

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

INTERROGATION NO: 280

Place: Tokyo
Date: 3 November 1945

Division of Origin: Military Analysis (See Note)

SUBJECT: Relationship of the Industrialist to War Planning

Personnel Interrogated and Background of Each:

1. Mr MOTORA, ex-President of MITSUBISHI HEAVY INDUSTRIES
2. Mr NOMURA, General Affairs Manager of MITSUBISHI

WHERE INTERVIEWED: Meiji Building, Room 722

SPECIAL NOTE:

This was a JOINT INTERROGATION conducted by Col RAMSAY D POTTS, AC, representing the USSBS, and by Mr ALEXANDER P DE SEVERSKY, former Major, AC representing the SECRETARY OF WAR.

Interpreter: Lt Cmdr Walter NICHOLS, USNR

Allied Officers
Present: None

SUMMARY:

Mr MOTORA makes a general appraisal of the results of the bombing of the MITSUBISHI plants and compares HE bombing with fire raids. The Japanese Government warned industry in advance that bombings would take place but did not estimate the full scale of such raids.

Neither the people nor the industrial leaders knew until the very end of the war, the extent of destruction of the Japanese NAVY, and the Government did not keep industry apprised of the outcome of operations in the field.

Mr MOTORA discusses the division of plant space between ARMY and NAVY and the attitude of the two services to technological improvements. He considers morale to have suffered considerably under the impacts of the fire raids causing absenteeism and a lowered efficiency.

Q. Do you remember how much damage was done by the one big bomb on your plant at Kobe?

A. Not much damage, but for one bomb, fairly heavy damage. The bomb did not hit a shelter.

Q. In your opinion how did the fire bomb attacks on heavy industry compare with HE attacks?

A. In plants constructed of wood the fire bombs were the most efficient. In plants constructed of steel, HE bombs exploding in the air beneath the roof caused the most damage. With respect to machinery alone, fire bombs caused the most damage because HE bombs would destroy only that machinery within the radius of the explosion.

Q. What relative effect did fire bombs and HE bombs have on underground water, power supply, and services?

A. HE bombs, of course, had a much greater effect on these services.

Q. With the continued progress of the war it became obvious that the relative technical quality of Japanese weapons was deteriorating. Was Mitsubishi held back in technological research by the military or were all possible measures taken to improve the product?

A. Mitsubishi made many suggestions to improve technically the various weapons but the Army and Navy had a resistance attitude in most cases and insisted upon volume production rather than showing a willingness to accept fewer weapons during a period of changing over to new types.

Q. Mitsubishi produced for both Army and Navy. Who assigned percentages of plants' capacity to each and who arbitrated divisions?

A. Allocations of plant space was about half to Army and half to Navy; and arbitration and adjustment was made by Army and Navy joint conference. Mitsubishi itself had no part in this allocation of plant space.

Q. As industrialists, when did you consider the struggle had become useless?

A. The first bombings of Mitsubishi occurred on December 13, 1944 when the airplane engine factory at Nagoya was bombed, and then again on December 19, 1944 when the airframes factory was bombed. By April of 1945, one third of the production capacity of Mitsubishi had been destroyed, and from then on there was a general feeling of helplessness and hopelessness.

Q. Did the Government keep Mitsubishi appraised of the progress of the war?

A. We were never informed of operations in the field but gathered the impression that matters were going badly by the increased tempo of American bombing.

Q. Was the surrender a great surprise?

A. A few days before surrender, some of these earlier defeats came out in their true light. Mitsubishi did not think that Japan could win the war because, despite increased production of fighter planes, the B-29s kept coming in greater and greater strength.

Q. Was Mitsubishi appraised of the loss of the Philippines?

A. The general announcement came but I do not remember how long after the defeat in the Philippines it was announced. No one knew until the very end the extent of the destruction of the Japanese Navy.

Q. Before the B-29 bombings occurred did the Government advise industry, and Mitsubishi in particular, of the probability of heavy bombing attacks?

Interrogation #280 (Cont'd)

A. Yes, we were advised to be prepared.

Q. Where did Mr. Motora spend his time during the war?

A. Tokyo.

Q. Did you know of the bombings in the other parts of Japan?

A. No, I only knew about the bombings of the Mitsubishi company in the other parts of Japan. I did not know what was happening to other industry and knew only rumors about bombings of the cities and villages.

Q. If they had been better informed could the industrialists have offered good advice on the conduct of the war?

A. If people had been generally informed they would have seen the hopelessness sooner, but their sense of loyalty would have kept them working right up to the end. I do not know whether industrialists could have offered better advice on the conduct of the war.

Q. How did the morale of the Mitsubishi workers stand up to the bombings?

A. Morale stood up as long as plants only were bombed, but when homes and towns were bombed and deaths occurred in the family, absenteeism increased, and morale became very low.

Q. Did you consider that a great deal of labor and materials could have been more usefully divided if it had been put into the components of air power?

A. At the beginning of the war the Navy was considered the first line of defense, and reliance was placed in battleships and traditional Naval weapons. Now, in looking back, it would have been better to place more reliance in carriers and in aircraft.