

When the American landing at Leyte Gulf in the central Philippines took place in October 1944, Sho Plan No. 1 was activated, and accordingly the Fleet was committed and reinforcements were sent to Leyte. The result was the complete defeat of the Fleet and its destruction as a homogeneous fighting force. Severe losses were also suffered by the Army and Naval Air Forces in the Philippines. The heavy destruction of major warships dictated a change of policy which resulted in a decision to concentrate on the Naval Air Force in the rôle of Special Attack ('suicide' or Kamikaze) Force.

80. THE 'TEN' OPERATION PLANS

With the occupation of Manila and the capture of the Luzon airfields by the United States in February 1945 the line of communication from the south to Japan, along which a trickle of shipping still ran, was finally severed and Japan was cut off from her oil supply, the life blood of her industries. With the remnant of her fleet immobilized in harbour in the Inland Sea through lack of oil, battle damage and absence of trained air groups, and the land-based air forces reduced to relying largely on suicide tactics no more than a 'last ditch' defence could be undertaken.

Early in March 1945 the 'Ten' Plans were drawn up. These provided for holding the Nansei Shoto, Formosa and the Shanghai area as long as possible, and making their capture costly so that the development of air bases for the bombing of Japan would be delayed. Meanwhile, further preparations were to be made for the final defence of the Home Islands.

Plans were drawn up for the defence of four areas :—

Ten No. 1—Nansei Shoto—Formosa.

Ten No. 2—Formosa.

Ten No. 3—Formosa—east and south coasts of China.

Ten No. 4—Hainan and areas to the westward.

The greater part of the Army and Navy air strength was to be deployed in the Kyushu—Nansei Shoto area. Much of it was by now trained and converted for the employment of special attack ('suicide' or Kamikaze) tactics, and the entire strength of the special attack force was to be used against attacking forces. The Naval air force was to regard enemy carriers as their principal objective. The use of naval surface forces (in a raid, using evasion, for no other action was now possible) was contemplated. No preparations were to be made for training surface counter-landing forces other than the special attack craft.

In accordance with the plan only naval land based air forces were employed to support the resistance of Iwo Jima in the Nanpo Shoto when the Americans landed in February 1945. All the naval and air resources left to the Japanese were used, in accordance with Plan Ten Ichi, however, in defence of the Nansei Shoto, where the Americans landed in April 1945 on Okinawa. A sortie on 7th April by the only remaining Japanese fast battleship, according to plan, resulted in its destruction. Special attack craft both surface and submarine, were effectively dealt with by the Americans. Yet defeated and at their last gasp though the Japanese were, their air attacks, both suicide and orthodox, on the invasion shipping and troops were so desperate and persistent as to claim for some weeks almost the entire effort of both the American and British

carriers in the unaccustomed rôle of immobile floating air bases, and partial diversion of the strategic air forces to the task of neutralizing the Kyushu airfields, in order to reduce the weight of attack.

81. THE 'KETSU' OR 'FINAL' OPERATIONS PLAN

With the fall of Okinawa in the Nansei Shoto in June 1945 the Japanese last line of defence was broken and the blockade of their Home Islands was practically complete. An Operation Plan, termed 'Ketsu,' for the final defence of the Empire, had already been drawn up at the end of March, contemporaneously with the beginning of the American assault on the Ryukus (Nansei Shoto), on the assumption that the next move of the Allies would be invasion of the Home Islands, with southern Kyushu and the Kanto area (at the head of Kagoshima Wan) as the most probable objectives. The concentrated strength of all forces was to be used and resistance was to be continued to destruction. Every effort was to be made to strengthen the defences of the vital areas. This entailed strengthening of likely invasion points and important straits and bay entrances: steps to ensure the security of surface communications; and mobilization and concentration of all mobile forces, particularly air and special (suicide) attack forces of all types, both air and naval, to attack the invasion forces, while at sea and off the beaches. All Japanese aircraft were being converted to suicide types, and it was expected that the entire air forces would be annihilated in the effort. Sufficient fuel had been stored for the operation. The Japanese estimated that the Allies would employ about 2,000 transports in the attack on Kyushu, of which they expected to sink rather less than a quarter by air attacks.¹

The Army and Navy air arms were to co-operate to the utmost in order to give full play to their united strength: they were to make joint use of bases and interchange maintenance and logistic supplies. The available aircraft, Army and Navy, were disposed throughout all the Home Islands and in Korea and China.² In anticipation of large scale air raids measures were to be taken, such as dispersal and evacuation of military establishments and appropriate disposition of military supplies. Even now, with their backs to the wall, the

¹ *Japan's Struggle to end the War*, Report BIOS/JAP/PR/1618.

² The Historical Section is quite unable to form any estimate of the number of aircraft available to implement the Ketsu Plan, but believes the figure 9,000 to be approximately correct (cf. Section 100). The following totals are given in various official publications :—

Army	Navy	Total	Remarks
5,650	7,075	12,725	<i>The Japanese Plan for the Defence of Kyushu</i> , App. 3 to Annex C to Operations Report, Occupation of Japan, 0189/ohd, Ser. 0788B.
—	10,429(a)	—	'Japanese Naval Air Strength, Production and Wastage,' <i>Interrogations</i> , Nav. No. 86. Some 20 per cent. of these were 'in storage.'
—	7,307(b)	—	<i>Air Campaigns of the Pacific War</i> . (U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey.)
—	—	9,000(c)	<i>The Campaigns of the Pacific War</i> . (U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey.)
3,200	5,200	8,400	<i>The Campaigns of the Pacific War</i> . (U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey.)
—	—	5,044(d)	<i>Japan's Struggle to end the War</i> . Report No. BIOS/JAP/PR/1618. (U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey.)

(a) On 1st April 1945.

(b) On 15th August 1945.

(c) Suicide aircraft that could have been employed to resist invasion.

(d) The total is broken down by types and shows (*inter alia*) approx. 1,300 fighters, 1,000 bombers, 2,200 trainers.

Japanese did not intend their defence to be entirely passive, for raids were to be made on the Allied bases in the Marianas, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, in order to neutralize them. The remaining ships of the Combined Fleet were scattered amongst bases in home waters, the greater part being at Kure. Except for the anti-aircraft guns' crews most of the officers and men had been assigned to various types of suicide operations. The naval Special Attack or Shock Forces, which operated up to 50 miles from the coast, consisted of large numbers of suicide boats (*Shinyo*), two-man submarines (*Kairyu*), five-man submarines (*Koryu*), human torpedoes (*Kaiten*) and mosquito boats.

The increasingly heavy scale of Allied air raids destroyed much war material and considerably disorganized the preparations for the defence of Kyushu. At the end of the war, for example, there remained undamaged in Japan of the major tactical units of the Navy only one light cruiser, some 13 destroyers and 55 submarines, not all of which were operational.¹

CHAPTER VII

ALLIED STRATEGY AND CONTROL

(See Plans 1, 6)

82. UNITED NATIONS CONTROL SET UP

On 23rd December 1941 the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Mr. Winston Churchill, accompanied by the British Chiefs of Staff, arrived in Washington to confer with the President of the United States and the American Chiefs of Staff. Out of the series of discussions which then followed an agreement resulted,¹ not only regarding the immediate strategy for the combined conduct of the war, but also on the method by which strategical command and control of British and American military resources would be exercised.

The forces of Great Britain and the United States were to be deployed under a single strategic control, exercised by a group termed the Combined Chiefs of Staff, composed of four representatives of the British Chiefs of Staff and four American members, namely the Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army and Navy (the President of the U.S.A.); the Chief of Staff of the United States Army; the Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet and Chief of Naval operations;² and the Commanding General, Army Air Forces. This body was to ensure complete co-ordination of the war effort of both nations, the allocation of man-power and munitions, the co-ordination of communications, the control of military intelligence, and the administration of captured areas were all accepted as joint responsibilities.

As a means to promote informal exchanges of views and information a Pacific War Council was formed. That body, over which the President of the United States presided, was composed of representatives of Australia, Canada, China, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippine Commonwealth, the United Kingdom and the U.S.A.

83. UNITED STATES COMMAND SYSTEM

Although the broad strategic allocation of resources among the theatres of war was controlled by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the actual control of operations in the Pacific was the province of the United States Chiefs of Staff. This agency, frequently called the 'Joint Chiefs of Staff,' was established in February 1942 by the President of the United States in his capacity of Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy. The members composing it were the Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army and Navy; the Chief of Staff of the United States Army; the Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations; and the Commanding General, Army Air Forces. The U.S. Chiefs of Staff were responsible for co-ordination between the Army and Navy; and in operations for which the United States had sole or primary responsibility they were charged with the strategic conduct of the war.

¹ 'Arcadia' C.R. (J.P.) W.W. J.P.C.

