

Summary of Sessions

Britain's Grand Strategy for War against Japan

Saki Dockrill

Britain, as a global power, had never formulated its external policy in a vacuum, and certainly not on a regional basis. The disaster of the Singapore strategy can be explained in this wider context. The priorities of Britain's grand strategy sharpened between 1939-1941, and by the time of the onset of the Pacific War, Britain had a very clear idea of how to prosecute the war at the global level, with the Asian-Pacific War constituting only a part of Britain's military undertaking. Despite America's determination to punish Japan as early as possible, the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, managed to persuade the American President, Franklin Roosevelt, to stand by the Europe-first strategy in the wake of Pearl Harbor. In the Far East, Churchill, despite earlier setbacks in Southeast Asia, never felt for a single moment that Japan had the capability to win against the combined strength of the United States and Britain. In any case, Britain regarded the war in the Pacific Ocean as America's affair, and it expected to play a relatively minor role in the final stage of defeating Japan once Germany and Italy had surrendered. While it was important for Britain to recover its sphere of influence in Southeast Asia, the priority given to this theatre was consistently low in Anglo-American war strategy. Thus the timing of the allied defeats of Italy and Germany and the allocation of resources to the European campaign determined the nature and scale of the war against Japan. The problem of how to assist China became a divisive issue in Anglo-Chinese-US relations, which in turn affected the nature of Britain's campaigns in Burma/India. Overall, Britain did not waste major resources in the fighting in Asia, but it won the Pacific War nonetheless. The priorities of Britain's grand strategy were not altered much throughout the Second World War, and the global coalition warfare was mainly fought as Britain had originally intended.

Tojo Hideki as a Leader in War against Britain

TOBE Ryoichi

War leaders such as Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini, represented the major powers in the Second World War. In case of Japan, however, there was not such a war leader. As A. J. P. Taylor observes, "there was no Japanese war lords--no single figure who led Japan into war, who directed the war, who made the decisions, and so on."

But if there was anyone who led Japan in the Second World War, it is Tojo who did. Actually Tojo was the War Minister and the Home Minister in addition to the Prime Minister at the outbreak of the Pacific War, and afterwards he held the additional posts of the Munitions Minister and the Chief of the Army General Staff. He had so many important posts and so wide competence that it would be quite strange if he should not be placed as war leader on a par with the other five leaders. Moreover, Tojo was a full General on active duty. He was a professional soldier, but the other five were not. Therefore Tojo was more familiar than they with the military aspects of directing war. In this respect, he should be well qualified as war leader.

Why cannot Tojo stand comparison with the other five? Why could he not well claim the name of war leader? I will explore the reasons in his directing the war against Britain.

One of the reasons is the institution called as the Independence of Supreme Command. It was not necessarily unsurmountable constraints. But Tojo did not try to overcome the constraints of the institution until the last stage of his administration. He endeavored to play a war leader within the limits of the institutional constraints.

Another reason is found in Tojo's leadership style. He endeavored to be a war leader on the basis of separating political matters from military affairs. Although Tojo took various offices concurrently, he did not integrate political aspects and military ones of war leadership by concentrating powers of those posts into one. Put it simply, he made great efforts to perform various parts separately. And Tojo tried to leave to his subordinates' coordination the troublesome conflicts that might split the military. He would avoid as far as possible the friction that might be created by enforcing his will. Tojo hesitated to complicate the conflicts by disputing directly with the General Staff even when he had different opinions from it. All he would do

was taking indirect measures in a roundabout way of restraining the General Staff when it went too far.

The most important reason why Tojo did not stand comparison with the other leaders is that he did not have some grand strategic visions or designs. It is noteworthy that the questions and suggestions Tojo presented at the meetings to discuss the strategic matters were to the point in most cases. But he did not give the strategic visions or guiding principles of directing the war with Britain. Holding post of the Chief of the General Staff, Tojo could have played a leading role in making military strategies, but he would not take the initiative in it. Why did he not take the initiative? It is because he did not have any strategic vision.

