

# **Chairman's Summary**



# The Unexpected Expansion of Conflicts

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The subject of the 2019 NIDS International Forum on War History is “The Unexpected Expansion of Conflicts.” It is not uncommon for an armed conflict or individual campaign that was launched according to a certain plan or concept to expand to a scale which was not expected by its planners. How to handle such situations is an important question that every country has to consider, even in peacetime. The speakers at this year’s Forum discussed several examples of armed conflicts which expanded beyond what was initially anticipated, and sought to deepen our understanding on how to manage conflicts.

An overview of this year’s NIDS International Forum on War History is as follows.

The Forum commenced with a keynote speech by Dr. Stephen Badsey (hereinafter referred to as Dr. S. Badsey) entitled, “Military Strategies and the Unexpected Expansion of Conflicts.” Dr. S. Badsey gave an overview of examples of the expansion of entire wars, as well as individual campaigns, involving modern military forces from the twentieth century onwards. He noted that while nothing in war is entirely predictable, very few events have ever been completely unexpected. Citing a sudden increase or decrease in the number of belligerent countries, the impact of natural factors such as terrain or weather, and an unexpected victory (or defeat) at the campaign level as important causes behind the unexpected expansion of a conflict, Dr. S. Badsey pointed to force generation, which includes recruiting an adequate amount of force that can outstrip an adversary, propaganda, training, and the manufacturing of weapons, as the most important elements in responding to such an expansion of conflicts. Along with the importance of preparations in advance in those areas, he speculated that the time required for training military personnel would have a greater impact than the manufacturing of weapons.

In Session I, there were three presentations focusing on the expansion of entire wars, including the Sino-Japanese War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, as well as comments and questions concerning these topics. First, Dr. Ryoichi Tobe gave a presentation entitled, “The Sino-Japanese War’s Expansion and the Japanese Army, July 1937 to October 1938.” Dr. Tobe divided the Sino-Japanese War into five stages from the perspective of responses by the Japanese Army: 1) from the Marco Polo Bridge Incident to the dispatch of forces to Shanghai; 2) the escalation from a local conflict into a full-scale war and the seeking for a “non-expansion” policy; 3) the search for a resolution of conflict by military means; 4) the prosecution of a protracted war; and 5) developments during the Pacific War. Among these, he gave an overview of the first through third stages; in other words, the period during which the conflict escalated. As for the main factors on the part of Japan that led to the unexpected expansion of the Sino-Japanese War, Dr. Tobe first pointed to the underestimation of China’s power of resistance; second, the lack of military strength and piecemeal employment of forces;

third, the inclination towards a short war; fourth, the inclination towards capturing strategic cities; and fifth, weak control by the Army's central command over local Japanese forces.

Next, Dr. Allan R. Millett gave a presentation entitled, "The General Who Loathed Surprise: Douglas MacArthur and Korea, 1950-1951." Noting that the political objective of the United States at the time was to preserve the Republic of Korea in order to defend Japan, Dr. Millett stated that MacArthur had little interest in the situation in the Korean Peninsula and devoted himself to the rehabilitation and reform of Japan and its defense against the Soviet Union; thus, he encountered three strategic "surprises" during the first year following the outbreak of the Korean War. The first surprise was the start of war by North Korea in June 1950. Though information on North Korean movements reached MacArthur, his naval and air force commanders did not anticipate an invasion by North Korea, and he was greatly surprised that Seoul, defended by the Republic of Korea forces, fell in only four days. The second surprise was Chinese intervention into the Korean War in October to November 1950. It had already been confirmed that the People's Liberation Army was deployed in Manchuria; however, MacArthur ignored that information. The third surprise came in the form of MacArthur's own dismissal in April 1951. MacArthur could not accept the shift in the American government's objectives, from the liberation and unification of the Korean Peninsula to the ending of the Korean War by making peace with China; hence, he was dismissed by President Harry S. Truman. Dr. Millett concluded that it was only through the excellent command of Lt. Gen. Walton Walker and his successor Lt. Gen. Matthew Ridgway, as well as the U.S. forces' dogged combat performance, which prevented the United States from suffering a strategic disaster.

