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1942, the Pacific War, and the Defence of New Zealand

**A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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in
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ABSTRACT

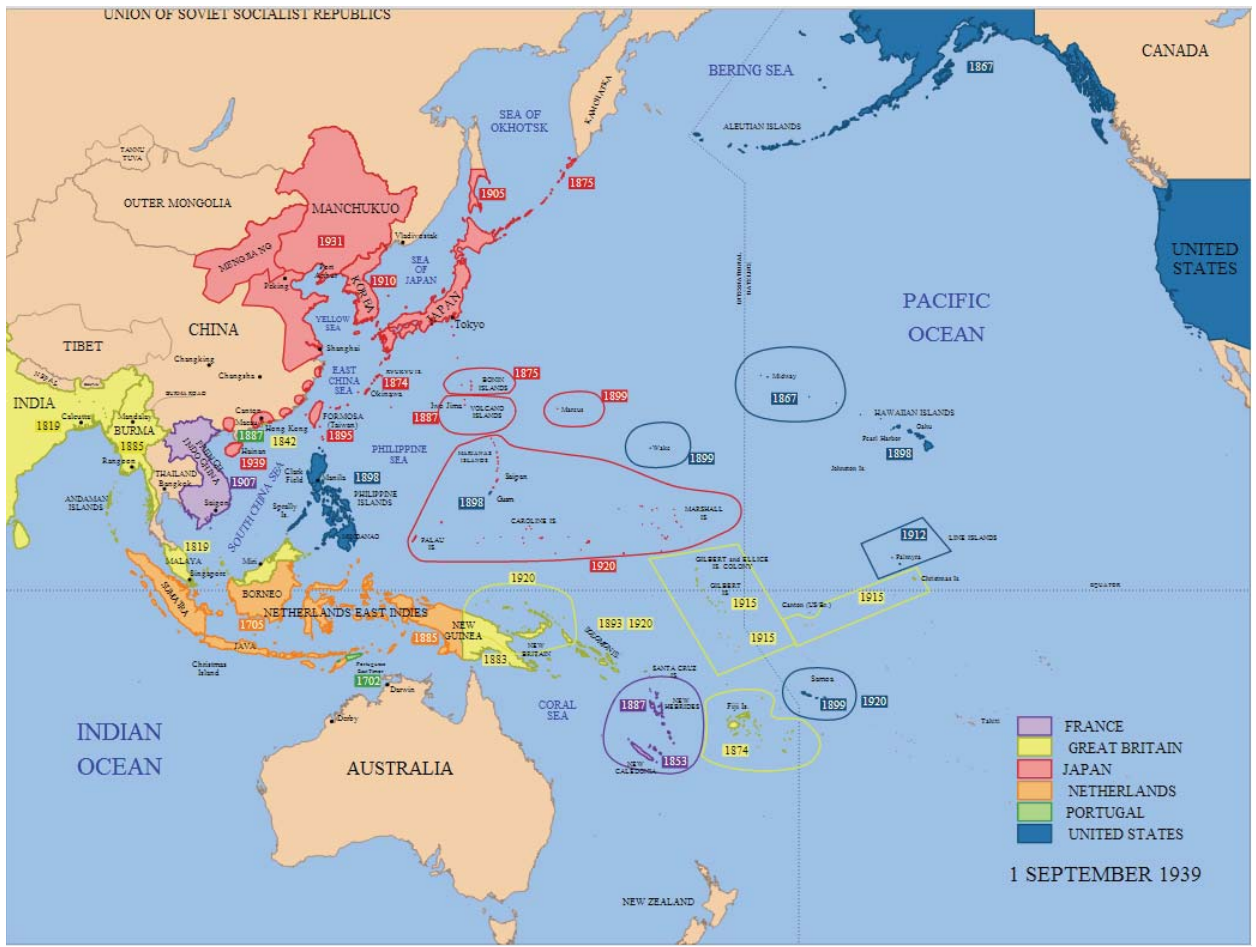
During 1941-1942 New Zealand expended vast amounts of capital and labour building in-depth defences against the perceived invasion threat from Japan that today is often regarded, especially by academic historians, as non-existent. This thesis looks closely at the background of such a Japanese threat and the subsequent realities. It examines the failures of the existing, indeed traditional political alliance with the British 'family of nations' and its associated myths against the *Realpolitik* of New Zealand's enforced absorption into the new American power block. The origins of today's opinions are teased out to examine their realities and the drivers of the New Zealand government's actions at the time are reviewed. These actions along with the experience, perceptions and, above all, the circumstantial knowledge that formed the opinions drove the decisions to act are established. The conclusion of this thesis is the threat to New Zealand of being raided, isolated, even possibly invaded, was geopolitically and militarily real at the time. The margins by which any of these possibilities were avoided were narrow.