The Army Level Of Command: General Sir William Slim And Fourteenth Army In Burma

Brian Bond

Bill Slim was a tough and successful Army commander who was also a charming and humane character. He was a professionally well-educated and highly-trained soldier, a master of staff work and administration. He chose his subordinates wisely and gave them loyal support. He enjoyed good relations with most of his superior commanders (notably Mountbatten), and co-operated well with allies, including the notoriously prickly Stilwell. He was a good listener and adopted a relaxed, almost democratic, style in discussing plans with his staff. Slim was completely free from snobbery or self-importance; he excelled at winning the trust of all ranks and various nationalities -including even Chinese generals! One of his most important assets was his ability to speak to his troops in plain language which they could understand, explaining not only practical, soldierly matters but also dealing with more delicate issues of ideas and idealism. This gift for personal communication brought a rich reward in terms of loyalty and affection and goes far to account for his remarkable achievement in creating an esprit de corps at Army level. Slim's judgement as a strategist was sometimes faulty, but he never tried to gloss over his mistakes or put the blame on others. In operational terms Slim demonstrated his leadership qualities in three very different circumstances. First, in sustaining

morale and discipline through a devastating retreat which would have destroyed a lesser commander. Secondly, by maintaining his strategic aim through a long defensive battle of attrition. Finally, in orchestrating a victorious advance through most difficult terrain against a formidable enemy. Slim is now widely regarded as one of Britain's best Army commander in the Second World War.

“The British Factor” in Japan’s War Plan

AKAGI Kanji

This paper addresses the extent to which “the British Factor” was considered in the formation and implementation of Japan’s war plan in the prelude to, initial and latter phases of the Second World War. The war plan, consisting of the “Plan for the successful conclusion of hostilities with Great Britain, the United States, the Netherlands and the Chungking regime”, was devised in the light of an inability to directly force an enemy’s surrender. Based on assumptions of German invincibility and the likelihood of British defeat, it comprised a scenario of bringing about a British surrender and subsequently using the effects of this to end the war by indirect means.

This paper considers Japan’s failure to accurately interpret German intentions and to resolve domestic differences in strategy over the issue of whether a protracted war or short decisive war was being aimed for, resulting in ambiguity and conflicting policy directions between the Army and Navy, and within the Navy itself, that became particularly marked with the entry into the second phase of the war.

Issues surrounding the adaptation of Japan’s war plan and the prevalence of its acceptance in the military establishment through the various developments in the war are the subject of this paper. In an action that formed a part of the process of the evolution of the war plan, Japan cancelled all westward military operations up to the end of 1942, due to the intensification of fighting over Guadalcanal. After withdrawal from Guadalcanal, the Imperial Headquarters revised Japan’s grand strategy. With this, the “British Factor” in Japan’s war plan disappeared. Japanese

leadership had finally recognized that the assumptions previously held had been illusory.

Crisis of Command:

Major-General H. Gordon Bennett and British Military Effectiveness in the Malayan Campaign, 1941-2

Carl Bridge

British military leadership and effectiveness in the Malayan campaign is a series of examples of a poor hand played poorly in the face of a Japanese opponent with a good hand played superbly. The British had sufficient manpower but inadequate air cover and naval support. They quickly lost command of the air and sea. Their opponent, Yamashita, was an accomplished practitioner of the rapid encirclement tactics and all-arms warfare necessary to take the peninsula and island. His opponents, Percival, Heath and Bennett, failed to concentrate their forces and showed insufficient grasp of jungle warfighting methods until it was too late. Bennett, in particular, was better at drawing the lessons after the event than he was at coming up with useful and practical solutions during the campaign itself. Perhaps the best result from a British point of view was that they learnt from the Japanese, and these lessons were to prove invaluable in the campaigns of the next three years.