Third, Dr. Albert Palazzo gave a presentation entitled, "Meeting the Needs of War: The Australian Army and the Vietnam War." Commenting first on Australia's security policy, Dr. Palazzo noted that it would have been impossible for the country to defend itself on its own from the threat from Southeast Asia, and that the objective of Australia's participation in the Vietnam War was to have the United States maintain its military commitment to Southeast Asia. He then expounded on the background of the dispatching of the Australian Army, which started with a single battalion-sized task force and, despite a host of problems, including the difference in tactics by the U.S. forces, which were more willing to sacrifice men, as well as a rising antiwar movement at home following a sharp rise in casualties among Australian soldiers caused by land mines stolen by the Viet Cong, was expanded to the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) with a strength of just under 8,000 soldiers. As for major changes brought about in Australia by the Vietnam War, Dr. Palazzo said that Australia, while still relying on ANZUS, came to shoulder more responsibility for its own defense, and that Australia came to believe in the necessity of a permanent army made up of professional soldiers.

Based on the above, the discussant for Session I, Dr. Tomoyuki Hanada, Senior Research Fellow at NIDS, summarized each of the presentations made during the session, then asked the three presenters regarding the relationship between war aims and the expansion of conflicts, and the relationship between peace negotiations, ceasefire agreements (in the case of the Korean War, an armistice agreement), and the expansion of conflicts.

Dr. Tobe mentioned that Japan's war plans and objectives for China were unclear from its beginning and that Japan enlarged them as the battle frontage expanded and casualties

increased. He also pointed out that while efforts toward peace were made by former Japanese Consul-General in Shanghai Tatsuichiro Funatsu, German Ambassador to China Oskar Trautmann, and Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Kazushige Ugaki, those efforts were not coordinated with the military's efforts to end the conflict.

Dr. Millett pointed out that the initial war aim of the Korean War was to protect the Republic of Korea, which had been established in 1948 through a democratic election. However this was expanded in October 1950 to the unification of Korea under a democratic form of government, then reverted back to the original aim following the intervention by China. On the other hand, China's war aim was clearly to protect North Korea against attacks by the United States and the Republic of Korea. However, since the stationing of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army in North Korea was not welcomed, China moved to fortify the whole of North Korea. Dr. Millett also noted that while the U.S. forces were to remain in the Republic of Korea after the armistice, the United States expected that the Republic of Korea would defend itself, and he also noted that armistice negotiations were difficult due to factors such as discussions regarding the exchange of prisoners of war and a rejection of the negotiations by the Republic of Korea.

Dr. Palazzo stated that while the dispatch of Australian forces to the Vietnam War was small in scale and could not affect U.S. strategy at the military level, Australia did succeed in drawing the United States into Southeast Asia at the political level. He also mentioned that Australia actively supported the Vietnam War with a reasonable amount of military strength; however, deploying additional soldiers beyond the 8,000 men already deployed would have required the introduction of conscription, and was therefore impossible due to domestic political reasons. Aside from this, he responded that Australia had little impact on peace negotiations as a junior partner to the United States.

In Session II, there were three presentations focusing on the expansion of individual campaigns, including the Gallipoli campaign in World War I, Japanese campaigns in the South Pacific during World War II, and the Soviet-German War, as well as comments and questions concerning these topics.

First, Dr. Phylomena Badsey (hereinafter referred to as Dr. P. Badsey) gave a presentation entitled, "The Unexpected British Medical Emergency in the Gallipoli Campaign 1915-16." Dr. P. Badsey shed light on a process in which the British forces, initially expecting a short campaign, were unexpectedly stalemated, and responded to the massive emergence of sick and wounded soldiers under severe circumstances by developing a system of evacuating and treating casualties. At the end of the presentation, Dr. P. Badsey concluded that the British forces succeeded in evacuating their troops from Gallipoli in January 1916, with relatively few losses, because they were able to draw heavily on the methods and experience gained from establishing and operating their medical 'chain of evacuation'.