² The duties of the Chief of Naval Operations were combined with those of the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet, in March 1942.

¹ Figures based on Admiral King's *Final Official Report*.

A development of the U.S. Chiefs of Staff organization was the unity of command principle which placed the responsibility and authority for a contemplated operation under one commander directly responsible to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. When a joint or combined force commander had been appointed and the units composing his force detailed, his command responsibilities were the same as if the forces involved were all of one service.¹ He exercised his command through the commanders of forces detailed to form his command, and normally in operations this consisted of detailing their special missions. The tactics and technique of the subordinate force were the responsibility of its commander. On one occasion the principle outlined above was departed from and two Force Commanders of equal status were directed to co-operate with one another. This was at the landing at Leyte Gulf in the Philippines in October 1944, and had unfortunate results.²

Allied to the principle of unified command was the mechanism of operational planning. The President as Commander-in-Chief of the United States forces exercised his command function through the United States (Joint) Chiefs of Staff. The latter had organized planning and supporting agencies consisting of representatives from the Army and Navy and, where applicable, from other interested governmental agencies. These United States supporting agencies assisted and advised the U.S. Chiefs of Staff in matters of strategy, operational and administrative planning, psychological warfare, intelligence, transport and communications, the allocation of materials of war, meteorology, weapons, petroleum, civil affairs, and other matters.

The Australian and New Zealand Naval forces when taking part in operations conducted by an American Commander, and the task forces of the British Pacific Fleet when they began to play an active part in operations in the Pacific, came into the direct chain of command of the American Commander in charge of the operations.

84. STRATEGIC THEATRES DELIMITED

The specific strategy of the global war was not conceived until the conferences between the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff which took place in May 1943 in Washington ('Trident') and in August of the same year in Quebec ('Quadrant'). Although the suddenness of the Japanese onslaught, the unpreparedness of the United States, the preoccupation of the British Commonwealth in other theatres and the weakness of the Netherlands rendered it impossible for the Allies to shape the strategical pattern of the war at the outset, the basic plan was influenced by certain conditions. It was impracticable to include in a single theatre of war the entire area in which Japan undertook operations. In the first instance, to meet the rapidly spreading Japanese attacks the south-west Pacific was constituted a separate area, known as the A.B.D.A. or Abda Area. Unified command was set up of all United States, British, Australian, and Dutch land, sea, and air forces in the Far East, Australia and New Zealand Areas within the Abda boundary, under General Sir Archibald Wavell, who took over the supreme command, with headquarters at Bandung,

¹ 'Joint' = participation of forces from two or more of the *Arms* (U.S.) or *Services* (British) of one nation. 'Combined' = participation of forces of two or more of the United Nations. (C.C.S. Memo. 75/3 vide 'Symbol' Report of Meetings C.O.S. (43) 33(0) 28/1/43.)

² See Section 96.

about 85 miles south-east of Batavia, on 15th January 1942.¹ A.B.D.A. in the event was short-lived, the continued advance of the Japanese necessitating dissolution of the headquarters on 25th February.

The United States had undertaken naval responsibility for the whole of the Pacific Ocean east of the Philippine Islands and Australasia, including the U.S. approaches to Australasia. At the end of January the ships of the Australian and New Zealand Navies, reinforced by one American heavy cruiser and two destroyers, were formed into a force termed the Anzac Force,² which operated in the adjacent Anzac Area comprising approximately the north-eastern portion of the Australian Station.³ The Anzac Force was placed under the strategical direction of the Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet exercised through one or more U.S. flag officers, assisted by one or more flag officers appointed by Australia and New Zealand. Its functions, in co-operation with air forces available in the area were to cover the eastern and north-eastern approaches to Australia and New Zealand, protect shipping and support the defence of the islands in the area, and attack enemy island key points. The Force co-operated both with the forces in the A.B.D.A. area and with the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The general strategic policy was—

- (a) to hold the Malay barrier as the basic defensive position of the Far East area and to operate sea, land, and air forces in as great depth as possible forward of the barrier, in order to oppose the Japanese southward advance. The barrier now acquired a geographical definition as the line Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, North Australia.
- (b) To hold Burma and Australia as essential supporting positions for the Far East area and Burma as essential also to the support of China and the defence of India.
- (c) To re-establish communications with Luzon and support the Philippine garrison.
- (d) To maintain communications to Burma and Australia and to and within the Far East area.
- (e) To obtain in the Far East area and Australia all possible supplies to relieve shipping requirements.⁴

It was not possible to place under one command India, Burma and China, where operations other than those of the China-based Air Force were isolated from and did not impinge on those in the Pacific, since the distances involved were so great. As the Allies were not at that time in a position to undertake other than holding operations and limited offensives in those border countries separate commands did not lead to parallel and competing military operations.

¹ The boundaries of the Abda Area were as follows (See Plan 6) :—

North.—Frontier between India and Burma, thence eastward along the frontier of China and coastline to lat. 30° N., thence along parallel of 30° N. to long. 140° E., excluding Indo-China and Siam.

East.—Meridian 140° E. from 30° N. to equator, thence to long. 141° E., then south to frontier between Dutch and British New Guinea on south coast, thence along south coast of New Guinea to 143° E., thence south to Australia.

South.—North coast of Australia from 143° E. to 114° E., thence north-west to 15° S. 92° E.

West.—Meridian of 92° E.

² The British carrier *Hermes* was also to have formed part of the Anzac Force, but she never joined up. She was sunk on the 9th April 1942 in the Indian Ocean.

³ See Plan 6.

⁴ 'Arcadia' Papers, British Serial W.W.1 (Final).

In India and Burma the predominant interests were British; the U.S.A. was closely concerned with the Pacific. On 24th March 1942 proposals were made from Washington which resulted in delimiting theatres of strategic direction in the Pacific and Asia as follows (*see* Plan 1).¹

United States responsibility—Pacific Theatre (the Americas, China, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, but excluding Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula.)

British responsibility—Indian Ocean and Middle East, including all land areas contiguous thereto west of Singapore (inclusive) and the Middle and Near East.

85. DEFENCE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

Although under these arrangements Australia and New Zealand lay in the U.S. sphere of responsibility, the security of those dominions and other British territory in the area together with the security of the sea communications to them, were of vital importance to us. Prior to the war it had been recognized that security could best be effected by the concentration of a balanced fleet at Singapore capable of meeting such forces as the Japanese were likely to employ in the South China Sea. The Admiralty had assessed the force required as at least five capital ships and four aircraft carriers, though much would depend on the pressure maintained by the U.S.A. in their Pacific Ocean area; and it was intended to assemble in the Indian Ocean, such a force, termed the Eastern Fleet, as other ships became available. The ill-fated *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*, which were sunk three days after the outbreak of war, were its forerunners. By 24th March 1942, when Admiral Somerville arrived at Colombo to take command, the Eastern Fleet consisted of his flagship, the *Warspite*, the aircraft carriers *Formidable*, *Indomitable* and *Hermes*, with cruisers and destroyers. It was considered that the existence of the fleet would deter the Japanese from undertaking large scale protracted operations in the Indian Ocean without strong capital ship support. It is now known, however, that the Japanese war plans contained no provision for such operations, but merely for raids into the Indian Ocean.

The limiting factor in the defence of the Indian Ocean was the lack of a secure base for the fleet. Neither of the existing bases, Trincomalee or Colombo, were suitable or safe. Steps had been taken during 1941 to prepare secret defended advanced bases at Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago (lat. 7° 14' S., long. 72° 26' E.) and Nancowry (known as Port W) in the Nicobar Islands, with a main fleet base at Addu Atoll (known as Port T), the southernmost of the Maldivé group.² The Japanese carrier-borne air raids on Ceylon and the Bay of Bengal in April 1942, however, compelled all except the Fast Division³ of the Eastern Fleet for lack of a fleet base to quit Indian waters and base themselves on the other side of the Indian Ocean at Kilindini, where they were well placed only to safeguard the long supply lines round the Cape of Good Hope to the Middle and Far East. It was not until the late autumn 1944 that the progress of the war in Europe permitted the despatch of really powerful

¹ J.S.M. Washington 139 and 140, 1955Q/24, 2015Q/24.

² L.D. 03343/42.

³ The fast division known as Force A, consisted of the battleship *Warspite*, carriers *Indomitable* and *Formidable*, four cruisers and six destroyers. This constituted the striking force. The remainder of the fleet, Force B, had as its main strength four old 'R' class battleships.

naval forces to the Indian Ocean. By that date, however, the Japanese Combined Fleet had been rendered impotent by attrition: by the serious weakening of its naval air arm; and finally as the result of the great triple Battle for Leyte Gulf which took place between 23rd and 26th October 1944, consequent on the Japanese attempt to repulse the American landing for the reconquest of the Philippines.¹ The losses of the Japanese in the battle were so severe that they no longer possessed the power of operating in strength in the Indian Ocean.

