

## Keynote Address

### **Three Approaches to the Pacific War**

Akira Iriye

1. Introduction
  - a. Need to consider many facets of a war
  - b. Put Second World War in national, international, and transnational contexts
2. National Context
  - a. A nation's decision-making apparatus, domestic politics, public opinion, definition of national interest
  - b. Need to note that during the 1930s governmental power and authority grew in most countries
  - c. Also important is the rise of totalitarian states, some of which with genocidal agendas
  - d. Excessive nationalism (role of the press, radio, cinema)
3. International Context
  - a. Put foreign affairs in the context of international relations, such as regional order, imperialism, autarkies (de-globalization)
  - b. International organizations' attempts to deal with various crises
4. Transnational Context
  - a. Transnational networks of people, goods, ideas
  - b. Refugees, exchange programs, sports, popular entertainment
5. The Road to War in Asia and the Pacific
  - a. At the national level, a clash of national interests, also peculiarities of decision-making apparatus in Japan and elsewhere; other countries' nation-centric responses initially
  - b. Growing international concern with the war in Asia which comes to be seen as a part of worldwide contest for power and resources

- c. Transnational aspects: influence of the Comintern, business organizations, racial issues (immigration dispute), pacifism, human rights (Atlantic Charter)
6. Foreign Perspectives on Japan
- a. They vary according to national agendas and definitions of national interest
  - b. International (regional) perspective steadily gains importance
  - c. Transnational language used (humanity, civilization) to castigate Japan
7. Conclusions

### Session 1

## **From War Plan Orange to Pearl Harbor: The Evolution of United States Grand Strategy for East Asia and the Pacific, 1939-1941**

Mark A. Stoler

Before 1939 U.S. military planners considered Japan their most likely enemy and developed War Plan ORANGE to cover this contingency. Their forces in Asia and the Pacific were insufficient to win such a war, however, and they disagreed sharply as to how to deal with this problem. Then in early 1939 they concluded that ORANGE as well as all their other “color” plans for war with a single power were dated and began to develop a new set of RAINBOW plans to cover the possibility of war against all three Axis powers, either alone or with allies. If alone the United States would focus on defense of North America, the Western Hemisphere, and/or its vital interests in the western Pacific. If allied with Britain and France, it would conduct either major offensives in the western Pacific while its allies took care of Europe and the Atlantic, or offensives with those allies in Europe while assuming the strategic defensive in the Pacific. This last alternative (RAINBOW 5) was based on a conclusion reached as early as the 1920s that in the event of war with a Japan aligned with a European power, attention should focus on defeating first the more powerful, closer and therefore more dangerous European power.

RAINBOW 5 was not the favored approach in 1939, however, or in 1940. Indeed, the probability of having to fight all three Axis Powers without any allies given German military victories translated into top priority for unilateral continental and hemispheric defense until November 1940, when naval chief Admiral Stark boldly proposed that U.S. forces be concentrated for offensive operations with Britain in the Atlantic/European theater while assuming a strategic defensive posture in the Pacific. Stark did so in light of not only the unexpected British survival during the summer of 1940, but also Roosevelt's insistence, over military objections, on materially aiding Britain and risking war with Germany while simultaneously pursuing an aggressive policy against Japanese expansion.

Army and presidential acceptance of Stark's basic conclusion led in early 1941 to Anglo-American agreement to pursue a combined Europe-first approach in the event of U.S. entry into the war (ABC-1) with a revised RAINBOW 5 as the primary U.S. war plan. But Roosevelt simultaneously pursued an option Stark had rejected: continued economic and military pressure against Japan combined with maximum material assistance to potential allies in Europe and in Asia as an alternative to U.S. entry into the war. This was clearly illustrated in the early 1941 Lend-Lease Act that granted him the authority to lend or lease war material to any nation whose defense he deemed essential to U.S. security. After Pearl Harbor, ABC-1, RAINBOW 5 and Lend-Lease would together constitute U.S. grand strategy in the war, but in the spring of 1941 Lend-Lease constituted Roosevelt's alternative to U.S. entry. He did institute naval action against German submarines in September to make sure war material reached Britain, but this was far from the total war effort being proposed by his military advisers. He also increased economic pressure on Japan and refused to sanction even the temporary agreement being requested by the armed forces, at least partially to preclude a Japanese attack on the Soviets who were trying to halt a German invasion. War consequently came formally in the Pacific, which in turn led to major modifications in U.S. grand strategy during 1942 and 1943.

