

[Chairman's Summary]

The Pacific War as Total War

Junichiro Shoji

The Forum of this fiscal year is the fifth project on the Pacific War starting from FY2007 and its theme was set as the “Pacific War as Total War”.

In this year, the word called “post disaster” was born instead of “postwar” because of the Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred on March 11, 2011. This shows that the great earthquake had a considerable impact on the Japanese society and it is still in our mind. On the other hand, this year is the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Pacific War and the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Civil War that occurred in the U.S. mainland and caused a total of about 600,000 deaths from the two armies. This war is said to be a precedent of total war.

Nowadays the word “total war” is used vaguely without careful consideration in many cases, and it is occasionally used as a pronoun that means “put all efforts”. For example, a commentator described the championship game between Japanese team and the U.S. team in the FIFA Women's World Cup as the “total war”.

A person who introduced the concept of “total war” for the first time in the history is French politician Leon Daudet. He published *La guerre totale (The Total War)* in 1918 based on the lessons learnt from the battle with Germany in the First World War. In the background, there was recognition that World War I was a totally different type of war from traditional wars in which only armies participated. It was Ludendorff (E.F.W. Ludendorff), a German general, who widely diffused the concept of “total war” since then, and he published *Der totale Krieg (The Total War)*. Ludendorff defined “total war” as a form of war that organizes and mobilizes not only military strength but also political, economic, technical and (people's) mental capabilities of one country, that is to say, all material and human resources, to the fullest extent toward the purpose of war in order to win the war¹.

On the one hand, it is said that the first clear definition of “total war” in pre-war Japan was

¹ Atsushi Koketsu, *Soryokusen Taisei Kenkyu: Nihon Rikugun no Kokkasodoin Koso (Study on Total War System: National Mobilization Initiative of the Japanese Army)* (Shakaihyoronsha, 2010, expanded edition of the book of the same time published by San'ichi Shobo, 1981), pp. 21-22; Yoichi Kibata, “Soryokusen toshiteno Futatsuno Sekaitaisen (Two World Wars as Total War)” in Kibata, ed., *Koza: Senso to Gendai 2 – Nijusseiki no Senso wa Nandeattaka (Koza Series of War and Modern Age 2: What Do Wars in the 20th Century Mean?)* (Otsuki Shoten, 2004), pp. 65-66.

made by then Lieutenant Colonel Tatsuhiko Takashima (later Colonel). When Takashima worked in the War History Section of the General Staff Officer in 1938, he wrote a book entitled *Sumera Ikusa* or *Ko Sen (Imperial War)*. In this book, he described “total war” as “war that depends on organic total power such as the military strength, politics, economy and thoughts in contrast with traditional wars” and particularly emphasizes its characteristic as “comprehensive mechanism exercised by the harmoniously-combined organic binding state”.² In 1938, a translated version of *Der totale Krieg* published by Ludendorff in 1935 was published under the title, *Kokka Soryokusen (Total National War)*. In the actual politics, the National Mobilization Law was enacted in the same year due to the expansion of the Sino-Japanese War.

On the other hand, then Major Tokuchi Tada (later Colonel) published a great work entitled *Nihon Sensogaku (Japanese Polemology)* when he had worked as a teacher of the Army War College in 1939. In this book, he points out that the form of war has changed from “military war” to “national mobilization” then to “total war” and expressed his own opinion that distinguishes “national mobilization” from “total war”. That is to say, the “form of war of national mobilization” exercises the full strength of a nation for military warfare in a concentrated and integrated manner, while the “form of total war” stands for a war in which independent wars in a variety of fields such as politics, economy, thought and culture are integrated organically and comprehensively with military warfare.³ There have been different opinions on the meaning of “total war” from the beginning.