The Eastern Fleet and the reinforcements from home were constituted in the following month into two fleets, the East Indies Fleet and the British Pacific Fleet; and the latter moved eastward to Fremantle for operations in the Pacific under American Supreme Command. The main objects of the East Indies Fleet became the cutting of the Japanese supply lines to their armies in Burma and their remaining garrisons in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands; the destruction of Japanese war potential, especially oil, and shipping, shore and harbour installations; and support of the army in Burma.

86. DECISION TO DEFEAT GERMANY BEFORE JAPAN

In addition to the unalterable factors conditioning Allied strategy, such as geography, weather, and the Allied and Japanese military potentials, three main decisions taken by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Washington in December 1941–January 1942 and concurred in by the United States and His Majesty's Government were to influence the future pattern of the war. These were to defeat Germany before Japan; to support China and keep her in the war; and to maintain in the Eastern Theatre only such forces as were necessary to secure the vital interests of the Allies and deny Japan access to raw materials vital to her war effort.² Both actually and potentially Germany was considered to be the most dangerous adversary. The progress she was making in the development of jet propelled aircraft and guided missiles admitted of no delay in the deployment of all available military power against her. The vital interests of the Allies in the Eastern Theatre were held to be the security of Australia, New Zealand and India: to hold Hawaii, Alaska, Singapore, the East Indies barrier, Philippines, Rangoon and the maritime provinces of Siberia. In addition it was laid down as essential to secure the sea routes through the Indian Ocean to Burma, the Netherlands East Indies and Australia; and the Pacific routes from the U.S.A. to Alaska, Hawaii, Australia and the Far East. Essential air routes to be kept open were from Cairo to Calcutta, China, Malaya, the Philippines and Australia: U.S.A. to Australia via Hawaii, Christmas Island, Canton Island, Palmyra, Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia: Australia to the Philippines and Malaya via the Netherlands East Indies; and the United States to Vladivostok via Alaska.

87. IMPORTANCE OF CHINA

It is perhaps not too much to say that China was the key to the economic consolidation of Japan's position, if not to her further expansion. Guerilla warfare and the maintenance of a large army in China imposed a continual drain on Japan's resources and prevented her from exploiting effectively the resources of the area which she held down by force. The economic importance

¹ The Battle for Leyte Gulf, sometimes known as the Second Battle of the Philippines.

² 'Arcadia' Record of Meetings (British) Serial W.W.1 (Final).

to Britain in time of peace of the great Chinese market needs no stressing. For the United States also China was both economically and politically a major sphere of American interest.

China was important also to the military effort of the United Nations, for three reasons :—

- (1) If China capitulated to Japan the latter would be free to exploit resources of materials and food and possibly men : instead of the war in China constituting a drain on Japan's war effort she would be enabled to organize the country to increase her military potential.
- (2) Unoccupied China was on the flank of the Japanese lines of communication to the Netherlands East Indies and within air striking distance of the lines of communication of industrial north China, thus affording a base for air operations against Japanese life lines.
- (3) Japanese domination of all China would render British control of India insecure. The Indian people were already being subjected to heavy Japanese propaganda and there were dangerously few troops in the country.

In speaking of the capitulation of China, what was really meant was that the Chungking Government would change over and co-operate with Japan. Actual military domination of 400 million Chinese was beyond Japan's capacity : neither her manpower nor her material resources were adequate for the purpose. Nor could she substitute a Japanese administration for the régime of Chiang Kai-shek, which would inevitably have collapsed in the event of China's defeat, with the consequence that military domination would merely have resulted in chaos. For these reasons, Japan had never attempted to crush China. The course of her military operations shows that they were directed towards two objects, securing bases for southward expansion and intimidating the Chungking Government into acquiescence in co-operation. Consequently, the operations of war were punctuated by periods of negotiations or attempted negotiations, for apart from bases, what Japan wanted of China was monopoly of her markets. As opposed to the Japanese endeavour to obtain China's co-operation, our object as already stated, was to support China and keep her in the war. The necessity for this was a major reason for the campaign in upper Burma in 1944. To re-establish communication with China, which had ceased since our evacuation of Burma in May 1942, was at the time held to be of great importance.

88. EMPLOYMENT OF AIR POWER AS THE STRIKING ARM

In consequence of the decisions taken at Washington the Pacific became an area of low priority. This compelled the Allies to conduct their early operations in the most economical manner and with the means presently available. The most efficient weapon for attacking a greatly superior enemy was the aircraft, more particularly the carrier-based aircraft which by making use of the ship's mobility could if assisted by an adequate intelligence service frequently hope to be in local superiority at the point of attack. Consequently, whilst the United States was rebuilding her navy and mobilizing the nation for war, the air arm was largely employed in limited offensive or holding operations, undertaken to check the momentum of the Japanese wave of conquest. Meanwhile secure lines of communication were being established to bases in Australia

and the southern Pacific from which in due course to commence the assault on the Japanese perimeter. The results were so conclusive that, subsequently, both Army and Navy tactics were adjusted to exploit the air arm.

The Japanese arrived at the employment of air power in carrying out their conquests by a road not dissimilar from that of the Allies, namely the need for economy of means enjoined upon them by the shallowness of their war potential. Their operational method was to use aircraft carriers as the spear-head of attack, relieving them as soon as possible by land-based air forces. After building up their strength at a given base they would overcome what in the early days of the war was the consistently inferior Allied air opposition at the next point of attack, before sending along heavily escorted expeditions to secure footholds on shore. The physical conformation of the area of early operations suited this type of warfare admirably. As a rule, distances between islands or land masses were too short to permit attack by Allied naval forces while the enemy expeditions were en route, even if the Japanese had not been in command of the sea and air. With the loss of local naval and air control any position lacking a background of supply, as did the islands of South-East Asia, was unable to withstand determined attack. As soon as the Japanese were in control of a new area they would repair the airfields and gather forces for the next advance.

89. DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

In January 1942 the defence by the United States and Anzac forces of the island bases on the route between Hawaii and Australia was well advanced, and the first flight over the southern air route necessitated by the loss of Wake Island in December, was made before the month was out though several weeks were to elapse before it became generally usable. Airfields were being constructed at Palmyra, Christmas, Canton, Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia : Bora Bora, Tongatabu and Efate were added later. In addition to their use as staging points along the air route all these islands were valuable outpost of the defences both of the Hawaiian Islands and of New Zealand and Australia ; and they would also serve as operating bases for naval and air forces. Certain of them were in constant use during the war as troop staging, fuelling and reprovisioning stations where material and supplies were stock piled and distributed. New Caledonia was the principal readily accessible source of supply of nickel of which the Japanese had only a limited supply. At Bora Bora in the Society Islands, which were under French jurisdiction, it was planned to form a base for refuelling naval vessels and other shipping. All bases needed support against attacks which were within Japan's capacity. The United States undertook to provide forces for the defence of Palmyra, Christmas, Canton (forces for Canton were, however, actually sent to Tongatabu instead) Samoa, and Bora Bora : New Zealand was sending most of the personnel required for Viti Levu (Fiji), and the U.S. was also sending aircraft and equipment to the Fiji Islands, and indeed assumed responsibility for their defence a few months later. New Caledonia was an Australian commitment but as a temporary measure the United States took steps for its defence.

In Australia itself the decision had been taken at the end of December 1941, to develop two fleet bases and two operational bases. It was eventually decided that Sydney and Fremantle should constitute the former, and Brisbane and Darwin the latter.

We have seen that the Abda Command lasted only a few weeks. On 25th February 1942 General Wavell's headquarters were dissolved and by the

first week in March Allied naval power in the Far East Area was destroyed for the time being, the Allied fleet being practically annihilated by superior Japanese forces. The few survivors withdrew to Australia and the Indian Ocean.

By April 1942 the Allies had worked out the main lines of the strategy to be adopted when the development and equipment of supply bases and airfields on the route from the U.S.A. to Australia and New Zealand had made sufficient progress and sufficient forces, naval, military and air, had assembled in the south-western portion of the area. The basis was recognition of the supreme strategic importance of the Solomon Islands, a chain of small islands running for 600 miles in a south-easterly direction from the Bismarck Archipelago to a position some 500 miles east of the nearest point of New Guinea. The Solomons contained potential airfields and anchorages, and they were not too small to be defensible. The establishment of Japanese advanced air and naval bases in these islands, which began on the 21st January 1942 constituted a serious threat to the line of communications from the U.S.A. to Australia. In Allied possession, on the other hand, the Solomons would both assist to secure this sea route and facilitate an eventual advance north-westward towards the enemy bases in the Bismarcks and Carolines. The situation of the group at the extremity of the Japanese 3,000-mile line of communications would force the enemy to fight at a disadvantage, and should offer the Allies opportunities for striking at the overstrained Japanese shipping resources. For these reasons it was decided to make the occupation of the Solomon Islands the first object as soon as the necessary forces had been assembled, and meanwhile to hinder by air attack and by any other means possible the development of bases and the firm establishment of the enemy in the group.