## **British Strategy in the Far East on the Eve of the Pacific War, 1941**

Douglas E. Ford

On 15 February 1942, the British garrison at Singapore surrendered to the invading Japanese forces, in what a prominent historian has described as ‘the greatest national humiliation suffered by Britain since [Cornwallis’ defeat by the American revolutionary forces at] Yorktown, over a century-and-a-half earlier. The disaster signified the demise of Britain’s position as the dominant power in the Far East, and was the first link in a chain of events that culminated with the dismantling of its empire. In order to understand the reasons for the fall of Singapore, and the setbacks which Britain suffered during the opening stages of the Pacific War, one needs to examine the political and military factors which dictated British strategy against Japan during the period leading up to December 1941. The failure was not due to incompetence on the part of British leaders, but more due to the fact that Britain’s military resources were overstretched, to the point where it could not provide adequate protection for its colonies in Asia.

Britain’s strategy during the Second World War was primarily influenced by the need to safeguard its national interests against the growing threat posed by Nazi Germany. By spring 1940, the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force and the Army were extensively engaged in operations to defend the home islands and Britain’s oceanic lifelines against Hitler’s forces. Commencing in June, with the Axis powers launching their onslaught against Egypt, the British needed to commit the bulk of their remaining military strengths to secure the Mediterranean and the Middle Eastern oilfields. Under the circumstances, the government of PM Winston Churchill did not have enough surplus resources that could be allocated for Singapore.

An additional factor which prevented Britain from formulating an effective defense plan was a poor knowledge of Japan’s military capabilities and strategy. The available intelligence appeared to suggest that Tokyo was reluctant to risk a war in which it might have to face the combined strength of the Associated Powers, including the US and British Empire, since Japan’s armed forces did not have the capacity to prevail in such a conflict. Consequently, the defense establishment developed a complacent attitude, and pursued a strategy which hinged on the

expectation that, if the western powers took a firm stand, the Japanese could be deterred from invading Britain's territories. Furthermore, even if the Japanese did choose to attack, Britain was unlikely to face serious problems in safeguarding its empire. While faulty intelligence was not the root cause for Britain's setbacks, it led the British to mistakenly believe that their strategy against Japan was sound.

The fall of Singapore was, and still remains, one of the greatest capitulations in British military history. Nor is there any debate over the question as to whether British strategy against Japan during the years leading to the Pacific War was adequate; the Japanese invasion of Malaya caught the British completely unprepared. However, the decisions made by British politicians and defense planners have to be viewed in light of the fact that Britain simply did not have the financial resources nor military strength to defend its global empire against all of its enemies. British grand strategy was shaped primarily by the need to contain Germany's threat to the home islands. The second major concern was to protect Britain's lifelines in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, as well as its vital Middle Eastern oil supplies. The defense of Malaya and Singapore was lowest on the list of priorities. Britain's strategy in the Far East prior to 1941 was determined mainly by its shortage of surplus resources, and preoccupations with matters closer to home diminished the prospects of securing its empire against Japanese aggression.

## Session 2

### **Threat, Response, and Moderation: Australia's Grand Strategy in the Years Leading Up to the Outbreak of War in the Pacific**

Steven C. Bullard

To Australian policy makers, military strategists, and the general public, Japan was the most likely threat to Australia's security during the interwar years. Australian defence policies during this period reflected this assessment. By the latter half of the 1930s, there had developed a strong perception that Japan would take advantage of the increasingly unsettled situation in Europe by making a move on British and Australian territory in the Pacific. The combination of defence, diplomatic, and economic strategies developed in this period sought both to prepare

for war and to avert conflict. To what extent the combination of these strategies in the Australian context correctly can be termed “grand strategy” is debatable, as they were not always comprehensive, coordinated, or consistent in either design or implementation. In any case, this paper will examine these strategies in the light of several main moderating factors: Australia’s imperial ties, growing diplomatic relations, and unsettled domestic politics.

The military policies adopted by Australia to meet this threat were firmly based in British Imperial strategies that had been established through a series of conferences in the 1920s and 1930s. The keystone of Australian defence was the British commitment to send a naval fleet of sufficient strength to Singapore if Australia was threatened – the so-called “Singapore Strategy”. Prior to the outbreak of war, there were substantial modifications to this strategy, and few could agree on the details, or indeed the fundamental tenant of the strategy itself. Australia was responsible for local defence, but its rearmament was slow. After the outbreak of war in Europe, a balance needed to be made between maintaining a sufficient strength for local defence while supporting the Imperial war effort.

With Australian military capacity at a low ebb after the depression years, a line of appeasement with Japan was adopted by the Australian government. After the collapse of the Munich Agreement and outbreak of war in Europe, Australia for the first time established independent diplomatic legations in the United States, Japan, and China, in an effort to bring about a peaceful solution in the Pacific, and to lobby for US involvement in the region if those efforts failed. Neither did Australia have the capacity for independent intelligence gathering, relying instead on British assessments of the international situation. Australia had to rely on a strong ally for its security, and was ready to turn to the US should Britain be unable to come to its aid.