ABBREVIATIONS AND CODE NAMES

AA	Anti-Aircraft (US=AAA - Anti-Aircraft Artillery)
ABDA	American-British-Dutch-Australian (Command)
AFV	Armoured Fighting Vehicle
Americal	Americans in New Caledonia, used also for US Army Americal Division (later 23rd Infantry Division)
ANZAC	<i>Originally</i> Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC used to describe Tasman Sea defence area early in 1942)
AWM	Australian War Memorial
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAST	USN Radio Intercept Station based at Corregidor, Manila Harbour
CID	Chief(s) of Imperial Defence (UK)
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific Area Command
COMINCH	Commander in Chief (USN)
COMINT	Communications Intelligence
COMSOPAC	Commander South Pacific (USN)
COS	Chief(s) of Staff
EPS	Emergency Precautions Scheme (NZ)
FDR	Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 32 nd President of the USA
FE	Far East (UK definition)
FECB	Far East Combined Bureau (UK)
FRUMMEL	USN Radio Interception Station Melbourne, Australia
<i>Gaimusho</i>	Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs
GC&CS	Government Code & Cypher School (UK)
<i>Gekokujo</i>	Japan's concept of manipulation of superiors by subordinates

GRU	<i>Glavnoje Razvedyvatelnaje Upravelenije</i> (Main Intelligence Directorife (USSR)
Gunreibu	Imperial Japanese Navy General Staff
HMS	His/Her Majesty's Ship (RN)
HUFDUFF	High Frequency Radio Direction Finding (UK)
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
HYPO	USN Radio Interception Station, Hawaii
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
IJN	Imperial Japanese Navy
IMTFE	International Military Tribunal Far East
KGB	<i>Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezoposnosti</i> (Committee for State Security) (USSR)
NEI	Netherland East Indies
NSO	National Security Organisation (NZ)
NZ	New Zealand
NZEF	New Zealand Expeditionary Force (2NZEF to Middle East, 3NZEF to Pacific)
NZPD	New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
ONI	Office of Naval Intelligence (USA)
Operation MO	Japanese code for landing at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
Operation SR	Japanese code for landing at Lae-Salamaua, Papua New Guinea
OSS	Office of Strategic Services (USA)
PM	Prime Minister
RAF	Royal Air Force (UK)
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RMS	Royal Mail Ship (UK)
RN	Royal Navy (UK)
RNZAF	Royal New Zealand Air Force

SEA	South-East Asia (UK definition)
<i>Shenskobyō</i>	Victory disease (a Japanese term meaning hubris from successes)
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
SIS	Security Intelligence Service
SOE	Special Operations Executive (UK)
SPA	South Pacific Area (also SP)
SS	Steam Ship
SSDA	Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Foreign Office (UK)
SWPA	South-West (or Southwest) Pacific Area (Australian and US)
UK	United Kingdom (of Great Britain)
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAAF	United States Army Air Forces
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USN	United States Navy
WWII	World War II (also WW2)



Map 1: The Political Map of the Pacific - 1939

[Wiki/History of Oceania#/media/File: Pacific Area – The Imperial Powers 1939 - Map.svg](#)

INTRODUCTION

The distance of years makes 1942 just a line in history to most of New Zealand's current population, but at the time it was a moment of national peril. What degree of peril is the intent of this thesis. In New Zealand, the Pacific War is often seen as something someone else fought, somewhere else. There were no fleets of invasion barges assembled by a triumphant enemy on a nearby coast and the enemy's bombers did not fill New Zealand's skies. The country's frantic efforts to arm itself and harden its infrastructure and defences against assault, possibly even invasion, is too often today seen vaguely and unreliably, through the filter of the television series, *Dad's Army*, a farcical treatment of the British prototype.¹ The importance of this period is further diminished by the fact New Zealand's main war effort, its principle experience of battle, and its war historiography were, and are, directed not at the Pacific, but at the war in Europe.²

A wartime Australian propaganda poster entitled *He's Coming South – It's fight, work or perish* (see Image 1, right), succinctly compiles the fear, drama and urgency felt throughout Australasia for much of 1942. The New Zealand experience was different to Australia's, yet inextricably connected. Early in the Second World War, New Zealand was a small country barely out of the grip of the Great Depression. Nevertheless, it believed it had to expend millions of pounds and millions of man-hours on national defence, much of it exported to the support of Britain, in her battlefields.



With a string of military disasters in the European-African theatres and the threat from Japan significantly increased, men, women and wealth were mobilised, and urgent

¹ M. H. Holcroft, *New Zealand's Heritage*, Paul Hamlyn, Wellington, NZ, 1972, p. 2447.

² <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-corpus-WH2.html> displays the war histories' bias towards Europe.

appeals were made to allies for supplies. The government meanwhile prepared its people for attack, isolation or even invasion by Japanese forces. Despite repeated reassurances by British and New Zealand advisors that the country was safe from invasion, Prime Minister Peter Fraser wrote to his British counterpart, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, in January 1942, that 'to be completely frank, we have not always felt that the potential problems of the Pacific have had the importance attached to them in London which we, more intimately concerned therewith, have considered that they have perhaps deserved.'³

The purpose of this thesis is to establish the origins of the situation engendering such alarm and to assess the military and governmental perceptions of, and reaction to the Japanese threat. In doing so, it will also gauge the reality of the threat itself. One of the challenges of assessing the New Zealand response to the national emergency is that New Zealand historians have paid only limited attention to the country's wartime government, its core decisions around the entry of Japan into the war, and the political and military environment within which it operated. The major works remain the official histories, but these are limited by their time and authorship. They range from J. V. T. Baker's authoritative *War Economy*⁴ to the weakness of the newspaper dependent *Home Front* by Nancy M. Taylor.⁵ Recent scholarship has produced incisive volumes such as Michael Bassett's *Tomorrow Comes The Song: A Life of Peter Fraser*⁶ and Gerald Hensley's *Beyond the Battlefield: New Zealand and its Allies, 1939-1945*,⁷ but these are in turn limited by their size not their quality.