It proved impossible to agree upon a single commander for the Pacific,¹ and the theatre was consequently divided into two. By agreements between the governments of the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands, a Pacific Ocean Area and a South-west Pacific Area were defined by the Joint Staff Mission at Washington on the 3rd April 1942. The Pacific Ocean Area, of which Admiral C. A. Nimitz, U.S.N., was Commander-in-Chief, was subdivided into the North Pacific Area (north of 42° N.), the Central Pacific Area (between the Equator and 42° N.) and the South Pacific Area (south of the Equator). (See Plan 1). Directives to the respective Commanders-in-Chief became operative at 0001 G.M.T. on 8th May.

The desire of Australia and New Zealand to remain closely linked in one area had to give way to strategical considerations. It was necessary to separate the strategical direction of the Australian naval forces from those of New Zealand, for Australia now came within the South-west Pacific Area, under the supreme command of General Douglas MacArthur, U.S. Army, whilst New Zealand was in the South Pacific Area, under American Naval Command. Vice-Admiral R. L. Ghormley, U.S.N., assumed command of the South Pacific Area in April 1942, with headquarters at Auckland, New Zealand. From that date, vessels of the Royal New Zealand Navy came under his orders.

The failure to establish unified control in the Pacific theatre made itself felt in three ways during the war. In the first place, it necessitated the transference of forces from Admiral Nimitz's to General MacArthur's Command, or vice versa, before extensive offensive operations were undertaken, such as the assaults on the Philippines and Okinawa. Secondly, when co-operation was

¹ United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *Summary Report (Pacific)*, p. 29.

relied on, it was on occasion less complete than it might have been if one commander had controlled all forces in the theatre. Finally, it had as a result, that

'An artificial barrier existed between the intelligence services of the Army and Navy. Throughout the war, lacking unified command in the Pacific, we operated without an intelligence system capable of meeting the requirements of co-ordinated land, sea, and air warfare . . . a system was not established during the war which ensured the timely production of balanced, objective intelligence and the timely dissemination of that intelligence to all those who needed it in the performance of their duties.'¹

In the Pacific Ocean Area the American Pacific Fleet, in accordance with the decisions of the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Washington had already begun carrying out limited offensive operations with the aircraft carriers which had escaped the holocaust at Pearl Harbour. Their raids extended from the Marshalls and Gilberts to New Guinea, with a token raid on Tokyo on 18th April by army bombers operating from the aircraft carrier *Hornet*. The effect of this latter raid on the Japanese war plans was out of proportion to its weight. It occurred at a moment when the first phase of the war plan was almost complete and when within a line joining the Kuriles, Marshall Islands, New Britain, Java, Sumatra, the Andaman Islands and Burma virtually every strategic locality was in the hands of the Japanese. Phase 2, consolidation of the now complete Greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere was due to begin. Certain military leaders in Japan, however, in view of the ease with which the conquests had been made, were arguing in favour of further expansion of the defensive perimeter, to include New Guinea in the south and Midway in the east, in order to afford better protection to the homeland and to the newly won possessions. The raid on Tokyo came at a critical moment to reinforce their arguments, and expansion was accordingly decided upon. It was more than the Japanese war machine could encompass. Three operations were undertaken in prosecution of the plan for expansion. One, the seizure of the western Aleutians, held little real danger for the Americans, whilst both the other two, namely the expedition to Port Moresby in southern New Guinea in May 1942 and to Midway in the following month, were badly defeated. In the battles of the Coral Sea (4th-8th May 1942) and Midway (3rd-6th June 1942) the wave of Japanese conquest was hurled back; the initiative was wrested from them; and the weapon that had formed the spearhead of their victorious operations of the past six months, the naval air arm, received a blow so crippling that it never completely recovered.

90. PERIOD OF ALLIED HOLDING OPERATIONS ENDS

When the period of Allied holding operations terminated with the victories of the Coral Sea and Midway, and the Allies took the offensive, at first on a limited scale, their principal effort was included in two parallel thrusts, carried out by forces composed of all arms, Army, Navy and Air Force, one in the South-west Pacific, along the North coast of New Guinea, and the other in the South Pacific Area, through the Solomon Islands. Operations in the former, General MacArthur's area, were predominantly army; and those in the South

¹ United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *Air Campaigns of the Pacific War*, p. 62.

Pacific, Vice-Admiral Ghormley's area, predominantly naval. Their co-ordination was the responsibility of the U.S. Chiefs of Staff. These two thrusts were reinforced by independent action by the XX Air Force and the U.S. Army Air Forces, China Theatre, and by submarines.

91. LIMITED OFFENSIVE PHASE

By May 1943 Australia was safe. The naval strength of the Allies in the South-western Pacific equalled that of the enemy and was steadily increasing. Their air forces had a large preponderance in all classes over the Japanese in every theatre, and this preponderance was increasing. By November the enemy would also have to face growing threat from Allied air forces based on India. The margin of Japanese shipping available for operations, after allowing for trade and maintenance of her many overseas commitments was estimated to have fallen from 1½ million to 600,000 tons, and was continuing to fall, for shipbuilding could not keep pace with sinkings. Shipping shortage limited the practical rate of Japanese troop reinforcement in the South-western Pacific to about one Division a month. The Allies consequently planned a limited offensive in the South-western Pacific, designed to wear down Japanese sea and air power and cause shipping attrition, while preventing her from consolidating her position sufficiently to enable her to stage an offensive herself. The objects of the limited offensive were—

- (a) to seize and occupy the New Caledonia—New Guinea line ;
- (b) to undertake a limited advance on the Malay barrier (such as Timor), mainly as a diversion ;
- (c) to advance from Rabaul to the Truk-Guam line when forces were available.

It had also been hoped to advance from Midway towards the Truk—Guam line and along the Samoa—Jaluit (Marshall Islands) line, but the Allied naval forces were not yet strong enough to carry these advances through.¹

The capture of the Japanese base at Rabaul, for which operations were in progress, was subsequently abandoned in favour of neutralization.² As soon as the Americans reached the airfields of the north Solomons they were able to render the base untenable by air attacks and the Japanese eventually gave up its use.

Initially, the operations of the South-west Pacific Force and the South Pacific Area Force had been parallel and passed through adjacent areas. General MacArthur started at Port Moresby in south-eastern Papua, crossed the island of New Guinea and moved up the North-east coast through Hollandia, Wakde, and Biak and Numfor Islands (off the North coast of New Guinea) to Morotai in the Moluccas, from where, having formed by a side-step to Manus in the Admiralty Islands an advanced base for the great amphibious operation in prospect, the force moved to the liberation of the Philippine Islands.

The operations of General MacArthur's force were not planned in their entirety, however, until nearly a year after his advance had begun as a counter-attack against the Japanese overland thrust from Buna on the north-east coast of New Guinea aimed at the Allied advanced base at Port Moresby.

¹ 'Symbol' C.O.S. (43) 33 (O) 28.1.43 papers, C.C.S. 153 ; and 'Trident' C.O.S.(43) 256(O) 17.5.43 papers, aide-memoire by Joint Planning Staff.

² 'Quadrant' C.O.S.(43) 513(O) 11.9.43 papers, Final Report of C.C.S.

The original intention was that the great east to west trans-Pacific thrust which was being planned in the summer of 1943 should become the main operation, and after its commencement the operations in the South-west Pacific should become subsidiary and be prosecuted only to the extent necessary to help the main effort. At the Quebec conference in August 1943 ('Quadrant') the specific routes of the advance on Japan were decided upon and General MacArthur was directed to continue up the New Guinea coast, to reach the Philippines by the autumn of 1944. His operations, though differing in type from the trans-Pacific drive, were to be of equal importance. This entailed division of the United States forces in the theatre. Against an enemy with a logistic echelon as shallow as that of Japan, however, division of the American forces was justified by the rapid development of United States military potential now taking place.

The eastern boundary of the South-west Pacific Area was the meridian of 160° E., beyond which lay the South Pacific area. The South Pacific Forces, under Vice-Admiral Ghormley, began their thrust at Guadalcanal Island, in the South Solomons, in August 1942, and worked northward through the group to Emirau Island, north of the Bismarcks, where their operations terminated in March 1944. Their Army forces were then added to General MacArthur's command, whilst most of the ships were allocated to a new force which had been formed in August of the previous year for the thrust across the Central Pacific.