Next, Mr. Hiroyuki Shindo, Senior Research Fellow at NIDS, gave a presentation entitled, "From Opportunity to Strategic Necessity: The Japanese in the South Pacific, 1942-43." Mr. Shindo noted that although the series of operations in the South Pacific would eventually have a large impact on the course of the Pacific War as a whole, the Japanese military initially did not expect to carry out any operations in the South Pacific. As for the causes of the unexpected

expansion of these operations, he pointed out that, first, the army and navy disagreed over the specific ways of achieving their strategic objectives and second, the strategy itself became more vague as operations progressed. As the final factor behind the unexpected expansion of Japan's operations, Mr. Shindo noted that the all-out commitment of the army to the war against the United States in the South Pacific was brought about by the fierce battle for control of the island of Guadalcanal from August 1942. He then concluded that Japan's offensive strategy came to a close as the effectiveness of both the army and navy greatly declined due to the operations in the South Pacific, which had been carried out despite the lack of a clear overall strategy for the area.

Third, Dr. Geoffrey P. Megargee gave a presentation entitled, "Rejecting Catastrophe: the German High Command and the Failure of the Offensive in the Soviet Union, Autumn 1941." First of all, Dr. Megargee underscored the optimism towards a war with the Soviet Union carried out by the *Wehrmacht*, the German armed forces, represented by Chief of the Army General Staff, Franz Halder, as well as the underlying sense of superiority over the Soviet Union, the Soviet Red Army, and the Slavic people. Nazi Germany believed that the Soviet Union, a giant standing on "feet of clay," would easily be destroyed by dealing a blow to the Red Army west of the Dnieper and Dvina Rivers. Dr. Megargee noted that underlying such an over-optimistic forecast was the "victory disease" caused by German victory on the Western Front, in addition to the abovementioned sense of superiority. The German offensive into the Soviet Union, launched in June 1941, failed to come to a successful conclusion even after the initial estimation of 11 to 14 weeks had lapsed, and the German drive to capture Moscow, launched in October 1941 (Operation Typhoon), also failed to change the course of the war. Then, the *Wehrmacht* was exposed to the winter offensive by Soviet forces. As factors behind all these adverse developments, Dr. Megargee again emphasized the over-optimism of the *Wehrmacht*, as well as the Germans' sense of military, political and racial superiority over the Soviet Union and the Soviet Red Army.

Following these presentations, the discussant for Session II, Lt. Col. Tatsushi Saito, Research Fellow at NIDS, pointed out that the dimension of an operation that falls in between strategy and tactics is an important element that can have a decisive influence on the outcome of a war. He then made the following comments regarding the three presentations. First, on the presentation by Dr. P. Badsey, he stated that when looking at the Gallipoli campaign in terms of the treatment and evacuation of casualties, it was interesting that the medical chain of evacuation turned out to be a system which could be used for the subsequent smooth evacuation operation of the landed forces. Next, on the presentation by Mr. Shindo, Lt. Col. Saito noted that the conflicts between the Japanese Army and Navy during the second stage of operations consequently led to the expansion of operations in the South Pacific, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of officers and soldiers. On the presentation by Dr. Megargee, Lt. Col. Saito noted that in the Soviet-German War, Germany made the same mistake as Napoleon Bonaparte in his attempt to capture Moscow, due to the optimistic views held by the *Wehrmacht*, represented by those of Chief of the Army General Staff Halder. However, in contrast, Adolf Hitler understood the realities very well, contrary to popular belief. Lt. Col. Saito also said that inadequacies in the logistics system gave rise to atrocities against the general population, and

resistance by partisans as a response to this led to the Soviet-German War being characterized as a war of annihilation. Then, comparing a postwar remark by Halder that, “those who think they have lost will lose,” to the comment, “absolute belief in certain victory” made by Hideki Tojo upon the fall of Saipan, Lt. Col. Saito noted that both Japan and Germany clung to a belief in the superiority of motivation and willpower even when on the verge of defeat, and by citing the prospect theory, both countries shared an optimism regarding their outlook on operations at the opening of war.

After pointing out that the Japanese and German operations had common ideological elements, Lt. Col. Saito posed a question to Mr. Shindo on the difference between the Southern Operation and operations in the South Pacific, and to Dr. Megargee on the difference between the campaign in France and Operation Barbarossa, and to both Mr. Shindo and Dr. Megargee on the relationship between managing operations before and after the culmination of an offensive and the rear areas or non-combat zones.