³ Fraser quoted in Brian J Hewson, 'Goliath's Apprentice, The Royal New Zealand Airforce and the Pacific War, 1941-1945', PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, 1999, p. 52.

⁴ J.V.T. Baker, *War Economy*, Part of the *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945*, Historical Publications Branch, Wellington, New Zealand, 1965.

⁵ Nancy M. Taylor, *The Home Front*, Volumes I & II, *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945*, Historical Publications Branch, Wellington, New Zealand, 1986.

⁶ Michael Bassett, *Tomorrow comes the Song: A Life of Peter F'sraser*, Penguin, Auckland, New Zealand, 2001.

⁷ Gerald Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield: New Zealand and its Allies, 1939-45*, Viking, Auckland, New Zealand, 2009.

The Australian history community in contrast has conducted a comprehensive and at times bitter ‘civil war’ centred on the events of 1942. Not only has the intensity of the debate led to the estrangement, even isolation of many of the ‘academy’ historians from their lay audience, it has potentially diminished their scholarship to this audience. The principle denigrator of any threat of a Japanese invasion of Australia in 1942 is Peter Stanley, previously the Senior Historian at the Australian War Memorial (AWM). His initial paper to the 2002 ‘Remembering 1942’ conference⁸ raised considerable opposition, especially within the lay community. He restated his position in 2005,⁹ but noticeably watered it down in his final paper on the matter, before later resigning from the AWM.¹⁰ He has academic support from such as fellow academic Craig Stockings,¹¹ but other viewpoints somewhat contrary to his position has also come from academia, most notably historian Professor David Horner’s 1993 article, ‘Defending Australia in 1942’¹², as well as from journalism’s Bob Wurth with his book *1942*.¹³

The Australian ‘civil war’ has encouraged some comprehensive research by both sides, providing a resource that contributes to understanding New Zealand’s situation. Australian scholarly study of 1942 started with official history volumes most especially Dudley McCarthy’s *South-West Pacific Area—First Year: Kokoda to Wau*,¹⁴ but in recent years it has progressively degenerated into brittle and bitter booklets such as *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History*,¹⁵ compiled by a group of scholarly

⁸ Peter Stanley, ‘He’s (not) coming south’. *Remembering 1942*, conference, Australian War Memorial (AWM), Canberra, Australia, 2002.

⁹ Peter Stanley, ‘Threat made manifest’, *Griffith Review*, Spring 2005, <https://griffithreview.com/articles/threat-made-manifest/Australia>

¹⁰ Peter Stanley, ‘Was there a Battle for Australia?’ *Remembering 1942*, conference, AWM, Canberra, Australia, 2006.

¹¹ Craig Stockings (ed.), *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, Australia, 2010.

¹² David Horner, ‘Defending Australia in 1942’. *War & Society*, Volume 11, Issue 1, May 1993, pp. 1-20.

¹³ Bob Wurth, *1942: Australia’s Greatest Peril*, Pan MacMillan, Sydney, Australia, 2008.

¹⁴ Dudley McCarthy, *Australia in the War of 1939-1945*, Series 1, Volume V, *South West Pacific Area – First Year: Kokoda to Wau*, AWM, Canberra, Australia, 1952.

¹⁵ Stockings, *Zombie Myths*.

military historians, apparently more determined to defend a political position than enlighten posterity.

While the events of 1942 represented a national emergency for New Zealand, it is important to bear in mind that New Zealand was just one of the several key players. The emergency was the consequence of Japan entering the war against the Western allies; and the response was an Allied one with principle decision-making in the United States of America (USA), with some input by Britain, Australia and New Zealand. Each player had different viewpoints. A nationalistic based examination of the events of 1942 would not serve the purpose. The Australian 'civil war' has shown a nationalistic debate can have the effect of limiting understanding of the events. This thesis is designed to consider the different national situations and viewpoints contributing to the perceptions and handling of the threat in 1942. It progresses through the principal countries, people and organisations that most affected New Zealand in the lead up to 1942 and the endurance test that was 1942. By considering the different viewpoints, it will then also be possible to assess whether the New Zealand government's actions in response to the threat were justified.

A key aspect considered is gathered intelligence. The 'decisions' made in regard to the prosecution of the war by the New Zealand government in 1942 are significantly interpretable by the intelligence on which they were based. Therefore a review of the political and military intelligence available to the Allies, compared to the summaries supplied to the New Zealand government, is important and thereby given its own chapter. The origin of the data and what is now 'known' of Japan's intentions and capacity from post-war and especially recent research is reviewed to qualify the quality of the material supplied during the war.