As war in Europe became increasingly likely, Australia after 1937 adopted various economic policies, developed with British requirements in mind, to increase its capacity to support the Imperial war effort. An increase in domestic munitions, aircraft, and other production was accompanied by agreements to prioritise exports of wool and other essential products to Britain. While the outbreak of war was met with the call “business as usual” as the economy slowly geared up for war, the end of the phoney war in Europe was met with the cry “all in” as more concerted efforts were made. The efforts were intensified by mid-1941, as Prime Minister Menzies’

first-hand experience of war in Europe saw him call for an “unlimited war effort”.

The lack of a stable and entrenched government in the years leading up to war impacted on how Australia saw its role in overall Allied strategy, how it prepared for the war effort, and how the people of Australia were encouraged in that effort. The death of incumbent Prime Minister Lyons in March 1939 brought Robert Menzies to power, but he could not unite his own party or inspire popular support. He was forced to resign in August 1941, after which Labor’s John Curtin won power. Policies of the new government were consistent with the previous for the most part, but there emerged an increasing hope of a peaceful settlement with Japan, compounded in part by an Australian naivety with regards to its influence and the American assessment of trends in the Pacific.

### **The Road to Kalidjati: The Netherlands-Indies contra Japan, 1940-1941**

Herman Th. Bussemaker

The presentation deals with the problem which faced the Dutch government after 1905, which was the solving of in essence an insoluble problem: how to defend an extended island empire in S.E. Asia with the very limited means of a medium-sized European Power. The strategy adopted by different Dutch governments was the maintenance of a strict neutrality, both in Europe as well as in S.E. Asia.

Dutch naval strategy was a “Risk Strategy”. To implement this strategy, the Dutch Navy needed a few battleships. The Dutch failed to obtain or build these ships twice, and in the period in between a weak Naval Staff lost itself in discussions about the preferred weapon of defence: airplane, torpedo ships or artillery ships (i.e. cruisers). Due to the results of the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference of 1922, it was assumed that Great Britain would protect the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) in case of need, even without a formal guarantee. It resulted in a period up to 1936 in which the defence of the NEI was in fact a parasitic defence. In the presentation the consequences of this attitude will be outlined. They were severe, resulting even in a mutiny on the largest ship of the navy present in the NEI.

The consequences of the mutiny were a much-needed overhaul of the organizational structure of the Naval Staff, and measures to improve morale. Vice-Admiral Furstner formulated the concept of a “balanced fleet” and started the modernisation and expansion of the Dutch Navy. New tactics were formulated, which will be discussed, and ships designed to execute these tactics. The War in Europe interrupted this prematurely. Vice-Admiral Helfrich as commander of the Dutch NEI squadron restored morale and went into battle after Pearl Harbor.

The presentation also deals with the Dutch colonial Army, the second line of defence. Under the influence of the Sino-Japanese War the Army Air-Force expanded rapidly, be it only as a bomber air-force. The reasons for it will be discussed. Another weakness of the colonial army was its preponderant dependence on native soldiers. When the Nationalist movement was driven underground in the late thirties, the morale of these native volunteers began to erode. Due to unwise political decisions the only supplier of modern weapons, the U.S.A., more or less imposed a weapons embargo, which thwarted an effective re-armament of the colonial Army in 1940. That embargo was lifted when the NEI joined the Singapore Staff Conferences of early 1941, because that participation effectively ended Dutch neutrality. However, as will be discussed, developing a common military strategy of the Western Allies against Japan proved very difficult due to divergent national priorities.

The presentation will also deal with the subject of Dutch intelligence about Japan, and Dutch counter-intelligence against Japanese espionage. The presentation ends with an evaluation of the Dutch efforts to defend their realm with respect to politics, political leadership, foreign policy, naval, army and air defence, and the extent of secret contacts with prospective allies in S.E. Asia.



### Session 3

## The Japan Strategy of China's Nationalist Government

Lu Xijun

1. The basics of the Japan Strategy and the early failures
  - (1) Policy and Basis
    - Policy: Turn the Sino-Japanese War into an international issue, and rely upon the powers' tendency to "Support China, Punish Japan" to reach an international solution to the problem.
    - Basis: ① "Axiom" (international justice; treaties)
      - ② Chinese interests
      - ③ The inevitability of war with a third party, given the trend of Japan's policies
  - (2) Basic rules and policies
    - "The only enemy is Japan"
    - "Endure with patience and wait for change"
    - "No acceptance of resolutions without participation by a third party"
  - (3) Failure and Confrontation
    - Collapse of the basis for an international resolution
    - The emergence of a pessimistic outlook for an "international resolution" between the fall of Wuhan (Hankow) at the end of 1938 to the start of the war in Europe in September 1939.
    - Differences in opinion regarding the outlook for an international resolution were the main reason for the split between Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Jing-wei.
    - However, Chiang Kai-shek also declared, in January 1939, that the objective of the war with Japan was the "situation before the Marco Polo Bridge Incident".
2. The turning point, brought about by the European situation and Japan's response thereto
  - A revision of the evaluation of the effect of the European situation on the war

with Japan, from a negative to a positive evaluation.

