Commander of any given area, the group forces particularly: How did it modify his planning?
- A. I, myself, can give you a general discussion of the subject, i.e., regarding the effects of your air attack upon our forces in relation to the changes made in our original plans as a result of these air attacks. Some plans were changed as a result of air attacks, and though it would be difficult to enter into it in detail, I can give you a rough outline of the way our major plans were changed.
- May I start out by saying that the biggest problem of all was destruction of our supply lines as a result of air attack upon shipping.
- Q. That is one of the things we want. What changes did you make in your plans, not just as the result of our immediate attacks upon troops or strong points or supply dumps, but also as a result of the attacks against your airplanes in the air, attacks against your shipping in bringing up supplies, the whole picture?
- A. In August 1942, the Navy was constructing an airfield on GUADALCANAL; it was at that time that AMERICAN forces landed to take the airfield.

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In order to retake the airfield, one batallion was sent down from MINDANAO to reinforce GUADALCANAL; the entire batallion was wiped out during August, in the fighting on GUADALCANAL. In September three more batallions were sent down to reinforce those. By October two divisions were sent down; the 2nd Division and the 38th Division.

Q. From where?

A. The 2nd Division was sent from JAVA; the 38th Division, I believe, was stationed at HONGKONG--it was the division which had captured HONGKONG, and it was intact there, and the most mobile force we had. We brought it down as fast as possible because this was an extremely important operation. I myself, arrived in October, landing at GUADALCANAL from a destroyer.

Q. Now, both of these were top-notch fighting divisions, weren't they, among the best you had?

A. Yes, they were both top-notch divisions. On October 23 and 24 the Japanese concentrated around MT AUSTIN (which is slightly inland from the coast) were attacking HENDERSON FIELD from the rear through the jungle. We were on the very point of success in pushing the American troops back into the sea when we had to give up the attack because trench mortar fire was so severe and we had so many casualties that we were decimated. In addition to losing two crack divisions in the GUADALCANAL operations, we lost in that operation about 20,000 tons of shipping.

Despite these losses on GUADALCANAL we planned to retake the island in a second attempt. For this purpose we planned to send two more divisions which were both crack divisions: The 6th Division and the 20th Division, which happened to be available and mobile. An attempt was made to carry out this plan, but as the result of bombing we could not carry out the attack.

Col

COLE: Where were the attacks made, at the staging area or where?

A. The 20th Division was staged in RABAU, and the 6th Division was landed on BOUGANVILLE. By this time both the RABAU area and the area between BOUGANVILLE and GUADALCANAL had become almost impassable due to air attacks; also by the time we had moved the divisions this far, we had to give up the plan because we had lost any hope of retaking GUADALCANAL.

Q. Where did the bombing attacks interdict the movements of these divisions? Was it by destroying supplies, or by sinking some of the vessels carrying troops, or did attack destroy some of the men themselves in barracks areas? What types of planes, in addition, caused this interdiction, caused this trouble?

A. The biggest problem was the loss of ships. Actually the bombing of troops and troop concentrations on the ground were not much of a hindrance because, although the bombing scared everybody and made lots of noise and had an effect on morale, the actual destruction was not very great. The biggest problem was the loss of our capacity to move these troops to the fighting areas. (I myself was bombed and I still have a fragment of the bomb in my back). However in the case of ground forces, you can disperse your forces to guard against heavy destruction in one raid, and also you can dig in and prevent losses, which cannot be done aboard ship.

Col

COLE: I still want to know where were these particular ships sunk? Can you give me some idea? And what types of planes sank these ships that were going to be used for these two divisions?

A. The types of planes which gave us the most trouble were B-17s. We were affected by bombing; we thought your accuracy was accountable to your good bombsight.

Q. Are you sure they were B-17s?

A. May I qualify that by saying that that is what I thought they were. They were four-engine bombers.

Q. Were they attacking at night or in the daytime?

A. Mostly daylight attacks, although there were some at night.

Q. In the harbor or in the approaches to the harbor--?

A. The greatest number of ships were sunk in RABAUH Harbor. However there were also a great number sunk on the way down.

Q. In the approaches to the harbor?

A. Yes. The ships that were sunk while under way were sunk most frequently by small type planes rather than by B-17s or four-engine bombers.

Q. The ships that were sunk in the harbor were sunk by planes attacking from what altitude--low, medium--?

A. I think that most of the ships sunk in the harbor were sunk by large-type planes, namely four-engine bombers operating at high altitudes estimated to be about 7,000 or 8,000 metres.