New Zealand is and was always too small a population and economy to defend itself against a significant aggressor. Therefore its position is one of a continuous supplicant to major players. In a year such as 1942 it became a matter of dignified desperation. What New Zealand did and did not know of the situation, and what was the actual intent rather than the promises or threats given it from the major players dictated the reality of 1942, the Pacific War, and the defence of New Zealand.

CHAPTER 1

The View Across Port Jackson

Defending New Zealand in the Fading Light of Empire

From its formation as a British colony, the people of New Zealand fretted about being attacked, but less commonly about being invaded. One of the challenges for New Zealanders during the ‘scare’ of 1942 was they had to contend with the possibility that their islands’ isolation, which had long offered reassurance, was no longer a guarantee of security. This chapter follows the labyrinth of New Zealand’s political and military ‘state-of-mind’ initially under the traditional perception of defending against enemy cruiser raids through to the growing fear of invasion following Japan’s seemingly unstoppable early successes.

A History of Fear

The first military fortification erected in New Zealand was Fort Britomart, on the shores of Waitemata Harbour. This coastal artillery fortification was designed to protect the embryonic Auckland against the ‘fierce Maori and the wily French.’¹⁶ By 1885 the main harbours at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin all had extensive coastal defences as protection against raiding by whomsoever was Britain’s ‘enemy’ at the time.¹⁷ The old established concept of an enemy naval force raiding coastal settlements appeared to have turned into a reality when, on Monday 17 February 1873, David Luckie, editor of *The Daily Southern Cross* newspaper, published a long and vivid description of a reputed raid under the dramatic headline ‘War with Russia: A Calamity for Auckland: Hostile Visit of a Russian Ironclad.’ Luckie’s spoof article was designed to force the Government’s hand on improving the coastal defences. Two days later

¹⁶ Peter Cooke, *Defending New Zealand*, Volume 1, Defence of New Zealand Study Group, Wellington, New Zealand, 2000, pp. 9-23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-131.

Luckie cut to the nub of the national worry about defence when he followed with an article titled ‘From the depths of our despair, we cry – Where is the British Navy?’¹⁸

The Royal Navy (RN) was essential for the expansion of the British Empire and the defence of sea lanes on which the Empire depended. By the late 1840s, however, senior naval commanders began to have doubts about the ability of the RN to continue to provide for imperial defence. As long as the RN remained undefeated, strategic logic argued against large scale enemy action in the South Pacific, but New Zealand could not be guaranteed immunity from attack. One concern was raiding by enemy warships could create a diversion, in theory drawing RN ships to New Zealand’s defence and thereby weakening more strategic locations in their absence. As late as the mid-nineteenth century it was believed an enemy could achieve this effect, without risk to their own naval forces, by issuing letters of marque to privateers who would operate to their profit and the enemy’s advantage. The French annexation of New Caledonia in 1853 gave a more realistic credence to the potential concept of raiding by providing a haven port for the vessels of a traditional enemy, within a short cruise of both New Zealand and Australia.¹⁹

In 1871 Captain F. W. Hutton, RN, wrote a report for the New Zealand Defence Minister on the defence of the country’s harbours. Hutton discussed the possibility of one or more areas of New Zealand being subjected to ‘a sudden attack by one or two small cruisers or privateers coming to the colony for the purpose of plunder only, and not with any idea of taking possession of it.’²⁰ However, although Great Britain needed to be concerned about the possibility of raids on its colonies and territories, this was not the priority of the RN. Late 19th Century Mahanian²¹ naval philosophy emphasised fleet concentrations and decisive naval battles, which became more of a possibility with the

¹⁸ Peter Cooke, *Defending New Zealand*, Volume 1, pp36-38. Also <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/daily-southern-cross/1873/2/17>, p.3.

¹⁹ Ian McGibbon, *The Path To Gallipoli: Defending New Zealand, 1840-1915*, GP Books, Wellington New Zealand, 1991, pp. 4-7.

²⁰ Captain F. W. Hutton, ‘Papers relative to Defence of the Harbours of New Zealand’, p. 1. Appendix to *The Journal of the House of Representatives* (AJHR - NZ), A-No. 4, 1871.

²¹ Reference to the theories of Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, USN, 1840-1914, naval geostrategist.

expansions of the German, Russian, French and United States fleets in this period. Accordingly, the RN was forced to reduce to a ‘two nation navy’ or ‘two power standard’, meaning it anticipated being able to simultaneously deal with the navies of any two nations allied against Great Britain. Her principal point of defence was considered to be her own islands and their routes of supply, with the Dominions and colonies ‘beyond the seas’ considered secondary.²² By the 1890s, the RN had established a number of secondary naval ‘stations’, to where it deployed obsolescent warships with the expectation that the various colonial authorities would meet the operational costs. This meshed, since 1870, with the expectation that colonies such as Australia and New Zealand would supply and finance their own local land forces for national and regional defence. New Zealand’s naval defence interests were served, up until 1911, principally by warships of the Australia Station.²³

In New Zealand, naval power was rightly perceived as the key to national defence. During his long reign, Prime Minister Richard John Seddon had regularly demanded a guarantee of naval protection from Great Britain—firstly against the expanding Chinese navy, then Japan, and finally from the Germans, after Germany’s annexation of Pacific islands, especially Samoa, in the 1890s. In addition, the Russian ‘bogey’ remained as a background concern until the Russian Baltic fleet was eliminated by the Japanese navy at the 1905 Battle of Tsushima in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. However, the RN could not be persuaded against Mahan’s concentration and ‘decisive action’ theory to contemplate dispersing warships about the Empire for local defence purposes.²⁴

Japan Appears

Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War saw it elevated to be one of the region’s most significant threats and New Zealand’s enemy of the day. In June 1905, Vice-Admiral A. D. Fanshawe, RN, writing in his capacity as Commander Australia Station,

²² Ian C. McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale: The Naval Defence of New Zealand 1914-1942*, GP Books, Wellington, New Zealand, 1981, pp. 5-7.

