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Economic Warfare Section
 War Division
 Department of Justice
 Washington, D. C.

Interview Report

July 11, 1942

Re: Interview with Charles L.
 McNichols on Strategic
 Points in Japan

Submitted by: Moon Chan
 Antitrust Division
 Department of Justice
 Los Angeles, California

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Interview with Charles L. McNichols on
Strategic Points in Japan

Charles L. McNichols was interviewed at 1477 West 25th Street, Los Angeles, on July 6, 1942. Mr. McNichols was in the United States Air Force during the first World War, and received injuries which left him physically unfit. During the past 10 years he has devoted a great deal of time to compiling data on Japan. His vocation is that of a writer. One of his articles on Japan was published in Harper's Magazine for June, 1942. He takes a keen interest in seeing Japan defeated and spends a great deal of time seeking information that may be helpful to this end. In this regard he has helped Captain John Maney, Office of Intelligence, 30th Bombardment Group, March Field, Riverside, California to interpret maps furnished by Robert Rhodes of Los Angeles. (See Memorandum of interview with Robert Rhodes, July 11, 1942.)

Mr. McNichols prepared a report for Captain Maney, a copy of which is attached; and also two reports, entitled "Where to Sock Japan" and "Report on Horses Japan May Have". Copies of the latter reports are also attached.

To: Captain John R. Maney,
Office of Intelligence
Headquarters 30th Bombardment Group (H) A.A.F.
March Field
Riverside, California

From: Charles Longstreth McNichols,
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Phone, Parkway 3792.

I have at hand a series of questions on Japan from your office given to me by Dr. Clayton D. Carus, Professor of Foreign Trade, University of Southern California.

First, by the way of introduction, with the collaboration of Dr. Carus, a friend of many years and a fellow alumnus of Stanford, I wrote an article "One Way To Cripple Japan" which will appear in the June issue of Harper's. This article gives a comprehensive picture of the three great cities in the Osaka Bay district (Kobe, Kyoto and Osaka), their importance to Japan's war effort (they contain one-half of all Japan's heavy industry), their great population (seven millions within a twenty-seven mile triangle), and their vulnerability to areal bombing with incendiaries (due to very high combustible coverage--40% to 80% total inhabited area as opposed to 15% for the London metropolitan district - and the very high inflammability of that coverage--75% as opposed to London's 25%). Tokyo, Yokohama, and Nagoya are also dealt with at some length.

Now, in detail:

1. a. Transportation system of Japan.

The four principal Japanese Islands have only 13,000 miles of trackage, or about the same trackage as we have in California alone. This is entirely inadequate to meet the transportation needs of 70 million people. Over 1,400,000 tons of coastwise shipping (counting vessels of over 200 tons burden only) were used in inter-island trade alone in peace time (1939 figures). This does not include any tonnage engaged in the vital trade with China, Manchuria, or Korea. As Japan only had 5,006,000 gross tons of shipping in 1940 and her total replacement capacity is only 1 1/2 cargo vessels a week, much of this inter-island tonnage must have been diverted to transport duty in the South Pacific where her losses have been heavy.

Hence a greatly increased freight load must now be carried by railroad. (Before the war railway passenger traffic was more important than freight traffic).

By far the largest railway milage is on the main island (called Hondo or Honshu) where lies Tokyo and thirteen of Japan's seventeen major cities.

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Hondo is shaped like an old-fashioned high-topped shoe, with the top to the north and toe to the west. Tokyo is right at the heel. Nearly all Japan's industrial production and hence her greater concentration of population is along the sole of the shoe--i.e. the south coast of Hondo--in the 550 air miles between Tokyo and the important western port of Shimonoseki, through which passes the coal, iron, and steel from the large island of Kyushu, just across a mile wide strait to the south, bound for factories in Osaka, Nagoya and Tokyo, as well as 80 million annual tons of rice that must go to feed the workers in these great cities.