Q. I didn't intend to get into, at this time, a full discussion of these various campaigns. I think you are in a very good position to write for us personally a description of the GUADALCANAL campaign and what effect our bombing of ships in RABAUH Harbor and in the approaches to RABAUH had on your efforts to reinforce your forces in the SOLOMONS area. If you could personally prepare that as a paper, we are very much interested in your personal experiences there, and we'd like an eye-witness account, a first-hand account, of the difficulties your units ran into, of the hardships you suffered there, of the hardships your men suffered, and especially what affect air attack had on preventing supplies of food, reinforcement of these divisions, reinforcement of arms, etc., coming into the GUADALCANAL-BOUGAINVILLE-SOLOMONS area. Could you prepare for us a personal account of that campaign, especially dwelling on your own personal experiences, in which we are very much interested?

A. I will try to write up for you what I can of it. I'd like to know about when you want this done.

Q. If you will try to do it within your power, we'd like to have that by the 12th of this month?

A. I'll do my best.

Q. We'd like to have your analysis of why you failed down there and why you failed to hold that area?

A. There is no longer any secrecy about anything as far as we are concerned, so I will be glad to write everything I can remember on the matter.

Q. Now I wonder if you would attempt to have someone who knows about this business in NEW GUINEA make a similar evaluation--write a similar paper--on the NEW GUINEA campaign up as far as HOLLANDIA?

A. That would be very difficult because there is hardly any one left in Japan now who took part in the NEW GUINEA campaign. As you are aware it's been almost three years since we have been able to supply them. Our communications have been entirely cut off from them for three years.

Q. Why couldn't you get in? Was it because of the air attacks which interdicted the area, that kept you from communicating?

A. Definitely because of your air superiority in that area; we couldn't even send supplies in by plane. Therefore our communications were entirely cut off; our supplies were cut off; we couldn't send personnel, military stores, or food. The reason we haven't had much communication from that area is that as you advanced up the coast, taking one place after another, our forces just went into the jungle with whatever they could carry with them. Naturally they ran out of batteries, and their communication equipment was too heavy.

Q. Do you mean that our air superiority was so great that you couldn't even bring ships along there, hugging the coast and sneaking in?

A. At first we were able to slip small ships through by moving them only at night and hiding them during the day, but towards the end it got to the point where we couldn't even do that.

Q. About what time was this, when the air blockade became so intense that you couldn't even get small ships through?

A. Practically from the end of 1943.

Q. Did you lose many ships in trying to reinforce NEW GUINEA?

A. Yes. We tried to reinforce but our ships were sunk.

Q. Did the loss of this shipping and the attempts to reinforce this area weaken the attempt to fight this campaign (Col POTTS indicated on a map the RABAUL - SOLOMONS - NEW GUINEA area), and this one (indicating MALAYA area)?

A. You would have to consider the RABAUL operations as part of the NEW GUINEA operations; therefore I could hardly say that one influenced the other because it was all one theatre of operations.

Q. In other words as far as you were concerned, the SOLOMONS-RABAUL-NEW GUINEA area was all considered one campaign?

A. Yes, we considered it as one theatre of operations (I mean by that your air superiority in this area, in the SOLOMONS and Southern NEW GUINEA area, made the circumstances of operations in the whole area exactly the same), but I'm not quite certain what you mean by "one campaign."

Q. What I mean is, the operations here were loosely tied up with operations here (indicating the two areas on the map). If you brought in supplies from RABAUL and had to ship them down to the SOLOMONS, then obviously you couldn't ship them to Southern NEW GUINEA. The campaigns were related in that any action in one area would affect the available strength in the other area.

A. Originally it was extended out to here (indicating area east of SOLOMONS) but it was viewed as a campaign in this area overall.

Q. Then you will attempt to have someone, if not from the NEW GUINEA point of view, from the TOKYO point of view, explain what was the meaning of these operations down here, the meaning of this air blockade in trying to get in supplies and reinforcements? Also

what was the significance of what we were doing over here (BURMA) as it stopped you from pushing further into the area? Did it stop you from supplying forces or from going on and conquering INDIA?

- A. Just to go back a second about what I said of the operations in NEW GUINEA: I said, that was all sea transport; therefore once the shipping was cut off we were entirely cut off. Although it had some effect on our ability to ship overseas, we were able to make up the difference by shipments into BURMA overland which we could not do down in NEW GUINEA because there was the water barrier.

I think, as a matter of opinion, somebody could write on the subject from TOKYO, somebody who was here in TOKYO at the time.

- Q. Well, if they can't do it circumstantially, then, we'd like a document which would be an informed opinion of the effect that our operations were having on your ability to carry on operations in these areas?

- A. I am the only person in TOKYO who was present and knows anything much about the operations in RABAUL and SOLOMONS area. There isn't anyone like myself in TOKYO who participated in the NEW GUINEA campaign.