General Yamashita and his Way of Leadership: Operations in Malaya and Singapore

TACHIKAWA Kyoichi

The purpose here is to examine the war leadership of Lieutenant General Tomoyuki Yamashita, Commander of the 25th Army, during Malaya/Singapore Campaign of the Pacific War/the Great East Asian War. Since those days through the present, General Yamashita has been highly estimated as a victorious general during the

first stages of the war both in Japan and abroad. However, the details of his conduct of war in Malaya and Singapore have not been well known. What kind of decisions did he make by himself? For what reasons? Did his decisions have influence on the course of the campaign on the whole? Is it possible to indicate any characteristics and any reflections of his personalities in them?

Let us examine, first, Yamashita's engagement in the planning of operations in Malaya and Singapore respectively. Secondly, let us consider his few decisions during the campaign to tell his perceptions, the backgrounds of his decision-making and their influence on the war situations. Thirdly, let us look at his war leadership from the viewpoint of joint operation. At the same time, Yamashita's relations with the commanders of the Imperial Guards, the 5th, the 18th Divisions and the Southern Army Command as well as his own staff officers and their influence on his decision-making will also be examined. In conclusion, Yamashita's war leadership during Malaya/Singapore Campaign will be reevaluated.

British Tactical Command and Leadership in the Burma Campaigns 1942-45

Graham Dunlop

Inheriting a legacy of poor preparation for war, British tactical command was outfought by the Japanese in the first Burma campaign of 1941-42, but did well to maintain its cohesion and the morale of troops during the withdrawal through Burma without air cover. The low point of British tactical leadership was reached during the first Arakan campaign of September 1942 to April 1943, which was conducted incompetently and without resolve, the lessons from the first Burma campaign being ignored. Despite problems with the quality of new recruits and young officers, a rapid improvement in the quality of British command and leadership began in late 1943, percolating down from the formation of South East Asia Command, under Mountbatten, and XIV Army, under Slim. Armed with much improved resources, this transformed command was able to turn the tide of the Burma campaign in 1944 and 1945.

Japanese War Leadership in Burma Theater –Imphal –

ARAKAWA Kenichi

I would like to solve a question on the Japanese war leadership in Burma theater. It's why the Imperial Japanese Army dare to do the operation when there were serious problems to pursue it and little impact on the tide of WW . And as a result, Japanese Imperial Army got huge damage and the failure of operation accelerated collapse of Japanese defensive system in Burma. My conclusion is as follows.

Lt. Gen. Mutaguchi planned an operation that had serious problems and excess of ambitious aim in the spring of 1943. This dangerous plan (Mutaguchi's Plan) was executed after 1 year in the spring of 1944 without any revision. Besides after he lost perspective of the operation and the possibility of its victory, he couldn't decide to halt this operation.

There were 2 triggers that made Mutaguchi plan this operation. One was the first Wingate Expedition, the other was his promotion to Commander of 15th Army. The primary objective of Imphal Operation was to protect all Burma. But since he added his ambitious dream to it, this Operation became dangerous one without feasibility beyond the 15th Army's capacity. The reasons why Mutaguchi's Plan was not modified were that his senior commander, Lt. Gen. Kawabe kept a loose rein on Mutaguchi and that M.G. Inada, Vice Chief of Staff at Southern Army Headquarters who urged Mutaguchi to modify Mutaguchi's Plan was shifted. In addition worsening tide of the Great East Asian War and cooperation of Tojo Government with Chandra Bose in 1943 made Imphal Operation push forward.

Change of British and Indian Army in 1943 was an important factor that did worse damage on Japanese Imperial Army. British Force postponed the large offensive plan, rather took defensive attitude and developed an innovative tactics, the Box- the cubic warfare. British Force trained and converted its Army into vigorous one. However, Lt. Gen. Mutaguchi didn't notice enemy's change, or took no interest in its change.

Although Gen. Mutaguchi and Gen. Kawabe lost perspective of the operation, why couldn't they decide to halt this operation? It's because they contained sound judgment from military rationality by expecting its success too much and with their characters.