Hence the one great vital railway line in Japan is that between Tokyo and Shimonoseki, which follows the south coast of Hondo, often right on the shore, except where it cuts directly across Wakayama peninsula between Nagoya and Osaka (90 miles).

Note the concentration of population along this line.

Tokyo Bay district--Tokyo, Yokohama, Yokosuka (naval base and supply depot)--eight to nine million.

Nagoya (manufacturing. Mitsubishi plane factory) 160 air miles west of Tokyo. Two million (with suburbs).

Osaka Bay (Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe) 90 air miles west of Nagoya, seven million within an area no larger than metropolitan Los Angeles.

From Osaka west, the railroad follows Japan's famous Inland Sea. (Hondo its north shore, Shikoku and Kyushu its south shore). This is the most vital section of the road, because while there is a roundabout route from Osaka to Tokyo via interior branch lines, there is but one rail-line from Osaka to Shimonoseki. I have been told that there are one thousand bridges in the stretch of road (about 330 rail miles). This seems like a large number, but quoting from my notebook: "The main line from Kobe west is very vulnerable to bombing. Even though a coastal road, it passes through much mountainous terrain, many bridges, and many cuts. This line has been continually harassed by landslides in the rainy season (summer). To avoid these, the banks of many of the cuts have been extensively terraced, but more of them have been sprayed with liquid cement to form a thin, water-proof coating. Many adjacent side-hills along this line have been thus treated."

Of course, this crust could be easily broken up by small demolition bombs. As much of this line is still single track, a bomber flying low along the right of way dropping single bombs at short intervals could put a considerable length of track out of commission. Such bombs as fall directly on the road bed would rip out ties and twist rails, and all misses would be effective in breaking up the cement crust, thereby promoting landslides.

It would be impossible for the Japs to protect all such stretches of track either by anti-aircraft artillery or fighter patrols.

Such protection will certainly be provided for any one of the several very large bridges.

Osaka to Kobe: There are 4 big railroad bridges across the Yodo at Osaka, serving the alternate lines to Kobe (20 miles) with buildings continuous and congested all along these four lines. Many warehouses Factories. Much siding. Details obtainable.

Kobe: See map of Kobe in Terry's Guide to the Japanese Empire. You should have this book. A thorough study of it is essential as a background for any detailed work on Japan. In fact, it should be required reading for every officer and noncom in your group. Get the 1930 edition, if possible. Published by Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston and New York. Chapter on railroads.

Note: As a rule the truest picture of Japan in all its aspects is obtainable from books published between 1925 and 1937. Anything after 1937 that relies on Jap source is only informative when read by an expert well versed in Japanese subterfuges and downright lies. The following is largely from Terry with a few additions of my own.

West from Kobe: 34 (railroad miles west). Himeji. Population 50,000. Big bridge across Ichikawa River. Freight yards for leather and cotton manufacturing as well as for divisional army headquarters situated in old white castle--very conspicuous-- 6 to 7 hundred yards from railroad station. Important arsenal and munition storage here. See Terry's Guide to Japanese Empire.

89 miles (from Kobe) Okayama. 100,000 population. Embarkation port for Shikoku Island (largely agriculture. Some copper mines. American prisoners held here--radio J.O.A.K.) Also junction of branch-line to interior. Bridge across river at Okayama. Otherwise unimportant.

93 miles (from Kobe) bridge across Yabegawa (at Niwase).

138 miles, Onomichi. Excellent port. Much coastwise shipping and fishing crafts anchor here. Bridge over Kurihara River.

143 to 165 miles road goes inland through mountains. Bridge across Numata River at Mihara. Beyond Hongo there are several miles of tough country--many bridges, many tunnels.

189 miles. At Kataichi, there is a 12 mile branch line running to the large naval station and arsenal at Kure (very important objective) and the Naval College, three miles away. This has all been a closed area for years, but believe that a Korean who knows about it may be found.