China was also considered to be essential in order to prevent the possibility of her collapse, in which case, after the assault on the Japan home island the Japanese Government might flee to China and continue the war, based on a great and rich land mass.

At the Quadrant Conference in August 1943 in Quebec, a new command termed the South-east Asia Command (S.E.A.C.) was created under Acting-Admiral the Lord Louis Mountbatten¹ to undertake operations in North Burma in the following winter, designed to reopen surface communication with China in order to keep her in the war. All the resources the United States could make available to him, within the low priority of the theatre, were allocated for the task. Nevertheless, such was the world shortage and the urgent need for building up resources in Europe that only meagre forces could be provided for this theatre. These were still further weakened by the withdrawal of landing ships and craft from the S.E.A.C. area for operations in the Mediterranean. Owing to lack of forces the project to seize a port in China was not put into effect whilst the Americans by-passed Formosa and instead captured the less extensive island group Okinawa Gunto in the Ryuku Islands, which had the advantage of being situated closer to Japan.

93. CENTRAL PACIFIC CAMPAIGN PLANNED

Long before this, however, the operations of the South-west and South Pacific Area Forces had established a breach in the Japanese defence line in the New Guinea-Solomons area, and it was clear that a successful advance through New Guinea would leave in the air the South Pacific Forces operating in the Solomons. The United States building programme was now beginning to show results and a weight of naval war material and supplies was building up in the Pacific.² Even though the Allied strategy was pointed at the defeat of Germany first, and only the minimum resources required for holding operations were intended to go to the Pacific, the scheduled allocation of the national resources of the United States to the separate components of their fighting forces tended to upset the implementation of this strategy. In particular, aircraft carriers were now coming forward in considerable numbers. By August 1943 four new fleet carriers and six light carriers had been completed since Pearl Harbour, and nine fleet carriers and two light carriers were on the stocks. Neither the South-west nor the South Pacific were altogether suitable areas for carrier-based air operations, on account of the proximity of enemy airfields and the vulnerability of carriers to land based air attacks. It was otherwise, however, in the wide spaces of the Central Pacific. The little atolls of Micronesia, the Gilbert and Marshall groups, Palau and the Caroline Islands, Guam and the Marianas—could not be effectively reinforced by the Japanese under the fast moving modern conditions of naval air warfare. For these reasons General of the Army H. A. Arnold, Commanding General of the United States Army Air Force, expressed his conviction at the Quadrant

Conference that the weight of air attack which could be brought to bear on Japan would defeat her and render invasion unnecessary. With his view the British Chiefs of Staff were inclined to concur. The plan was subsequently approved and put into execution. It called for the establishment of bases in China and in the Marianas and other Pacific Islands from which to operate the B.29 superfortresses then just going into production. Pacific Ocean Area Forces, of which the Central Pacific Area Forces were a part, disposed of more ships, equipment and men than were needed for the operations being carried out in the summer of 1943. The American 'fundamental concepts of warfare dictated that this force of personnel and material, which grew prematurely in the Pacific, be committed.'¹ Accordingly the Central Pacific advance was set in motion.

By the autumn of 1943 the power of the Japanese Naval Air Force had been so seriously reduced by attrition in the Bismarcks, Solomons and New Guinea, that at the end of September of that year the Japanese defence line was withdrawn and the Gilbert and Marshall Islands were abandoned to such resistance as could be put up by the inadequate land-based air forces and the local garrisons of ground troops: the Japanese Fleet was not to be committed in their defence.

94. BLOCKADE BY AIR

Operations by the United States Fourteenth Air Force from inland bases in China to reinforce the naval air attacks on the main Japanese overseas shipping routes—the oil route between Singapore and Japan and the iron ore route from the Yangtze shipping points to Japan—began during this same autumn. They also supplemented the pressure hitherto maintained by submarines. These operations were severely limited by the fact that the Fourteenth Air Force base at Kunming could only be supplied by air lift over the Himalayas—the so-called 'Hump.' Operations against Japanese industrial targets by heavy bombers of the U.S. XX Bomber Command from China bases began in the following spring, and were subject to similar limitations. Air attacks on shipping were, of course, no new feature: they had been carried out actively by naval aircraft throughout the war. Carrier-based air forces now mainly attacked large shipping concentrations, while land-based aircraft of the Thirteenth, Fifth and Seventh Army Air Forces, and Navy and Marine units, were active both in search and attack. The attacks from China bases were the first air operations of any magnitude directed primarily against trade. They took the form of sea sweeps, bombing of shipping and loading and repair facilities at ports on the mainland of Asia from Hainan to Shanghai, and the bombing and mining of Yangtze ports and shipping. All these air operations were now to be supplemented by General Arnold's plan to establish, by means of a trans-Pacific advance, bases from which the superfortresses could carry out an intensive air assault on the Japan home islands.

95. CENTRAL PACIFIC FORCE FORMED

The decision to undertake an advance through the Mandated Islands in the Central Pacific was in accordance with the opinion which the United States Chiefs of Staff had always held, that Japan could best be defeated by a series of combined operations across the far reaches of the Pacific, in the course of which

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹ Supreme Allied Commander S.E.A.C. Area (short title SACSEA).

² 'The forces . . . allocated to Navy, Army and Air Forces in the Pacific proved to be far in excess of the minimum requirements for security. Each area commander obtained sufficient logistic support to seize the initiative in the air and to start major surface advances very early in the war. These logistics were necessarily diverted (as far back as the production line in the case of the excessive naval forces created) from the number one job of defeating Germany first. We actually defeated the Japanese air forces before we defeated the German Air Force, and Japan was hopelessly crushed before the German surrender.' *Air Campaigns of the Pacific War*, p. 62.

the Japanese Combined Fleet would be encountered and decisively defeated.¹ The security of the Japanese position in the Pacific depended primarily on their Fleet and Air Force, and it was consequently a cardinal point in the Allied strategy to destroy these with the least delay. The refusal of the Japanese to commit their main Fleet again after the defeat at Midway in June 1942 necessitated the adoption by the Allies of a policy of attrition through ceaseless attacks by carrier and land-based aircraft on every base where enemy ships and aircraft were to be found. This was carried out with such success that the Japanese eventually abandoned their south and central Pacific main bases, Rabaul and Truk, and withdrew the Fleet to Japan and Singapore. The process of attrition affected the Japanese Air Forces even more severely than the Fleet.

Though there were certain disadvantages in the line of advance through the Gilbert and Marshall Islands it was necessary to adopt it in preference to one more direct, since in the course of the advance protection would be given to Samoa, the weak spot in the line of communications to Australia. Also air facilities were available in the Ellice Islands where Funafuti had been occupied by U.S. Marines in October 1943 and airfields were constructed before the Central Pacific advance began. Moreover, the relative proximity of this line of advance towards the operations for the capture of Rabaul, which had not yet been abandoned in favour of neutralization of this Japanese South-west Pacific base, would enable forces to be moved from the central to the south Pacific, and vice versa.

A new force of all three arms, Army, Navy and Air, termed the Central Pacific Forces of the Pacific Ocean Areas Command, was formed under the command of Admiral C. W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas. The new force commenced operations by attacking the Gilbert Islands in November 1943 and the Marshall Islands two months later. If Japan was to be defeated within a reasonable period after the elimination of Germany and Italy—twelve months was first spoken of, then eighteen months—a technique was required different from that employed in the close-knit Solomons Islands Group where every position had to be fought for and progress was slow. Time was accordingly saved by the practice of capturing only such bases as were needed for further advance and by-passing the remainder, leaving the Japanese in occupation but effectively neutralized. This policy was made possible by the gradually increasing disparity between American naval power and that of the enemy, so that the Japanese were unable to support the garrisons of the by-passed atolls. These consequently lost their status and became liabilities, until finally they were to all intents and purposes written off. The American advance was scheduled to continue to the Marianas, which were to be the base of U.S. heavy bombers attacking the Japanese homeland; and it was forecast that by the spring of 1945 the Americans would be able to secure a lodgment in the Ryuku Islands on the threshold of the Japanese mainland, an additional heavy bomber base and a mounting place for the invasion.