²³ Peter Dennis, et. al., *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, Australia, 2008.

²⁴ McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli*, pp. 137-152.

produced a report on Japan alarmingly titled 'Australia and New Zealand's real and only danger from an enemy'. Fanshawe warned, should Britain be 'unable to spare sufficient battleships from European waters to meet a powerful enemy in this [Pacific] hemisphere', the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) could gain ascendancy in the region. He went so far as to suggest an invasion or large-scale raid by Japan was possible. Fanshawe expressed a belief that the difficulties confronting it in invading New Zealand 'would compare in magnitude to those successfully overcome in ... [its] present campaign in Manchuria.'²⁵ As if this was not pointed enough, the Overseas Defence Committee of the London based Committee of Imperial Defence came to acknowledge there was a developing threat of an enemy state, at war with Great Britain, deliberately imposing an isolation of Australia or New Zealand designed to draw off RN forces from a Mahanian concentration. Its May 1911 report, 'Australia and New Zealand Strategic Situation in the event of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance being determined', warned:

Although in a war with Japan in combination with a European naval power purely strategic considerations might forbid the dispatch of British naval reinforcements to the Pacific until the naval situation in European waters had been cleared up, it might not unreasonably be assumed by our enemies that, if a raid on Australia or New Zealand were able to achieve a certain measure of success, the British Government might be compelled for political reasons to detach the requisite naval and military reinforcements for the protection of these Dominions, thereby disorganising our war plans and possibly jeopardising the success of operations in the main theatre of war.²⁶

Concern about Japan was somewhat soothed by the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. This naval accord allowed for Britain and Japan to provide largely moral support for each other in the Pacific, unless either faced two or more naval enemies at the same time (a reference to the British two navy doctrine).²⁷ The alliance was seen initially by New Zealand and Australia as a bulwark against Russia's

²⁵ McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, pp. 11-12.

²⁶ McGibbon, *The Path To Gallipoli*, pp. 11-12.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-146.

expansion into the Pacific.²⁸ It also allowed the RN the excuse to run down its Far Eastern and Pacific fleets until virtually abandoning the Australia Station with the establishment of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) in 1911.²⁹

The Royal Navy Wanes

Whereas the Australian colonies—and, from 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia—had the population and resources to largely provide for its local defence, New Zealand did not. The considerable sums spent in the 1880s on coastal defence guns and equipping of land forces could only be geared against raiders, not invaders. The country's principal defence remained the already declining RN presence. Prime Minister Sir Joseph Ward declared in 1909 a Eurocentric view: 'The fate and future of this country is not going to depend on eighty thousand men, or even a hundred thousand men, or even two hundred thousand fully trained men; it is not going to depend upon who may land in New Zealand: it is going to depend on the victory of the British Navy in some place thousands of miles from the shores of New Zealand.'³⁰ Nevertheless, it remained important to also provide for coastal and sea lane defences around New Zealand. Since 1887, under the Australian Naval Agreement, New Zealand had provided a £20,000 annual subsidy towards the cost of an auxiliary squadron on the Australia Station. This allowed for two obsolescent British warships to be stationed in New Zealand during times of peace.³¹ The sum was progressively increased early in the twentieth century to £40,000 a year in 1903 and then to £100,000 a year in 1908. The following year, both Australia and Canada opted to create their own navies, but the New Zealand Government considered New Zealand was too small to do so, and continued to rely on its subsidy of the RN to provide for its local naval defence.³²

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 141-142.

²⁹ McGibbon, *The Path To Gallipoli*, pp. 214-215, 218-219, 254; McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, p. 30.

³⁰ New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, CXLVI, 14 June 1909, p. 199.

³¹ W. David McIntyre, 'New Zealand and the Singapore Base between the wars', *The Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol 2, No.1, March, 1971, pp. 2-21.

³² Ibid., p. 3.