190 miles Hiroshima. Important. The largest city between Kobe and Shimonoseki. War time population about 250,000. Situated at the delta of the Ota River (called Kabi or Yaki-gawa on some maps). Several estuaries. Large bridge across main branch to town of Yokogawa one mile from Hiroshima station.

The headquarters of Japan's 5th army corps, said to be the outfit that took Singapore, is located in an old castle in Hiroshima. Conspicuous building not far from railway. Important supply depot.

215 miles. Just beyond Iwakuni, two bridges across the Imatsu and the Monzen-gawa--then the road passes through many tunnels and crosses many small bridges for about 20 miles.

329 Shimonoseki--on the strait of the same name.

Here the railroad passes through a tunnel under the strait to Moji (pop. about 200,000) on Kuyushu Island. Through this tunnel must pass about one-third of the coal and iron used in Japan's industries. Both ends of this tunnel are easily visible from the air. Camouflage will have been installed by now, of course, but as this tunnel is exactly at the narrowest point on the strait (Dr. Carus) and the tracks lead right to it, camouflage cannot be very effective.

The docks at Shimonoseki have great clam-shell power shovels to handle iron ore. This is the only port in Japan so provided.

Note: Get the September 1936 issue of Fortune (magazine). This is entirely devoted to the Japanese Empire, giving social, commercial, industrial and military aspects. Many fine pictures. Many maps. Will answer many of your questions.

The best single source of material on Japan's commerce and industry is Dr. Carus's new book "Resources of the Orient" which unfortunately is not only still in manuscript, but most of it is in pencil copy which I am at the moment in the process of arranging and cleaning up for the typist.

1. a. (2) The exact location of freight yards and repair depots.

Freight yards are indicated on the various maps in Terry's Guide. There is some reference to them in the text of same. However, these maps are too small for great accuracy.

1. b. Dock and Harbors. All general data on this subject including small-scale maps, to be found in Terry's 1930 edition. (Try Riverside Public Library). Again, dimensions and exact locations should be worked out from larger maps. Anyone experienced with navigation charts can do it.

1. c. Industries (Location and Size). This is the toughest question. It is appalling to me that this information is not already in your hands. If Washington does not have it compiled, it can be worked out here in this manner: One method would be to use a pair of dividers, another method would be to contact people who have knowledge of the special location of objectives.

WHERE TO SOCK JAPAN

by

Charles L. McNichols, Los Angeles, Calif.

KYUSHU

YOWATA - KOKURA -- Shimonoseki-Moji guard the entrance of the Inland Sea to Korea, 120 miles.

Shimonoseki, on the Hondo side of Shimonoseki Strait, 15 miles long and 7 miles wide. Channel is 600 to 1400 yards wide. Spring tide 7-1/2 knots, neap tide 4 knots. Minimum depth of channel is 4 fathoms at low tide. Bad sand bars. Electric and contact mines. Town is 4 miles west by north of west entrance of Shimonoseki Strait situated at the end of Sanijo Railway which goes to Kobe and points north.

Gun emplacements on low cliffs back of town. Heavy "naval" or railroad guns are located there. (A sailor told McNichols). These guns are 12" probably - 16" possible. Doubt necessity of such heavy ordnance to protect such easily defended waters.

Importance: Commerical city, crowded dock installations, shipping to Formosa, Korea, Tientsen, Manchuria. This is the only port in Japan that has facilities to handle coal and iron ore with big power shovels. Unofficial reports state that 80 million tons of rice entered this port in 1940.

Advise demolition bombing on harbor area.

Moji, northernmost point in Kyushu. Coal terminal. Electric power plants, steam generated. Much shipping; coal bunkers. Congested manufacturing district - steel and iron. Pall of smoke always over the city. Important shipping in harbor.

Advise demolition.

Kokura, situated 7 miles from Moji, shipbuilding, coal, manufacturing. There is a railroad tunnel between Shimonoseki and Moji through which all railroad traffic between Kyushu and Honshu must pass. Mouth of tunnel not camouflaged, one of McNichols' contacts who was there in 1940 stated.