96. DANGERS OF DIVIDED CONTROL

The Marianas were reached in June 1944. The outer line of the Japanese defence was now breached and important industrial areas in Japan itself were brought within reach of United States heavy bombers. This decided the Japanese High Command, for the first time since their defeat at Midway just

¹ *Biennial Report of the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army 1st July 1943 to 30th June 1945*, p. 63.

two years earlier, to commit their Combined Fleet to action and seek battle with United States naval forces. The United States naval authorities had estimated that the clash would occur in the Marianas or Philippines: in the event, the Japanese Fleet gave battle both at the Marianas in June 1944 and in defence of the Philippines four months later. In the first encounter their Naval Air Force was decimated, thus rendering the destruction of their fleet in the second encounter almost a foregone conclusion. The Japanese fleet was saved from annihilation, however, through a serious defect in the method of control, which now appeared. Up to the autumn of 1944 General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz had been able to conduct their operations in furtherance of the plan for the defeat of Japan, independently. Their forces operated in different areas. Their direction of advance was different, and their logistic support was founded on a different chain of bases. Any naval forces detached from the Pacific Fleet (which operated in the Pacific Ocean Area) to the South-west Pacific Area came into General MacArthur's direct chain of command exercised through the Commander Seventh Fleet. In the assault on the Philippine Islands, however, a different system was employed, and reliance was placed on mutual cooperation by two equal commanders. The assault was to be carried out by General MacArthur with his own forces reinforced by certain naval units from the Pacific Ocean Area; whilst Admiral Nimitz was directed by the U.S. Chiefs of Staff to cooperate with a covering force from the Pacific Fleet. No single Commander-in-Chief of the two forces was appointed, control being at Joint Chiefs of Staff level. Admiral Nimitz detailed Admiral Halsey with the Third Fleet for the duty of covering the expedition. The differing interpretations of the function of the covering force by General MacArthur and Admiral Halsey caused a misunderstanding which nearly led to a serious setback to the Allies.¹ The initial landing of the Americans in the Philippines at Leyte Gulf was only saved from disaster at the hands of the Japanese main fleet through desperate fighting by a part of General MacArthur's naval forces which Admiral Halsey had left uncovered, namely the U.S. Seventh Fleet escort carriers, their aircraft, and screen of light craft, coupled with the operational ineffectiveness of the powerful Japanese Second Fleet and the irresolution of its Commander-in-Chief. As it was, the landing in the Philippines was successful, and before the antagonists finally disengaged on the fourth day after action was joined the Japanese Combined Fleet had been very severely handled. Nevertheless, the failure to annihilate it cost the Allies a certain effort in the months to come.

For the final combined operation of the United Nations in the Pacific, the capture of Okinawa in April-June 1945, the mistake of ordering the naval covering force to cooperate with the officer in charge of the landing operations was avoided, and the whole of the forces engaged, both Army and Naval were placed under the command of Admiral Nimitz, who was directed to carry out the operation. With three exceptions (two of them air commands) every force that operated in the Pacific was placed under his orders, namely the North and South Pacific Forces, Marshalls-Gilberts Force, Service Force, Pacific Ocean Areas Army Force and Strategic Air Forces, Tenth Army (Okinawa Landing Force) and the Submarine Force. The three exceptions were General Arnold's Twentieth Air Force, the China Based (Air) Forces, and General MacArthur's South-west Pacific Forces. These were directed to co-operate, the principal function of General MacArthur's forces being to neutralize the Formosan airfields and reduce air attacks which before the operation ended

¹ See Naval Staff History, Battle Summary No. 40, *Battle for Leyte Gulf*.

inflicted damage to the extent of 36 ships sunk and 371 damaged, the overwhelming majority being caused by the enemy air forces in Formosa.¹ That General MacArthur's cooperation was less complete than Admiral Nimitz expected can only be ascribed once more to the inherent weakness of the system of attempting to carry out operations without appointing a supreme commander at theatre level.²

The Okinawa operation was only a few days old when the state of higher command in the Pacific became confused as the result of a directive giving General MacArthur command of the land forces and Admiral Nimitz of all naval forces in the theatre. The intention of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was that both commanders should retain their areas (South-west Pacific and Pacific Ocean Area respectively) until passed to the other by mutual agreement or by direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff themselves. Both commanders continued, however, to retain their areas until the operations ended, and it is not altogether clear why the directive was issued at that particular moment.

97. DECISION TO EXPLOIT AIR SUPERIORITY

At a meeting in September 1944 between President Roosevelt, the Prime Minister, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff, known as the 'Octagon' Conference, it was decided to exploit to the fullest extent the naval and air superiority which the Allies now possessed and avoid where possible costly land campaigns. Japan was to be defeated at the earliest possible moment: the planned date was eighteen months after the defeat of Germany—a year earlier it had been twelve months.

Plans were to remain flexible and it was expected that as the result of developments in the strategical situation it would be possible to take various short cuts. The President explained that the American plan was to regain the Philippines and dominate the mainland of Japan from this great archipelago or from Formosa and from a bridgehead to be seized in China. The preliminary movements in the Philippine operation were actually in train at the time, for consequent upon the revelation of the enemy's weakness in the air during carrier-borne strikes carried out early in September an immediate decision had been taken to advance by some weeks the planned date of the assault. The necessary naval and air advanced bases were made available during the month by the capture of positions in the Palau Islands, West Carolines, and Moluccas. As already noticed, the plan to occupy Formosa (operation 'Causeway') never materialized: the island was neutralized by bombing instead. Nor was a bridgehead ever seized in China.

At the Conference Mr. Winston Churchill revealed that Stalin had volunteered a solemn undertaking that the U.S.S.R. would enter the war against Japan on the day Hitler was beaten. Germany surrendered unconditionally on the 7th May 1945, but Russia did not declare war on Japan until a week before the surrender of Japan in the following August. At the time, the Russians knew that Japan was prepared to surrender through the fact that, in May 1945, the U.S.S.R. being still neutral the Japanese had asked her to sue for them

¹ See *Naval Staff History*, Battle Summary No. 44, *Naval Operations in connection with the assault and capture of Okinawa*.

² During the month of April Admiral Nimitz asked for heavy air strikes on Formosa. Out of 25,239 sorties by South-west Pacific aircraft, however, only 1,636 were made on Formosan targets, intermittent adverse weather and other reasons being adduced.

for terms of peace.¹ Russia now made sure of obtaining the advantages of belligerency, without undertaking its toils, by entering the war when it was won.

To provide the necessary assembly area for the final assault on Japan it was decided to seize Okinawa shima and other positions in the Ryuku Islands. This gave the British Pacific Fleet an opportunity of taking part for the first time in the main Pacific Operations, as had been agreed at the Octagon Conference, for the assault entailed the neutralization of the Japanese air bases on the Allied left flank, a duty for which the British Fleet was detailed. The striking force of the Fleet served as a task force in the United States Pacific Fleet, its method of employment being decided from time to time in accordance with the prevailing circumstances. It had its own supply train.

At an inter-allied conference in January and February 1945, known as 'Argonaut,' the Combined Chiefs of Staff again considered operations for the defeat of Japan. Following the Ryuku operation, which took place in April-June 1945, it was intended to seize additional positions from which to intensify the blockade and air bombardment of Japan. This would create a situation favourable to an assault on Kyushu for the purpose of further reducing Japanese military capacity by containing and destroying major enemy forces and further intensifying the blockade and air bombardment. Thus would be established a tactical condition favourable for carrying out if necessary the decisive invasion of the industrial heart of Japan through the Kyushu Plain with the object of destroying Japan's power to resist.

Actually, physical invasion proved unnecessary, for the final air assault provided the necessary argument to induce Japan—already pursuing peace—to surrender unconditionally.

98. AERIAL PREPARATIONS FOR INVASION OF JAPAN

This final air assault consisted of direct attack on the Japanese home islands. Though the Marianas had been reached in June 1944 the air bases did not become operational until November. With the reconquest of the Philippines late in the same year, land based air power, no longer hampered by logistic limitations, was brought within range of the main enemy sea routes; and in the following spring and early summer Okinawa brought the air forces even closer to Japan² while the airfields of Iwo Jima enabled fighters to escort the heavy bomber strikes.

The bombing offensive against Japan's home islands had been begun in November 1944 with the possible invasion of Japan in mind. Strategic air action was for the most part directed towards weakening Japanese resistance to the landing operations in contemplation for the following November, and targets were chosen such as aircraft factories, arsenals, electronic plants, and military material, the destruction of which would affect adversely the power of the Japanese armed forces to oppose the landings. The possibility of simultaneously putting pressure on the whole Japanese economic and social order by attacking the transport and power systems, and finished and semi-finished goods was not actively considered until the beginning of April 1945: the Americans felt too uncertain of their intelligence appreciations of the internal state of Japan to abandon altogether the assumption that invasion would be necessary.

¹ *Japan's Struggle to end the War*, Report No. B105/JAP/PR/1618.

² The attacks from Okinawa airfields began before the capture of the island was completed in June 1945.

An extensive mining campaign by B.29 aircraft began after the capture of Iwo Jima in March 1945. It operated against all still active harbours and shipping routes and was directed both against overseas traffic and the even more important inter-island movement. In the later stages of the war this mining was extended to the Korean ports.