Since then, a number of books such as *Nihon Soryokusen Yawa (Night Tales of Total War of Japan)* by Yakichi Terada (Monasu, 1939), *Soryokusen Kyosho (Total War Guidebook)* by the same author (Kasumigaseki Shobo, 1941), *Kokka Soryokusen Ron (National Total War Theory)* by Takao Tsuchiya (Daiyamondosha, 1943) had been published. Tsuchiya, for example, defined “total war” as “a form war that is fierce and comprehensive with the full national strength such as military, politics, economy and thoughts and last for a relatively long period of time in which the national economic strength is of extreme importance together with the ideological and political bond different from traditional limited military wars, though military wars are still a main form of war”.⁴

In postwar Japan, *Soryokusen Taisei Kenkyu – Nihon Rikugun no Kokka Sodojin Koso (Study on Total War System: National Mobilization Initiative of the Japanese Army)* (San’Ichi Shobo, 1981) published in 1981 by Professor Atsushi Koketsu who spoke in this forum was a precedent

² Tatsuhiko Takashima, *Kosen (Imperial War)* (Sekaisozosha, 1938), Glossary, p. 82.

³ Tokuchi Tada, *Nihon Sensogaku (Japanese Polemology)* (Koyo Shoin, 1939), pp. 381-393.

⁴ Takao Tsuchiya, *Kokka Soryokusen Ron (National Total War Theory)* (Daiyamondosha, 1943), p. 1.

of studies on Japanese total war. A number of study results related to total war or a total war system have been put to the test of the society mainly in history and politics.⁵

Particularly, a collection of research papers entitled *Soryokusen to Gendaika (Total War and Modernization)* (Kashiwashobo, 1995) edited by Yasushi Yamanouchi⁶ et al. published in 1995 when fifty years have passed after the war mainly analyzes Japan and Germany from a perspective of what have total war and corresponding social changes brought down to the modern society. It raises a bold issue that the social reorganization was made through total war and the transition from the hierarchical society to the system society was caused. That kind of perspective has been criticized, because it clouds the axis of conflict between fascism and antifascism (democracy) that laid the base of characteristics of World War II, and there have arisen vigorous debates⁷.

In any way, nowadays the width of studies has widened such as the meaning of total war (system) in modern history and the point of view of reviewing the mode of modern wars from the perspective of total war.

This Form is to verify the Pacific War from a point of view of total war and indicate two characteristics. The first characteristic is that this forum targets not only the concept of total war and the reality of total war system but also aspects of how countries concerned had prepared for total war. In World War I, belligerent countries did not fight a battle as total war from the beginning but it was recognized that it was going to be limited war as those from the eighteenth century. In this sense, World War II is totally different and major countries expected in advance that it was going to be total war. It is an important theme, therefore, how the countries concerned had made preparations for a war to come.

The second characteristic is that this forum also targets not only Japan but also the U.S., the British Empire and Australia. As the author mentioned above, the word “total war” was born in European continental countries such as France and Germany that played a vital role in World War I. Thus, one cannot deny that total war tends to be used for continental countries. In this sense, it is very significant that this forum focuses mainly on maritime countries.

⁵ Concerning the history of studies, see Atsushi Koketsu, *Soryokusen Taisei Kenkyu (Study on Total War System)*, pp. 259-281.

⁶ Yamanouchi later published a jointly-edited book with Naoki Sakai entitled *Soryokusen Taisei kara Grobarizeshon e (From Total War System to Globalization)* (Heibonsha, 2003).

⁷ Concerning criticism, see Kibata “Soryokusen toshiteno futatsuno sekaitaisen (The Two World Wars as Total War)”, p. 72, “Soryokusen-taisei wo do toraeruka?: *Soryokusen to gendaika wo yomu (How Can We Understand Total War System?: How Can We Read Total War and Modernization?)*” in *Nenpo Nippon-Gendaishi 3 Soryokusen/Fashizum to Gendaishi (Annual Report on Modern Japanese History 3: Total War, Fascism and Modern History)* edited by Kentaro Awaya et al. (Gendai Shiryo Shuppan, 1997) and Koketsu, *Soryokusen Taisei Kenkyu (Study on Total War System)*, pp. 274-276.