Fortified district; many guns.

Yawata, 6 miles south by west of Moji. Yawata is site of Imperial Steel Works, 300 acres of factories, 26 tall chimneys, coke ovens, coal piles. This steel plant cannot be camouflaged

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very easily. Congested workers quarters across the railroad tracks from this steel plant. (See page 76, FORTUNE, Sept. '36)

Demolition job. Big bombs and incendiaries because Imperial Steel Works is modern, well-built steel and concrete plant.

Sasebo, just south of the westernmost point of Kyushu. Destroyer base. Town of about 100,000. Some manufacturing and commerce. Main fleet based here 1942 according to newspaper report.

Nagasaki, the "Old Navy" had a coaling station there. Big town, now 400,000 plus. Built along the waterfront and in narrow canyons leading to it. Harbor is deepest in Japan (15 fathoms) and one of the best. Docks and godowns most important bomb targets. Heavy and medium rifles in placement on cliff 1000 feet back of city.

Incendiaries would do a lot of damage but more or less of a precision job because of restricted and irregular terrain.

Directly across the bay from N. Custom House Landing is

Mitsubishi Shipbuilding & Dockyards which in 1930 was largest in Japan. Big battle wagons on the ways there now. Three major dry-docks that will take the biggest the Japs have. Large machine shops and engine works. Gun emplacements on hill 1000 feet due west.

Demolition.

Akumoura Engine Works from Mitsubishi yard on north, exactly on small inlet. Marine engines manufactured here - important. Guns on hill 1500 feet northwest and farther north on ridge. Congested building all along this side of bay, 1-1/2 miles south to north, 400 to 1200 feet wide.

This stuff should go up like a torch with a scattering of incendiaries. High demolition job from above, anti-aircraft artillery range should be a cinch.

Railway station right at the head of the bay. Very important freight yards near railroad depot. This together with much tankage, docks, warehouse, etc. backed into 1000 square feet, with mouth of river to west.

Swell target. Demolition and incendiary.

Kumamoto, situated on the west side of Kokura on the strait back of Oidaka Island on mouth of Shirakawa River. Volcano situated

27 miles northeast of town of Kumamoto. This is a seaport and provincial capital but no one seems to go there. Headquarters of Sixth Division (Army), there - on grounds of old wrecked castle.

Kagoshima - No information on this except that it is a port town with small dock facilities. Embarkation point for Formosa.

The railroad to this town goes along coast - ragged terrain - many bridges and tunnels -- easy to demolish in several places.

Beppu-Oita - Town of Beppu situated west of the neck of Bungo channel. Beppu is a health resort and used as rest camp and hospital area. The Bungo channel is south entrance to Inland Sea. Forts on both Kyushu and Shikoku side of channel. Apparently no industrial or commercial importance. Said to be much training activity in Beppu area. On August 12, 1939 they were practising troop landings here.

HONDO

Hiroshima - Biggest town between Kobe and Shimonoseki, probably 1/4 million now.

Yokogawa is a contiguous suburb of Hiroshima and is located across the river, called either Ota, Kabi, or Yaki. Both Hiroshima and Yokogawa are in the flat delta at the head of a land locked bay of the Inland Sea. (Eda Island is due south of these two cities.) Mostly native houses and can be burned out.

Important as naval and military outfitting center. The home station of Japan's "ever-victorious 5th Army" is around an old castle visible from the beach. This must be important because foreigners have been denied admittance for 20 years (although usually admitted to naval and military stations on special pass). This was Japanese G.H.Q. during Russo-Japanese war.

Kure, on east side of the strait leading to Hiroshima; very large and important arsenal and naval station.

Stajima, 3 miles from Kure; naval college.

Note: Many bridges and tunnel on railroad to Kobe.

Okayama, Kurihara River, port on Inland Sea 90 miles (by rail) below Kobe, population about 150,000. No great importance indicated.