99. WORK OF THE SUBMARINES

Neither the air nor the mining campaign, singly or in sum, pulled as great a weight in the blockade of Japan as the operations of submarines. The part played by Allied submarines in bringing about the defeat of Japan through blockade was indeed of supreme importance, and is capable of direct assessment, unlike that of the land, naval surface and air forces, whose operations frequently impinged on one another or were combined. Submarines sank nearly two thirds of the total merchant ship tonnage lost by Japan, or nearly double that sunk by all other forces, surface and air, Army and Navy combined. They also sank almost a third of the total number of Japanese naval vessels destroyed.

The main United States submarine force used Hawaii as a base and worked generally north of 20° N. A further American submarine force, Task Force 42, commenced operating from Fremantle in Australia in the autumn 1942, and was joined in the summer of 1944 by a considerable British force from the East Indies Station where modern submarine reinforcements had begun to arrive a year previously.¹ The force at Fremantle worked in the South-west Pacific, both in and north of the Malay Barrier.

At the date of the Argonaut Conference in January and February 1945 Allied submarines had already greatly reduced the Japanese power to continue the war. In fact in February when the final operations against Japan were decided upon, sinking had reached such proportions that the Japanese finally abandoned the sea route to the Netherlands East Indies, Borneo, and Malaya, and therewith all they had set out to win when they broke the peace on 7th December 1941.

100. SURRENDER OF JAPAN

The final air assault on Japan which determined the timing of her capitulation and obviated any need for invasion, was at first directed towards the furtherance of two objects, namely the infliction of the maximum damage on industrial production and war potential generally, together with shock effect on the population and the destruction of their moral. In planning this assault, the Americans were handicapped by the incompleteness of their pre-war economic intelligence.

'Greater economy of effort could have been attained and much duplicative effort avoided, by extending and accelerating the strangulation of the Japanese economy already taking place as a result of prior attacks on shipping. This could have been done by an earlier commencement of the aerial mining program, concentration of carrier plane attacks in the last months of the war on Japan's remaining merchant shipping rather than on her already immobilized warships, and a co-ordinated B-29 and carrier attack on Japan's vulnerable railroad system beginning in April 1945.'²

¹ 'T' class in September 1943, 'S' class in January 1944.

² United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *Summary Report (Pacific)*, p. 29.

In order to destroy Japanese moral the Americans, in July 1945, adopted the practice of broadcasting in advance the names of towns marked for destruction. The full strength of the assault was not developed until the early summer of 1945. The enormous damage to the Okinawa invasion fleet by Japanese suicide and orthodox air attacks which began in April had caused almost the whole of the super fortress offensive to be diverted from strategic targets to the bombing of Kyushu airfields, and it was not until the middle of May that the B.29s were able to resume strategic bombing and conduct a pre-invasion campaign of destruction against every industry and resource contributing to the ability of the enemy to wage war. Aircraft from carriers also actively co-operated in this bombing, after the Battle of the East China Sea on 7th April 1945 had deprived the Japanese of the last of their fast naval tactical units, and so removed all fear of any interruption by naval action to the operations for the capture of Okinawa. The Pacific Ocean Area Carrier Forces, including those of the British Pacific Fleet, joined in the final assault when released by the successful completion of the Ryuku operation on 23rd June 1945. Their main effort was directed against operational aircraft, airfields, and naval units immobilised in port by lack of oil. To these attacks the Japanese air forces were unable to offer effective opposition.¹ Employing suicide tactics, for which they were being increasingly organized, they could no doubt have done great damage to an invading force; and aviation fuel had been reserved for this purpose. But the Japanese army, even though with the aid of heavy coast defences it could have resisted attempted invasion, could not prevent the destruction of Japan and her people from the air. The destruction of the Japanese Fleet was completed in three or four heavy strikes. Bombing of large and small cities continued. Industry was paralysed. Systematic destruction of the communication system of the Japanese home islands was initiated on the 14th and 15th by aircraft from carriers dealing a severe blow to the critical water ferry system between Hokkaido and Honshu.

The end was nearing and on 14th August 1945 Japan surrendered unconditionally, the actual timing of the surrender being dictated by the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima on 6th August and Nagasaki on 9th August.

¹ 'At the time of surrender, Japan possessed approximately 9,000 aircraft . . . but these 9,000 aircraft did not remotely approximate to an air force. Due to pilot inexperience, organization, Japanese concept of aerial warfare, and technological limitations, these aircraft could not be brought to bear in the war in the air.' (*Air Campaigns of the Pacific War* U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey p. 53.)

CHAPTER IX

SURRENDER OF JAPAN

101. RECOGNITION OF DEFEAT

In drawing up their war plans the Japanese leaders had to take into account the inability of the country to fight a long war. Two years was generally considered to be about the limit of time during which it would be possible to carry on active full-scale offensive operations, and the date for completion of consolidation of the defensive perimeter had been fixed accordingly. The loss of the initiative after the Battle of Midway in June 1942, and the rapidity of the American strategic moves thereafter, threw the Japanese off balance and compelled them to undertake an unending, costly retirement which gave them no breathing space, caused ceaseless attrition of their fighting forces and merchant marine, and imposed on their war potential a drain it was unable to withstand.

Recognition that the country was defeated came to the leaders of Japan, if not as early as the spring of 1944, at least with the breaching of the Marianas line in July of that year. This was long before awareness came to the people. The political leaders were unwilling to move too far in advance of public opinion, and before peace could be considered, the people had to be brought to the required frame of mind by propaganda. The difficulties of the political leaders were intensified by the objection of the Army to peace, and their custom of assassinating any leader whose policy they disliked.¹ Consequently, it was necessary for those members of the Government who favoured peace to work in secret for ending the war or fall victims to knife or bullet.

It is significant that the capture by the United States of Saipan, in the Marianas, in July 1944, was quickly followed by the collapse of the government of General Tojo and the incorporation of prominent peace-making elements in the succeeding government under Kuniaki Koiso, a retired Army general known to be a critic of Tojo. The Marianas were on the perimeter which the Japanese considered vital to hold, since from bases in the group the Home Islands could be subjected to sustained, shattering air assault such as was then being directed on Germany. Thus the mere fear of bombing of the Home Islands exerted its influence before the event. Raids by the American new heavy bombers (B.29s) of XX Bomber Command on Kyushu and southern Honshu, had already begun from bases in China during the previous month. They were the first air attacks on Japan proper since General Doolittle's carrier-borne B.25 attack in April 1942, and the Japanese authorities were now able to judge the potentialities of the Superfortress about which information had begun to reach them in 1943. The first attacks were limited in weight owing to difficulties of supply and mechanical troubles, and it was not until November 1944, that intensive B.29 attacks against Japan could be undertaken from the Marianas airfields.

¹ Between November 1930 and February 1936 there were 13 assassinations or attempted assassinations of persons occupying high positions in public life in Japan. In most or all of these serving officers of the army or navy were directly or indirectly concerned.

The attacks began at a critical period. Shipping losses had reduced imports of raw materials below the needs of the existing industrial plant capacity, output of a number of essential items had already passed the peak, and the country faced a declining output of aircraft, oil, transport, steel and coal.¹ Food was short.

102. PEACE ADMINISTRATION FORMED

Despite the ominous situation that was developing, and the somewhat ambiguous Imperial directive to Koiso on his taking office to give Japan's situation 'a fundamental reconsideration' looking to the termination of the war, the new government decided to continue the war with renewed vigour, at the cost of further sacrifices. A number of reasons led to this decision, the principal being perhaps the conviction with which Japan's leaders entered the war, that they were fighting for national existence. Contributory reasons were fear of the military clique and police; fear of the reactions of the people if they were allowed to know, without due preparation, the true facts of the situation, which had so far been kept from them; the desire to save face; and finally a belief that it would somehow be possible to find a solution through the favourite oriental procedure of haggling, for the Casablanca statement and the Cairo Declaration setting forth the Allied terms for unconditional surrender were not seriously regarded by the Japanese Government as firm terms. At the same time, at the behest of the Vice Premier, Admiral Yonai, secret studies were made of steps to get out of the war, one of the questions which had to be considered being how to get the Army clique to agree to peace, for the Army still undefeated in the field, hoped the final defence of the Home Islands would provide a tactical victory that might obtain better terms of surrender.

The Emperor had already come to the conclusion that the country must make peace. On 1st April 1945 the Americans invaded Okinawa and a week later Koiso was replaced as premier by Admiral Baron Suzuki with definite instructions from the Emperor to arrange an end to the war. Fear of assassination rendered it necessary for Suzuki to work for peace in secret, despite the backing of the Emperor. When in May Germany surrendered it became possible to bring the matter into the light: indeed, on the 9th May the War Minister, General Anami, though like his Chief of Staff he still urged continuance of the war on the Cabinet, asked for an Imperial conference to be convened to decide whether to continue the struggle.