The outline of this forum is as follows.

Firstly, the “keynote address” was given by Professor Yoko Kato under the theme, “Thoughts on the Pacific War”. Professor Kato pointed out in her address that although various organizations of the League of Nations deliberated on disarmament, labor problems, agricultural problems in the mid-1920s, Europe tended to play a central role so that regular international conferences have started to be held mainly by countries that were interested in the Pacific area. The Institute of Pacific Relations (hereinafter abbreviated as IPR) led those conferences, and various problems in the Pacific area were deliberated by inviting not only countries on the Pacific coast such as Japan, the U.S., China and Mexico but also the USSR, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and France in the Kyoto round held in 1929. She points out that the word “Pacific” was used in a broad sense not limited to Japan and the U.S. or the Pacific area sandwiched by the two countries in the mid-1920s. Currently, China and Russia have started to adopt an aggressive policy from a point of view of naval and aerial forces in the Pacific area. She argued that it is meaningful to review the Pacific War that occurred seventy years ago as a case of failure in terms of security and preventive measures in the Pacific area and to deeply and widely study the Pacific War from a perspective of the “Pacific”.

Subsequently, in the first session, two researchers made presentations focusing on “the emergence of total war” and questions were asked with respect to their presentations.

Firstly, Professor Jan Willem Honig made a presentation under the theme, “What is Total War? From Clausewitz to Ludendorff”. In this presentation, Professor Honig explained that it was Ludendorff who made the largest contribution to the conceptualization and generalization of total war. While Clausewitz saw wars as the continuation of politics, Ludendorff claimed that politics was the continuation of wars by other means. Professor Honig compares the perception of war of the two professors in detail and points out that the theory of Ludendorff links war to politics more closely and consistently than that of Clausewitz. He concluded that the Ludendorff’s concept of total war can be understood as a theoretically-convincing image of war and that its trace can still be tracked back in war waged by a modern liberal and democratic state.

Secondly, Tomoyuki Ishizu, Chief of the Research Office of History of International Conflict made a presentation under the theme “Total War and Social Change: With a Focus on Arthur Marwick’s Perspective on War”. In this presentation, Chief Ishizu introduced an Arthur Marwick’s examination on total war from a point of view of functionality and an argument that war that is seemingly irrational phenomenon may in some cases paradoxically promote rationalization and modernization. He also argues that wars are not an only or the most important catalyst of social

changes, but a question of why many social changes occur in wartime or immediately after war is worth examining to the fullest extent. Chief Ishizu points out the fact that states could be reorganized to battle it out by a method no one could imagine as an outstanding characteristic in the age of total war.

The following questions were made by Professor Kanji Akagi with respect to the two above-mentioned presentations. He first asked Professor Honig a question that had the Ludendorff's concept of total war been refused by Nazi Germany. Professor Honig responded to this question that the thought of Ludendorff had still remained at the stage of operation planning of the German Army but it underwent a change to a different thought at the stage of execution. Then, he asked Chief Ishizu from when the social impact of total war started to appear in postwar Japan. He replied that the recognition of history that captures the age before and after 1945 by a discontinuous manner is dominant in Japan, but continuity is discerned in any time we extract. He explained that major factors that helped the high economic growth in postwar Japan were actually created in the period before and after the enactment of the National General Mobilization Act in 1938, introducing arguments of Yasushi Yamanouchi and Yukio Noguchi.

"The special address" by Professor Christopher Coker was given under the theme "War and the Short 20th Century". In the address, Professor Coker defined the 20th century as a century of wars and differentiated the period from 1914 to 1989. He pointed out the connection between the centuries before and after that period. That is to say, though the 19th century was the age of progressivism and modernization, this caused massacres and total war in the 20th century. The 21st century may not have arrived as a result of wars occurred during the 20th century, if this trend progressively merged into nuclear weapons. Professor Coker pointed out the fact that humankind has not learnt effective lessons from that experience in the 20th century.