Much manufacturing of straw mats in native type houses. Railroad junction line to north. Principal port for Shikoku Island to south - hence important as copper port for mines down there. All informants say town would burn easily. No details on harbor installations.

Kii channel, south entrance to Inland Sea opposite mouth of Osaka Bay and adjacent to Owaji Island. Fortified area.

Railroads -- 13,000 miles of railroads in Japan (1938) or about the same as California; well built; good ballasting; 100 pound rail; electrified all around Tokio. From Tokio to Osaka there is still much single track on main lines. Neither trackage nor rolling stock capable of handling Japan's internal commerce, hence her great dependence on coastwise shipping.

Much mountain trackage, even on coastal lines. Many bridges. Continual landslides in wet weather. Many hillsides terraced and others sprayed with liquid cement to form a thin, water-resistant crust.

The main railroad following the shore of Inland Sea westward from Kobe is very vulnerable to bombing. Many high bridges -- side hill cuts -- single tracking.

A comparatively small task force should be able to knock out this line for through traffic to Shomonoseki strait for several days at any time.

Dr. Carus states that Japanese railroads have more passenger than freight traffic in peace time.

Note: Only about 90,000 trucks, busses, and private cars in Japan in 1940.

Note: Confidential - U. S. Navy has very complete report on railway, bridges and trestles in Japan as of 1940-41.

20 miles 27 miles

Kobe Osaka Kyoto

Most vulnerable area for incendiary attack.

1938 -- 35% of all heavy industry (Carus). (50% including Kyoto-1942)

Kobe is first in shipbuilding in all Japan; Osaka, second.

The 20 miles between Kobe and Osaka are built up completely with industry along the railroad. Osaka leads in production of electrical machinery and railroad equipment; is tops in cotton, rayon, steel cables, electric power consumption, chemicals, etc.

Kyoto -- chemicals, lacquers, iron and steel articles.

Kobe - situated on west side of Osaka bay. Coming in from south (up the bay) first landfall is Wanda Point. Lighthouse and quarantine station about 1000 feet southwest of end of point. On the other side of the point or 1500 feet northwest therefrom (towards town) are the three Mitsubishi floating drydocks. The shipyards and engine works of the same name (Steel mill also) extend nearly 2000 feet along the shore to an inlet channel 100 to 150 feet wide running west. Many railroad tracks right back of this yard and through it. Area of yard and trackage about 700 by 2500 feet. Many wooden shipways and bamboo staging. 100 heavy demolition bombs in this area would do plenty of damage.

Right back of Mitsubishi yard is a congested industrial and residential area extending 4000 feet west and including Kanaguichi textile plant. Incendiaries scattered over this area couldn't miss and would light up the works for night bombing.

Just north of Mitsubishi yards is Hyogo harbor, a triangular bay 2500 feet across the mouth by 1500-1800 feet long. This is the old harbor of town of same name that has been absorbed by Kobe. Old district, congestion. Incendiaries.

Between Hyogo harbor and mouth of Kobe harbor proper is a rounded promontory. On the far side of Kobe harbor is the important Kawasaki shipyard. The promontory is about 2000 feet wide. Thus Kawasaki shipyard is 3000 feet due north of Mitsubishi plant. If you come in on that course and overshoot Mitsubishi, you can hold it a couple of seconds and hit Kawasaki. The famous Kawasaki airplane motors are built at this shipyard although Kawasaki assembly plant is in outskirts of Kobe.

(Total Japanese ship production for 1941 from all yards was 1-1/2 ships a week.)

Directly across the entrance of Kobe harbor from Kawasaki yard are six great shipping piers. The first pier is about 1500 feet from Kawasaki yard and the last pier is about 3000 feet from the yard and the less important piers are located along the edge of the harbor. 37% of Japan's annual deep water shipping docks at Kobe harbor.