Mr. Shindo said that operations by the Japanese military in the South Pacific theater involved three actors; the Army General Staff, the Navy General Staff, and the Combined Fleet, and the operational objectives were seldom shared by these three actors. However, he noted that during the Southern Operation carried out at the outset of the war, the objectives of acquiring areas of natural resources and destroying Allied bases were shared among them, and that they were also unified in their perception of which areas were to be acquired, and for what purposes. This represented a major difference from subsequent operations in the South Pacific. He also said that the Japanese military had paid little attention to the management of rear areas since 1942, and that in the eyes of the army, the navy may have expanded its battle frontage without considering the limits of its logistical capabilities, as naval vessels carried the supplies they needed on board. In addition, Mr. Shindo pointed out that the Japanese military emphasized motivation and willpower, i.e. “non-material” factors, because it recognized that Japan was inferior to the other industrialized countries in terms of the material aspects of war, and exacerbated its material deficiencies by failing to come up with realistic and feasible solutions for its material disadvantages. He also noted that the emphasizing of motivation and willpower, which worked positively when Japan was winning the first round of battles, functioned negatively when Japan went on the defensive, and that emphasizing motivation and willpower at the strategic level can lead to major problems.

Dr. Megargee noted that with respect as to who was responsible for Germany’s defeat, since records on decision making concerning Germany’s conduct of war were burned after the war, former officers from the *Wehrmacht* placed the blame on Hitler, who had killed himself, spreading the myth that they had only followed Hitler’s orders, just as if “history is written by the victors.” However, this has come under criticism in recent years. Regarding motivation and willpower, Dr. Megargee pointed out while confidence has a role to play in any war, Hitler and his officers had somewhat overcommitted themselves to this—on the other hand, Germans at that time very much supported the war as a way of defending the state and their culture. As for the difference between the campaign in France and Operation Barbarossa, Dr. Megargee noted that operations can be affected by the characteristics of the areas of operation, namely that France had infrastructure such as a well-developed network of roads and gas stations, and that

the Soviet Union was vast and underdeveloped. In other areas, Dr. Megargee speculated that in the occupied area the *Wehrmacht*, by depriving residents of resources without taking their circumstances into account drove the Soviet Union into a situation whereby all of its people had no choice but to fight the Germans. The Germans thus created a crisis for themselves.

In Session III: Overall Discussion, Dr. S. Badsey, who delivered the keynote speech, noted in his review of the discussions during the two sessions that on many numerous occasions, when military power is exercised, instructions from politicians are vague and plans by policymakers regarding the final phase of war are unrealistic, and that while officer and soldier morale and a confidence in certain victory are important, they have to be consistent with military theories. He added that these matters have been pointed out repeatedly over the past 2,000 years.

Next, Mr. Tomoyuki Ishizu, the chair of the Forum, posed the following question from the floor to all of the speakers: whether there exists any way to prevent the expansion of conflict should Japan get involved in a conflict. Dr. S. Badsey stated that in any conflict, people always assume the worst case scenario when taking action; however, it is still possible that a situation could arise that exceeds even the worst case scenario, adding that it is necessary to have a backup plan by recognizing the possibility of such developments, as well as training for predicting such a situation. Dr. S. Badsey pointed out that it is important for modern military organizations to make preparations in the areas of operations, organizing military units, education and training, and equipment. He mentioned that there are plenty of things we can learn from history about these matters, and that they should be shared as general knowledge. Mr. Shindo added that one possibility would be to create a specialized unit which focuses on developing contingency plans. Dr. Millett pointed out that it is important to institutionalize a “B Team” that incorporates a self-critical perspective into a military organization in order to consider unexpected situations, and to prepare a mechanism for collecting information and promptly making adjustments to plans that have already been laid out based on the collected information. Dr. Hanada stated that strategies for ending a conflict should be considered from the very beginning, while Lt. Col. Saito pointed out that we need to learn how civilian control should be realized by studying war history, citing the case where General Sir Ian Hamilton halted the expansion of the Gallipoli campaign from the standpoint of a military officer.

Finally, Mr. Ishizu stated that going forward, the Center for Military History (CMH) would like to proceed with research on such issues as how to end wars, how evacuations should be conducted, formulae which tie military success to political victory, and in what ways politicians should control the expansion of military situations, and he concluded the discussion by expressing the hope that the Forum will serve as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the nature of armed conflicts.