Within a few days steps were taken to open talks with a view to persuading Russia to intercede on Japan's behalf. Nevertheless, when as late as 8th June the Supreme War Council for the Direction of the War met, with five co-opted members, not one of the eleven had the moral courage to express the view which most of them now held, that steps should be taken to end the war.² It was left to the Emperor, on 20th June, to say 'what everyone has wanted to say but yet was afraid to say,' to quote Suzuki.

The Russian talks came to nothing. The Kremlin merely procrastinated until it suited them to declare war on Japan and advance into Manchuria; where the Japanese Kwantung Army, weakened by detachments for the defence of southern conquests and Japan proper was in no state to oppose the

¹ See Appendix D.

² The Supreme War Council for the Direction of the War had been formed on 5th August 1944. Up to the end the War Minister and the two Chiefs of Staff were opposed to making peace.

Russians: indeed, it is difficult to see how any other result could have been expected except perhaps by a nation so self-centred or ingenuous that during March 1945 a plan had actually been discussed to begin peace steps through the mediation of China, a country whose inhabitants Japan had for more than ten years been massacring and subjecting to every form of atrocity.

103. FAULTY BASIC STRATEGY

If we seek for first principles amongst the causes of Japan's defeat it is clear that she herself sowed the seeds of disaster in a strategy which failed to recognize the necessity for an island power with inherently second-power resources, to safeguard its sea communications; and also so completely misjudged the determination of the Allies as to fail to take adequate account of their immense military potential. It was Japan's belief that, if she made the task of reconquest sufficiently hard the Allies would tire. It was of course out of the question for Japan with her strictly limited logistic capacity to attempt to destroy at source the military potential of the Allies, the main manifestation of which was industrial output. But that military potential deriving from manpower, raw material resources, industrial complexes, research teams and other factors, could only be applied to Japan after traversing the vast stretches of the Pacific Ocean. It was primarily American sea power which effected this. What Japan failed to do, was to prevent or at least delay such application by attacking the ships on the long lines of communication. She ignored the advice given by Germany to use her submarines for this purpose, as Germany herself was doing in the Atlantic with results which were causing the Allies the greatest anxiety.

104. SEA POWER AND BLOCKADE

In this Pacific war once again we see the tremendous effect of the naval blockade exercised in this instance chiefly by submarines and carrier based aircraft. Japan indeed was facing defeat even before the advance of the Allies had reached geographical positions from which attack on and subsequent invasion of the Japanese homeland could be made. Whilst huge and spectacular air battles were taking place over the Coral Sea and Midway, whilst advance was being made inch by inch in the South West Pacific and by giant strides in the central Pacific, allied submarines were silently going about their task of sinking Japanese shipping and cutting the Japanese life lines one by one.

(1) SINKINGS OF JAPANESE MERCHANT SHIPS BY AGENTS

<i>Agent</i>	<i>M/V tonnage sunk</i>	<i>Number of ships</i>
Submarines	4,886,991	1,152
Navy and Marine carrier-based aircraft ..	1,392,058	361
Army aircraft	694,091	256
Mines (including those laid by submarines) ..	592,231	254
Navy and Marine land-based aircraft ..	220,068	89

See Figure 1 (overleaf).

*Destruction of Japanese Merchant Ship Tonnage
by Principal Allied Agents,*

Steel Ships of 500 G.R.T. and over, including Tankers.

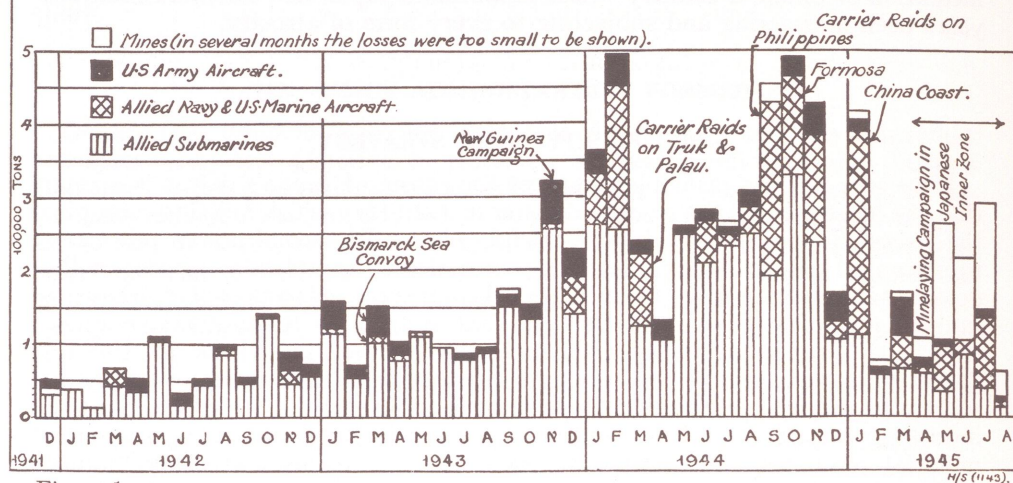


Figure 1.

105. DECISION TO SURRENDER

Japan, like ourselves, was peculiarly susceptible to blockade in war. Unlike us, she failed to take the necessary steps to safeguard the sea communications on which she depended for imports of such basic items as oil, iron ore, coal, bauxite, food and other materials, adequate reserves for which could not be built up in peace time. Japan's vulnerability was accentuated by the shortage of shipping with which she began the war, the tonnage of her merchant marine barely sufficing for estimated minimum requirements. Dispassionate advisers of the Government had warned the Japanese Premier of this in the autumn of 1941. The excess of losses over capacity to build quickly set up a vicious circle. By preventing exploitation of captured sources of raw materials it kept the country's economy off balance and created shortage of materials. These in turn limited war production, and deprived the country of oil in such quantities as to impair training of air units and finally to immobilize the fleet.

A survey of national resources made between 1st and 10th June 1945 presented a picture of gloom relieved only by the statement that moral was high. This was vitiated however by the admission that the people were losing confidence in their leaders and that careful preparations would have to be made to cope with public reactions if the Okinawa Campaign should result in disaster. It was recognized that the effect of the loss of Okinawa (then but a fortnight distant) would result in the cutting of the last remaining lines of communication. Steel was so scarce that it could no longer be used in shipbuilding. Oil reserves were on the verge of exhaustion. Railway transport was on the point of being confined to local areas. The food situation had deteriorated further and a crisis was expected at the end of the year: there was a shortage of 9 per cent in the estimated requirements of rice for the year, and even if communication remained possible the deficit could not be made good from the mainland.

By 1945, when intensified air attacks against the Japanese home islands began, the country had been brought through blockade to a state in which the air force and home army were powerless to prevent the complete extermination of the nation's economy, industry, communications, and culture

DECISION TO SURRENDER

by air attack. After more than four years of attrition Japan's aircraft fighter defence was inadequate both in numbers and performance to withstand the Allied attack. Heavy losses over that period had destroyed a large part of her fighter strength: shortage of aviation fuel and the imminence of invasion caused the remainder to be dispersed and conserved. Improved aircraft types did not materialize. The dispersal and moving underground of essential industries, and the evacuation of metropolitan areas, were undertaken too late. It is doubtful whether they could ever have been completely effective.

Sea power had created the conditions for victory. Japan towards the end of the war was as vulnerable to air attack as she had been to naval blockade at the beginning of the war. By June 1945 the American and British fleets had brought the Allied air forces to positions from which intensive bombing of Japan could be effected. Before the month was out every large city in Japan had been destroyed: in the following month 42 cities of secondary industrial importance were razed to the ground by radar night bombing blind, and attention was being turned to the communication system of the Home Islands, which was to be completely paralysed before the invasion.

When Japan surrendered without invasion the recurrent question as to what effect the threat of invasion had on the decision to surrender necessarily remained undecided. Evidence obtained by the Americans after the war tended to show that the expected 'violation of the Sacred Homeland' always viewed through an emotional and reverent haze did little to hasten the decision to surrender. Though this decision was not finally taken until the conclusive Imperial Conference on the night of 9th-10th August the Emperor as early as May 1945 when his Supreme War Council was divided three to three, had given direct and secret instructions to Prince Konoye, the intended emissary to Moscow, to secure peace at any price, whatever the severity of the terms. Nor did the entry of Russia into the war, though occurring at the critical moment when the decision to surrender was under consideration, have any effect in hastening that decision. The evidences of defeat were all about, plain for everyone to see. By the beginning of August it may be said that the military strength of Japan had been broken. The first atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on 6th August. The culminating point came with the dropping of the second atom bomb on Nagasaki on 9th August and the threat that the atomic bomb would be used 'promptly and forcefully' if Japan did not end the war.

On 14th August at midnight the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom announced that Japan had accepted the Allied demand for unconditional surrender.