Railroad station, post office, police station, banks, and two big commercial buildings immediately behind the site of inner harbor, with small local buildings; mass of sampan and other small craft. Incendiaries.

From Wanda Point clear around past the big shipping piers, a distance of about 3 miles, Kobe is built up solid for about 3000 feet back of the beach. While the streets are not so narrow as in Osaka, the congestion is great and the houses mostly native and very inflammable. Wind blows in from bay almost continually. Rain every third day in summer. Heat. High velocity clouds. Whole town might burn easily from comparatively few incendiary fires.

The Theater street, Minatogawa, leads to the shipyards. Mainly 1 and 2 story buildings, mostly made of wood and mud; three story buildings rare. Police inspected house cleaning twice a year to prevent plague -- astonishing filth piled into street -- dust. On Suwayama hill which is back of Kobe are located the better residences. There is a power dam somewhere near this hill. The Shinkawa district is one of the most congested slums in the world. The streets are only 5 feet wide in this district of Kobe.

Osaka is located on bay south side of main mouth of Yodo River; 70 square miles; main city 5 miles by 4 miles; one big target. Landmarks -- Yodo River and its various branches running through the town into the harbor; has a distinctive breakwater, U-shaped; many small canals throughout the town; docks and shipyards at harbor; 3000 factory chimneys; unbelievable congestion; only one park of any size and that is in the southwest corner of city; always wind from bay; in the spring and summer there are gales and typhoons; velo clouds and high fogs.

A good spot for incendiaries.

Nagoya, 300,000 buildings. Only 6000 of material other than wood and paper; about 610 are of concrete or ferro concrete construction (class A).

Tokio, one million buildings, 12,000 to 15,000 are of material other than wood and of latter, about 20% are class A buildings.

A pattern for the area bombing of Osaka with incendiaries by one large plane: If monsoon comes from southeast, come in on course 5° on line Imamay Park or Tennoji Pagoda to junction of Okawa and Yodo.

Additional planes - sound course each line 500 yards to west of preceding planes. At 25,000 altitude, dispersion will give overlapping coverage.

If N.W. monsoon blows - all courses parallel to Yodo on course 55° 500 yard intervals.

If sea breeze - course 120° - intervals 1000 yards (cross wind)

Kobe - use incendiaries regardless of wind. The course should be inside Wanda Point, back of Mitsubishi shipyard following curve of waterfront 500 yards inshore to old foreign settlement, thence at 20° . 2 planes in parallel courses can cover this mile-wide strip of congested flat between waterfront and hills.

REPORT ON HORSES JAPAN MAY HAVE --

Submitted by Charles L. McNichols of Los Angeles.

The figures below were obtained through research of Dr. Clayton O. Carus, professor of Foreign Trade, University of Southern California. Dr. Carus obtained the data from the International Trade Reports issued by the United States Department of Commerce. McNichols stated that no data was obtainable from any Japanese publication. This data is to be discussed in the next issue of the "American Remount Association Publication," in an article entitled, "The Horse." McNichols and Carus are the authors of this article.

The total number horses Japan had in 1935 was approximately 1-1/2 million. Their normal import of horses is well hidden. In normal years, however, it appears to be between 2000 and 2500 per year.

In 1940 a total of 2600 thoroughbred horses were registered for racing at Japan's eleven major racetracks.

In the fiscal year of 1936-7 (starting in June) Ireland exported to Japan 3000 horses valued at 3 million dollars. This means each horse was worth approximately \$1,000. The only Irish horse worth this sum are Irish Hunters which are extremely suitable for military purposes. They are a large, strong, and long-winded type of horse. Many of the horses appear to be a highclass breeding stock also.

In the fiscal year 1937-8 (starting in June) Ireland exported 13,000 horses to Japan. These horses were valued at a total of 7 million dollars.

McNichols stated that many people he has contacted, such as Robert Rhodes, have informed him that in 1937 and 1938, the military in Japan were collecting all the horses they possibly could from their own civilian population.