In the second session, three researchers made presentations focusing on the deployment of total war and questions were asked with respect to each presentation.

Firstly, Professor Dennis Showalter made a presentation under the theme "War to the Knife: The US in the Pacific, 1941-1945". In this presentation, Professor Showalter argues that at first the Japanese in the Pacific War were regarded as "a second-class enemy" from American eyes and an almost harmless enemy in the U.S. Nonetheless, the actual battle between the Japanese Army and the U.S. Army became fierce due to natural environments in the Pacific area and the way the Japanese Army waged the battle, driving Americans to war between different cultures. Professor Showalter argues, however, that "common war culture" prescribed the attitude of Americans even

in such fierce war and that an awareness of human rights did not become an important factor.

Then, Professor David Horner gave a presentation under the theme “The British Empire in the Pacific War”. Professor Horner argues in this presentation that the role of the Great Britain in the Pacific War was limited, but Australia accounted for the majority of ground forces under the direction of General MacArthur and played an important role. As a result, postwar Australia has become an important ally of the U.S. in the Pacific area.

Lastly, Professor Atsushi Koketsu gave a presentation entitled “Total War and Japan”. In his presentation, Professor Koketsu explained that the process of responding to total war in Japan forced the country to coordinate efforts by repeating constant confrontation and compromise between the government and the Army. Nevertheless, a contradiction that arose in that process could not be overcome to the end and the construction of Japanese total war system has not completed. He points out that the principal reason for such failure is attributable to the fact that a variety of powers is separated in the national structure of Japan and that the coordination among those powers was not promoted sufficiently in spite of the state and national call for total war system. Professor Koketsu pointed out that it was possible to analyze the nature of Japan in summarizing the process of responding to total war and concluded that the Japanese total war system was definitely insufficient compared to the Western total war system.

Professor Ryoichi Tobe asked the following questions with respect to the three presentations. Firstly, he asked Professor Showalter about the term “trans culture war” used in his presentation. Professor Showalter explained that this term is applied to a special situation of the Pacific front with the war between the groups of different cultures (Japanese Army and U.S. Army) in mind. Then, he asked Professor Horner whether Australia adopted the total war system during World War II, and if that is the case, such system is a result of experiences of World War I. He also asked what influence the Pacific War had on the Australian society after the war. Professor Horner replied to those questions, explaining that Australia has never experienced total war and that Australia began to depend on the U.S. in terms of immigration and security policies in the process where Australia has been incorporated into the Allies led by the U.S. Lastly he asked Professor Koketsu whether Japan is a nation of total war system that has not been achieved. Professor Koketsu described that the Japanese total war system is a military supremacy system, while the Western total war system was a democracy supremacy system. Based on that lesson, postwar Japan has shifted from the military total war system to the economic total war system and this shift led the country to the postwar reconstruction in Japan and the theory of comprehensive security in the 1980’s. He points out that, in this sense, the non-military total war system has in essence started to take root or has already taken root in the Japanese political system and political culture,

although words and its form have changed.

In the third session, three researchers made presentations focusing on “various aspects of total war” and questions were asked with respect to those presentations.

Professor Geoffrey Wawro gave a presentation under the theme “The ‘American Way of War’ and the U.S. War with Japan, 1941-1945”. He points out in this presentation that the idea that a chance for Japan to win was extremely low from the beginning when we review the Pacific War ignores the advantage of Japan due to its surprise attack in the early stage and geographical conditions. He concludes that the U.S. could overcome the advantage of Japan because of great sacrifices and technological innovation.