The Anglo-German arms race intensified in the decade before the First World War, with the German Navy developing a Pacific Fleet and bases, which threatened British imperial interests. The anchorages at German Samoa and New Guinea were of especial worry to Australasia. New Zealand offered to pay for one and possibly two battle cruisers for the RN on the understanding these would be based in the Pacific, even occasionally in New Zealand, to counter the threat of German warships using the New Guinea and Samoa anchorages. The first of these, the battle cruiser HMS *New Zealand*, was launched in 1911, on which occasion Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, praised New Zealand for its gift by declaring: ‘No greater insight into political and strategic points has ever been shown by a community hitherto unversed in military matters.’³³ After being commissioned, *New Zealand* never took up its intended post as flagship of the China Squadron and was allowed only a brief ‘thank you’ visit to New Zealand in 1913, after which it was rushed back to join the Home Fleet, leaving New Zealand to continue paying off the loan for its purchase until 1944. Finding itself denuded of the naval force it thought it was buying, the New Zealand Government began exploring the possibility of following the lead of Australia and establishing its own navy. Churchill reacted angrily. He thundered prophetically: ‘If the power of Great Britain were shattered upon the sea the only course open to the five million white men in the Pacific would be to seek the protection of the United States.’³⁴ The RN promptly redeployed two obsolete cruisers, HMS *Psyche* and HMS *Pyramus*, to be based at Auckland—at New Zealand’s cost—thereby maintaining the pretence it was meeting New Zealand’s national defence interest.³⁵

The First World War brought New Zealand’s fear of assault by a foreign power to maturity when the Imperial German Navy’s Asian Fleet and later independent armed merchant cruisers (‘raiders’) operated in the region.³⁶ Despite Luckie’s cry in the 1870s ‘Where is the Royal Navy?’ the RN at the opening of hostilities promptly removed one of the obsolete cruisers from New Zealand. Fortunately, the German naval ships

³³ McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, pp. 5-7.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-16.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli*, pp. 10, 257.

operating in the Pacific in 1914 followed the demands of ‘concentration’ and departed for the Atlantic, where they were sunk in the Battle of the Falklands. However, with most of the RN and RAN warships in the region redeployed to the European theatre, the way was clear for German mercantile raiders to venture into the South Pacific. Ironically it was IJN warships that bolstered the defence of the Pacific and Indian Oceans sea lanes, as well as patrolling the Australian coast after German raiders laid mines in Australian and New Zealand waters and captured several merchant ships.³⁷

The RAN demonstrated a Dominion’s national fleet could readily, in time of war, integrate with the RN. However, the Admiralty still preferred monetary gifts and outright ownership of naval hardware. By the war’s end, Prime Minister William Massey was leaning towards a national navy able, like the RAN, to in future integrate with the RN. In 1919 the Admiralty countered the idea by dispatching Admiral Lord Jellicoe (for matters of prestige, he was promoted to Admiral of the Fleet while en-route) to assess Australian, New Zealand and Far East naval defence requirements.³⁸ With the formal ending of the Anglo-Japanese naval alliance still nearly three years away, there is a strong suggestion within Jellicoe’s tour that it was an exercise in politics and propaganda rather than negotiations. It appears the decision to dump the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had already been made by the British and Jellicoe had been instructed to mollify both Australia and New Zealand, who became alarmed when faced with its demise.³⁹ Seven months after Jellicoe’s arrival in New Zealand both the Japanese and British governments questioned the alliance’s relevance in the light of the Versailles Treaty, suggesting it was ‘not entirely consistent with the letter of Covenant (of the League of Nations), which both Governments earnestly desire to respect.’⁴⁰ Jellicoe held discussions with the Australian and New Zealand governments and senior naval and military commanders in both countries, formulating a plan, which provided

³⁷ McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, pp. 23-30; Cooke, *Defending New Zealand*, p. 219.

³⁸ W. D. McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War: Defence Policy, 1919-39*, University of Canterbury Press, Christchurch, New Zealand, 1988, p. 31.

³⁹ McIntyre, ‘New Zealand and the Singapore Base between the Wars’; J. C. Vinson, ‘The Imperial Conference of 1921 and the Anglo-Japanese alliance’, *Pacific Historical Review*, Volume 31, No. 3, 1962, p. 258.

⁴⁰ Ian H. Nish, *Japan’s Struggle with Internationalism: Japan, China, and the League of Nations, 1931-1933*, Routledge, New York, USA, 2009, pp. 24-25.

reassurance to the Dominions while maintaining the dominance of the RN in imperial defence plans. Jellicoe saw Japan as the probable future enemy and proposed forming a RN Far Eastern Fleet based at Singapore—at a naval base yet to be built—from where the fleet could provide defence for British Empire interests in both the Pacific and Indian Oceans.⁴¹

The Singapore Illusion

At the same time, New Zealand also needed to consider the development of local forces, including the incorporation of aircraft into defence planning. In 1919, the British Air Ministry offered the services of Lieutenant-Colonel A. V. Bettington, Royal Air Force (RAF), to New Zealand. As McIntyre relates, the Government gladly accepted the offer of an expert, professing themselves eager to ‘take immediate action in regard to the organisation of naval, military and civil aviation.’ Bettington brought with him several aircraft as the basis of an air corps and produced an air defence report that was thorough and detailed. It foresaw most of New Zealand’s aviation needs for the interwar period and identified Japan as the countries nearest potential enemy. He recommended the formation of an air force capable of contributing to local defence, including maritime operations. Unfortunately, the report died in a welter of inaction.⁴² Partly, this was the result of defence cutbacks as occurred in many countries after the relief of victory in 1918 and the financial stringencies of the 1920s. By 1922 the New Zealand Massey Government had dramatically cut back defence expenditure, leaving only Wellington and Auckland with a coastal battery apiece for port defence.⁴³

British Empire strategic defence policy in the 1920s and 1930s revolved largely around the illusion of the Jellicoe Plan (and its many modifications). Although Massey tried to retain Japan as a friend, and advocated the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, there was a rising acceptance in both New Zealand and Australia of a strong chance of a war with Japan.⁴⁴ However, the ‘Singapore strategy’ became a bone of contention within the

⁴¹ McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War*, p. 32.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 51; Cooke, *Defending New Zealand*, pp. 232-233.