- ① The Nationalist Government's concern: that Japan might focus solely on resolving the "China Incident" and use its "Hand of Liberty" to make a deal with the British, French and other Powers at China's expense.
- ② The Nationalist Government's hope: that Japan would firmly stand on the side of Germany and Italy, and enter into a war with Britain, France, the Soviet Union and others by advancing both north and south.
- Japan's response to the European War increased the common interests of the British, Americans and China.
  - China's resistance of Japan seen as having greater value.
- An increase in the possibility of a war between Japan and another country
  - a new basis for the argument for an "international resolution"
- A revision of the "international resolution" strategy
  - ① Emphasis on the "Asian interests" of the countries involved, rather than their "Chinese interests"
  - ② Emphasis on the interconnectability of the Sino-Japanese War and the European War: maintenance of the "two concurrencies" (the concurrent termination of the Sino-Japanese War and the World War, and the concurrent resolution of the Japan-China problem and the global problem)
    - the raising of the objectives (surrender terms) of the war against Japan
- Japan's arguments for a "concurrent progression" and the expansion of the "new order"

### 3. The Response to the Tripartite Pact

- Expectations of the Military Committee in May 1939
  - ① If war in Europe can be avoided, a split between Japan and Germany plus Italy will benefit China
  - ② If war breaks out in Europe, an alliance between Japan and Germany plus Italy will benefit China
- Relations with Germany before the Tripartite Pact
- The "Gray Response" after the Tripartite
- Motives and effects

4. Cooperation and disagreements with the Soviet Union
  - Bafflement regarding the Soviet Union, the European War's "Neutral power"
  - Wariness regarding relations between the U.S.S.R. and the Chinese Communist Party after the new Fourth Army Incident (Wannan Incident)
  - Concurrence and ratio of cooperation and disagreement
  - The maintenance of a cooperative relationship, based on the "Japan First" policy
  - Response to the "Russo-Japanese Neutrality Pact"
  - Observations of the Russo-German War
  - The end of the "Gray Response"
  
5. Concluding Remarks: A few observations on China's strategy
  - The divergence of fates: How to respond to the European situation, and deciding on which coalition to join
  - The turning point: changes in the European situation and the responses thereto
  - The determining of "friends" and the prioritizing thereof based on interests, and not ideologies or political systems
  - The relation between China's Japan strategy and the objectives of the war against Japan
  - The China and Japan factors in the Pacific War

(Translation: Hiroyuki Shindo)

**The Southward Advance Policy of the Imperial  
Japanese Army and Navy:  
The Strategy of "Autarky" and "Regional Security"**

Ken Kotani

The international situation of 1940 drastically influenced the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) and Navy (IJN)'s grand strategy. The outbreak of the WWII provided

an opportunity to Japan for concluding the Sino-Japanese war, which had remained bogged down for a few years. The French and Dutch surrender to Germany and the Battle of Britain caused a power vacuum in the Southeast Asia area.

Japan considered the area vital for her “autarky” and “regional security”. France and Great Britain could run their supply lines to China through French Indo-China and Thailand, while the same region under Japanese control could be buffer zones against the British Far Eastern Empire. In other words, the area was important for Japanese regional security. The Dutch East Indies were regarded as a source of oil by the Japanese and necessary for Japanese autarky. During 1940, the Japanese strategy had shifted from the “early settlement of the Sino-Japanese war” to the “southward advance to attain autarky and regional security.” From this point of view, the signing of the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy in September 1940, and the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact in April 1941 and the advance into South French Indo-China in July 1941 were based on the Japanese strategy of attaining “autarky” and “regional security”. However, from the allies’ point of view, Japanese foreign policies were regarded as a subtle infiltration into Southeast Asia.

On the other hand, the IJA and IJN were not good at handling the international situation. They spent much energy on internal discussion and building a consensus among the Army, Navy and the Japanese government. The IJA’s foreign policy was premised on the “northward advance” and “US-UK-Dutch separability” while the IJN’s policy was based on the “southward advance” and “US-UK-Dutch inseparability”. When they tried to draw up Japanese grand strategy, they failed to fill the gap and postponed dealing with the problem. As a result, they had to play catch-up with the drastic and rapidly changing international situation in 1941 and had to tackle the problem in an impromptu manner. The war planners of the Army and Navy also made mistakes in their estimates of the international situation, such as the course of the Soviet-German war and US foreign policy toward Japan.

In December 1941, Japan added the political objective of the “independence of Asian nations and establishment of the Great East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere” to “autarky” and “regional security” and waged a war against the US, UK, Holland and Australia, a war that Japan had never expected to fight.