All in all, Mutaguchi had a nature to hold a thinking process with his excess of sense of mission. The thinking process was an essential ability as a professional military officer to observe enemy coolly under premise of possibility of change of enemy's plans and ability and to set up objectives under the correct calculation of own side-logistics. Lt. Gen. Mutaguchi who had such a nature was promoted to GCO 15th Army in charge of defense in north and middle Burma in 1943. This was the precise cause of the tragedy in Imphal.

British Leadership in Air Operations (Malaya and Burma)

Michael Dockrill

Following their defeats in Malaya, Singapore and Burma in 1942, the British were painfully aware that one of the major factors in their defeat had been their inferiority in airpower vis a vis the Japanese. This paper describes how the British, with indispensable assistance from the Americans, rebuilt the Royal Air Force in South East Asia after 1943, equipping it with new fighters and bombers, constructing all weather airfields in Assam, and improving training, reconnaissance and radar facilities. Above all the reorganisation of August 1943 resulted in the appointment of Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten as Supreme Commander of the newly created South East Asia Command, and he, and the 14th Army Commander, General William Slim, planned the reconquest of Burma by relying on transport and cargo aircraft to provision, and replenish, British garrisons which been hitherto tied to an inadequate road and rail network which was easily interdicted by Japanese forces. Mountbatten fought tenaciously to ensure that his Command had adequate transport aircraft and to retain them in the face of strong pressure from the Joint Chiefs in Washington to remove them for other fronts -at one time Mountbatten diverted Dakotas from 'the Hump' without the prior agreement of the joint Chiefs in order to transport troops from Arakan to the besieged garrison at Kohima. His air leaders and their squadrons drove the Japanese air force virtually out of the skies after March 1944, enabling Slim and his army to drive the Japanese out of Burma by May 1945. This paper assesses the abilities and professional qualities of the British air leadership during the Burma campaign.

Imperial Army Aviation's effort to be an "Air Force" during the Offensive Air Operation over Malaya

YOKOYAMA Hisayuki

The Malaya Offensive Air Operation of the beginning Pacific War that Japanese Army played a key role was a grand attack to reach Java, Burma from Malaya. And Army Aviation got airfield one by one, like as airbase-hopping by "Aerial Exterminating Action." Their aircraft could only reach to the northern Malaya because of shorter combat radius from the air base of Southern French Indochina which they deployed to set the start of their operation. But they almost gained control of the air in Malaya for a few days, and this operation contributed greatly to the Southern Campaign whole; the Singapore, Java, and Sumatra Operation. Throughout their operational leadership which was done in the Malaya Offensive Air Operation, we recognize enthusiasm and suffering of Army Aviation that broke with cooperation to ground operation and operated "Air Force" as the purpose of control of the air.

This report addresses LTC. Kazuo Tanikawa and LTG. Michioho Sugawara. Tanikawa planned this air operation and supervised its enforcement as chief of section 4 (Air Operation) of the Southern General Army, and Sugawara led this operation as the commander of 3rd Air Corp. I examine this operation from the viewpoint of recognition for their air operation concept, and we discuss that Army Aviation's attempt as an air force operation tied to epoch-making victory of the Southern Campaign. Firstly, we survey the process that the Japanese Army adopts a concept of "Aerial Exterminating Action", and Army Aviation's "Aerial Exterminating Action" concept in Sugawara Mission dispatched to Germany. Secondly, we watch recognition of the command of the air in the Malaya Offensive Air Operation, and examine that Tanikawa was putting all his energy into securing detachment of aviation unit and display of originality of an air operation. Tanikawa made an effort in realization of "Air Force Operation" as acquisition of control of the air into discord with ground force. Thirdly, we take up a concrete example and discuss an operational leadership of Sugawara, and make clear his commander image.

And finally, taking into account the result examination above, we point out that an

operational leadership of Tanikawa and Sugawara by "Aerial Exterminating Action" in Malaya aimed at the air force operation. In addition, we mention that Army Aviation was not able to molt from the frame of army for limit of an operative concept when Army Aviation shifted to defensive air operations after the Malaya Offensive Air Operation.