- Q. Not a single person?

- A. Not a single person who would be in my position in regard to the other campaign, and therefore anything that was written would merely have to be looked on as a matter of opinion.

- Q. We will regard it as such, but we'd still like to have it.

Col.

COLE: Weren't there people in TOKYO on the Staff who had as their immediate and direct responsibility the knowledge of and handling of affairs in the NEW GUINEA area who are still around and who could supply this information?

- A. There are people in TOKYO whose responsibility was the operation in NEW GUINEA campaign from the TOKYO standpoint, but as I said before, were they to write about the campaign it would not be any more accurate than anything I could write about the RABAUL-SOLOMONS campaign.

- Q. We'd very much like to have that as their estimate of the significance of the various operations.

- A. I will handle it.

- Q. And those will be ready by the 12th?

- A. I will try and do it. I want to make certain that you understand that whatever is written here will be merely an opinion on what happened, the accuracy of which cannot be guaranteed. Of course when eventually these people come back from NEW GUINEA they will be able to write a complete and documentary history of it, but anything turned out between now and the 12th would have to be merely opinion.

- Q. Can this same report be done on the BURMA campaign?

- A. A report could be written in the same manner on the BURMA campaign. However I want to point out that the BURMA campaign was planned locally, and no orders were given by TOKYO as to how the operations in the BURMA theatre should be carried out.

- Q. Where did those come from: SINGAPORE?

A. SAIGON--I think the headquarters were at SAIGON.

Q. Who were the generals or the commanders who directed those BURMA operations, in 1942, '43, '44, and '45; in other words, the man who was in supreme command and could originate policy?

A. I can look that up for you.

Q. I'd like to have that at the same time. As a matter of fact I'd like to have that as soon as possible for we may find it necessary to go through SINGAPORE and RANGOON to talk to them.
and SAIGON

A. The man to see when you get down there would be General KIMURA.

Q. Why weren't operations in this area directed by TOKYO?

A. The situation was that the elements involved in campaigns in those areas, the obstacles to be overcome in the way of natural obstacles and the forces involved, were very little known in TOKYO, and I'm afraid that if orders were given to carry out certain operations, it would be impossible to carry out those operations for reasons not known in TOKYO; therefore, it was left entirely up to the local commander to decide where he could utilize his troops best, -strategically and otherwise; then he would report his plan to TOKYO and TOKYO would give him the go-ahead signal, provided he stated this plan could be carried out.

Q. What was the objective in that area? Didn't TOKYO issue some directive as to policy?

A. I don't really know about that, but as far as I know the entire operation was carried out from almost the beginning under the direct command of the local commander.

Q. Was it handled that way from the very beginning?

A. I don't think so.

I am not certain of the facts, but I know from what I have heard that, even in the field there, in the BURMA area, there was a great difference of opinion, some officers insisting that it was impossible to advance as far as IMPHAL and others insisting, they could do it right away, and things like that; so it was certainly a matter that TOKYO couldn't decide on. The purpose was to secure BURMA and capture all points strategically necessary for the defense of BURMA, IMPHAL being considered an essential defensive position.

Col

COLE: The purpose of the campaign was to interdict the BURMA ROAD; wasn't it?

A. Well, naturally.

Col

COLE: This was the main strategic mission, wasn't it?

A. The primary objective of the BURMA campaign was originally the cutting of the BURMA ROAD. Therefore the Army that had that task assigned to it went in there and managed to cut the road. However they no sooner cut the road than the Allies developed an air route from Northern India to KUMING and flew supplies in to CHINA. Therefore the next objective was to cut their air route. We believed that if we advanced as far as IMPHAL that we would be in a fair position to cut that supply route. However we knew that even if we advanced that far we were still slightly out of range of the main bases from which your planes were operating, and therefore we still could not be certain of achieving this object of cutting the air supply route.

- Q. Did you ever at any time intend to invade INDIA'S western area?
- A. I don't think we ever had a plan for invading INDIA because it would have been impossible.
- Q. Did you ever plan to take CEYLON at any time? After taking the ANDAMANS did you ever think of taking CEYLON as a means through air of controlling the shipping in this (Southern) area?
- A. I don't believe there was ever any plan for invading CEYLON because, in the first place it was beyond the power of the forces which the Japanese could assemble, and also because we had decided on a line through JAVA, through SUMATRA and up through the ANDAMANS and then up through BURMA as the first line of defense in this area. I don't believe that CEYLON could have been taken with the forces we had available.

END OF INTERROGATION

(Note: Another interview was, at this time, scheduled for 0930 hours the following day, to be conducted by Cols. COLE and RODENHAUSER).