⁴⁴ McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War*, pp. 34-37.

British Empire. South Africa and Canada opposed it. Jan Smuts, then in the last year of his first term as South African Prime Minister, saw it as provoking Japan; the Canadians meanwhile preferred to forge an alliance with the USA, as the US Navy (USN) was the other major naval force in its region. Australia and New Zealand, feeling more remote, alone, and exposed—as Massey put it, ‘alone in the ocean’—saw the promised base at Singapore as ‘bait’ to encourage an RN presence.⁴⁵ The growing size and complexity of principle naval units meant they could not operate at sea for any prolonged period without docking and support facilities. This made the Singapore base essential if Britain was, under any circumstances, to have a significant presence in the East.⁴⁶

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the very concept and practicality of the Singapore base was subject to strong debate by politicians, economists and defence planners. In Australia, particularly, there was strong criticism from within the Army that the ‘Singapore strategy’ was fundamentally flawed. Lieutenant-Colonel H. D. Wynter, described by Australia’s official historian, Gavin Long, as ‘perhaps the clearest and most profound thinker the Australian Army of his generation had produced’, and others, argued there was no guarantee the RN would actually be available in the event of a war against Japan. Jellicoe himself had warned that the RN would prioritise Atlantic and Mediterranean operations should there be a war in the Asia-Pacific area at the same time as Britain was committed to a war in Europe, making it unable to spare many warships for naval operations in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.⁴⁷ In the mid-1930s, Colonel J. D. Lavarack, then Director of Military Operations and Intelligence for the Australian Military Forces, summarised the problem: ‘The issue is simple. Command of the Atlantic is of vital importance to the British people, command in the Far East is not.’⁴⁸ This was not a new awareness. Great Britain had long conceded as much. In 1923, First Sea Lord L. S. Amery bluntly informed the Dominions at the Imperial Conference, ‘for many years to come—certainly until after 1931—we have no mobility, no power to do

⁴⁵ McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, p. 78.

⁴⁶ McIntyre, ‘New Zealand and the Singapore Base’, pp. 4-7.

⁴⁷ Gavin Long, *Australia in the War of 1939-1945*, Series 1 (Army), Volume I, *To Benghazi*, AWM, Canberra, Australia, 1961, p. 8.

⁴⁸ Brett Lodge, *Lavarack: The Rival General*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, Australia, 1998, pp. 21-22.

anything to protect the Dominions that lie in the South Pacific, if a sudden gust of insensate ambition should come upon any other nation.’⁴⁹

The dispensability of New Zealand and Australia was clearly realised on a number of occasions. At the 1921 Imperial Conference, British Prime Minister Lloyd George emphasised to New Zealand’s Prime Minister, Massey, the importance of the Suez Canal. While the canal was the key route for the British fleet to come to Australia and New Zealand’s defence, its importance to Britain was primarily as the shortest route to Middle Eastern oil and to India. Massey himself possibly flushed with the Imperial moment, picked up the theme and went further, stating: ‘I do not know of any country so important to the Empire as Egypt, with the exception of Britain itself. Even Australia and New Zealand might be parted with and the Empire would go on ...’⁵⁰ Nevertheless, by the 1930s there was mounting concern about the situation in the Far East and increasing demands for Great Britain to assure the defence of its Asia-Pacific possessions. In July 1935, the British Defence Requirements Committee, described by historian Keith Neilson as ‘the body whose decisions largely determined the path British strategic foreign policy took in the years until 1939’, declared that unless adequate defence provisions could be made, Australia, New Zealand, India, Burma and various colonies ‘may well be doomed.’⁵¹ The British Government promptly dispatched the Secretary for Defence, Maurice Hankey, to the Dominions to explain away concentrating on its own air defence rather than their naval protection.⁵²

While Britain could ‘talk away’ Japan as a threat, the 1930s rise of the Nazi party in Germany forced British politicians, reluctantly, to look to their nation’s defences. The choice between defending the home islands and/or the Empire naturally evolved in favour of the home islands, with British defence planners realistically appraising their immediate needs as protection against increased air bombardment and a capability to

⁴⁹ McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, pp. 107-09.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Keith Neilson, ‘The Defence Subcommittee, British Strategic Foreign Policy, Neville Chamberlain and the Path to Appeasement’, *The English Historical Review*, Volume 118, Issue 477, 2003, p. 653; McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, p. 252.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 238-242.

attack Germany in return. In 1934, Neville Chamberlain, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, advocated completing the Singapore base (but to do so to a lower standard than was originally planned) in order to appease Australia and New Zealand. The Admiralty opposed this, unsuccessfully, as strategically inadequate'.⁵³