Then, Lieutenant Colonel, Tomoyuki Wada, Center for Military History, gave a presentation under the theme “Japanese Perspective of Total War”. The presentation of Lieut. Col. Wada regards the content of so-called “plan” as “grand strategy” and analyses the four “war instruction outlines” that should embody that strategy in accordance with the change of war conditions based on awareness that the reason for the defeat of Japan cannot be attributable only to the difference of military capabilities with the U.S. As a result, he concluded that total war of which Japan thought could not unite and exercise all national efforts because of disharmonized strategies and division and Japan had to face the defeat.

Lastly, Keishi Ono, Chief of Society and Economy Division, Security Studies Department, made a presentation entitled “Total War from the Economic Perspective”. The presentation of Chief Ono demonstratively discusses the problem related to the war expenditure of Japan in the Pacific War from a perspective of macro economy (national income account) by showing the global big picture including international comparison. In the presentation, Chief Ono pointed out that the capability of Japan to enforce total war was not so high from a point of view of economic power, but Japan procured the war expenditure and produced military supplies in exchange for private consumption expenditures and civilian production. Comparing the ratio of Japan’s military expenditure to national income in the Pacific War with that of western countries that participated in the war, he concluded that Japan could cope with long-term total war at the level of 1943, but it was impossible to wage long-term total war at the level of 1944.

Lieutenant Colonel Fumio Takahashi asked the three presenters whether a major form of war underwent a paradigm shift from military war to economic war in the case of total war. Professor Wawro answered that although the economic potential was of course an important factor, the existence of leadership that coordinates and organizes the Army and the Navy was also important to wage a battle in an extensive theater of the Pacific Ocean. In this sense, the U.S. was superior to

Japan. Then, Lieut. Col. Wada mentioned that it is true that economic factors have no doubt become more important compared to traditional wars, but a major form of war has not undergone the paradigm shift from military war to economic war. Rather, total war requires the coordination among all fields of the national function such as politics, economy, diplomacy and military affairs, the unity of politics and war more than traditional wars. Lastly, Chief Ono described that World War I was “a battle by military and other means for an economic purpose”, while World War II was “a battle by economic means for military and political purposes”. He replied that this means that the priority was placed on economic means in order to achieve military and political purposes, but wars have not undergone the complete paradigm shift to economic wars.

The content of this forum is expected to be summarized as *Sensoshi Kenkyu Kokusai Foramu Hokokusho (Report on International Forum on War History)* in March 2012 and distributed to libraries including the National Diet Library and archives. The entire content of this report will be available in the section of “Sensoshi Kenkyu Kokusai Foramu (International Forum on War History)” on the website of the National Institute for Defense Studies (<http://www.nids.go.jp/exchange/forum/index.html>).

In this forum, characteristics and problems of the Japanese total war system were reconfirmed again by comparing them with other countries. Those characteristics and problems are as follows.

Firstly, it was the military, particularly the Army, which took the lead in the total war system, not politicians. Secondly, the disintegration of national affairs and the leader could not be overcome and an integrated political system could not be formed. This made it impossible to provide effective instructions on war. Therefore, policies were at the mercy of operations. One factor is that such a problem of the political system was avoided, because it was closely related to the foundation of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan. Thirdly, the construction of total war system did not establish war instructions but was trivialized to problems of human resources of national mobilization and of material resources such as arms modernization, acquisition of resources and increase in military budget.⁸

This is the chairman’s summary of this forum.

⁸ See Shinichi Suzaki, “Soryokusen Rikai wo Megutte—Rikugun Chusu to 2.26 Jiken no Seinen Shoko no Aida (Understanding of Total War: Between Center of the Army and Young Officers of the February 26 Incident)” in Kentaro Awaya et al., ed., *Nenpo Nihon Gendai-shi 3, Soryokusen/Fashizumu to Gendai-shi (Annual Report on Modern Japanese History 3: Total War, Fascism and Modern History)* and Ryoichi Tobe “Daiichiji Taisen to Nihon ni Okeru Soryokusenron no Juyo (World War I and Acceptance of Total War Theory in Japan)” in *Shin Boeiron Shu (New Journal of National Defense)*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (March 1980).