The rise of dual threats—Germany in Europe, and Japan in the Pacific—gave cause to reassess defence preparations in New Zealand. In 1935, *Defence of New Zealand*, a report commissioned by the Government, and written by the newly formed Chiefs Of Staff subcommittee of the New Zealand Committee of Imperial Defence, outlined the defences New Zealand anticipated needing to meet in line with what was termed the 'minimum consistent with safety'.⁵⁴ This was primarily safety from 'raiders' operating out of Asia-Pacific bases, including potentially Singapore (if it fell), with the RN being expected to protect New Zealand from any greater threat, including invasion.⁵⁵ Priority was given to artillery based coastal defences at key NZ ports. These were not principally for the protection of the population but rather to protect commerce. The coastal fortresses were intended to keep raiders out of bombardment range of the ports thereby providing safe havens for merchant shipping recalled to port in the event raiders were detected operating off New Zealand.⁵⁶ By 1937 Auckland, Wellington and Lyttelton harbours were designated by the New Zealand Government as 'first-class defended' ports, being entitled to coastal and anti-aircraft (AA) artillery batteries, with supporting minefields laid around their entrances. Smaller harbours, such as Port Chalmers, were initially not to be protected.⁵⁷

In spite of the deteriorating international situations, especially in Asia where the Japanese military increased their presence in China, there was not a universal expectation of a broader war in the Asia-Pacific region. The Labour Government elected in 1935 was not strongly committed to defence, being inclined to be dismissive of the threat. For example, John A. Lee, then a Labour Member of Parliament,

⁵³ McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, pp. 235-256.

⁵⁴ McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War*, p. 134.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 188.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

perceived New Zealand as lacking strategic importance and its isolation as 'our best defence'. He went so far as to suggest the possibility of invasion by Japan was a 'laughable prospect.' However, he was astute enough to see through his own political bias to realise an invasion was not necessary for Japan to dominate the country. He realised, should Japan make sufficient gains against other British Empire outposts, especially Singapore, they could then dominate the sea lanes on which New Zealand was reliant. Lee proposed building up the air force to better defend New Zealand's coastal waters, as aircraft were something 'New Zealand could afford, not a navy which it couldn't'. His main hope though was the base at Singapore would discourage Japan from attacking British Empire interests.⁵⁸ The British Chiefs of Staff were opposed to the plan to build up the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF), and continued to advocate a cruiser defence of New Zealand against raiders, noting as long as imperial defence held there would be no Japanese invasion expedition.⁵⁹

The problem facing New Zealand was a growing realisation that British promises to deploy sufficient warships to defend it were valueless. A succession of military reports painted a progressively grim picture. In 1933, Flight Lieutenant A. T. de Nevill, RNZAF, produced a report on national defence with a secret appendix proposing, '*The Case for a Japanese Invasion of New Zealand.*' Nevill argued there was a risk of an attack, with Japan having already proved its capability of an overseas amphibious assault with the landing at Shanghai. He considered the strengthening of the Singapore base could convince Japan to attack elsewhere, including New Zealand, and estimated a small fleet that included an aircraft carrier with a few dozen aircraft, could take Auckland.⁶⁰ In 1936, Wing Commander Thomas Wilkes, RNZAF, suggested New Zealand needed to be committed both to local defence and imperial defence, especially to defend the Suez Canal. He argued that should the canal be lost and a RN fleet have to sail from Europe via the Cape of Good Hope there would be ample time for a 'fairly

⁵⁸ McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, pp. 259-266.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 270-273.

⁶⁰ Nevill report noted in Matthew Wright, *Kiwi Air Power: The History of the RNZAF*, Reed, Auckland, New Zealand, 1998, pp. 24-25.

strong naval force' to overwhelm local defences, even possibly occupying Auckland.⁶¹ This argument reinforced the need for New Zealand and Australia to plan for both national and imperial defence, including the dispatch of expeditionary forces in the event of another European war.

The Shadow of War

By the late 1930s, the British Empire was planning for a two-theatre war. In 1937, British war plans envisaged the cruisers based in New Zealand concentrating on Singapore if war broke out with Japan. Deputy Prime Minister Walter Nash's talks in Britain that year saw the failure of all attempts by the hosts to talk New Zealand out of purchasing bombers for coastal defence instead of further investing in warships. The British Chiefs of Staff were so incensed they considered not showing their latest appraisal of the situation in the Far East to New Zealand, adding the country to the 'black list' that also included Canada and South Africa. They intended showing the report, which was a full review of the Far East situation, only to Australia and India. However, wiser heads prevailed and the report was shown to all parties.⁶²

New Zealand's armed forces had in the meantime been starved of men and materiel for much of the interwar period. The first Labour Government added philosophical reasons to budgetary reluctance to continuing subsidising RN warships, which were seen as 'imperial' and not dedicated to the defence of New Zealand.⁶³ Until 1937 investment in the RNZAF was the lowest of the three services. The rapid purchase of modern bombers and flying boats then signalled a realisation of war's imminence. Air power was seen as a cost effective modern solution to the defence challenge especially in the accepted adage of the time that 'the bomber will always get through'. The hope was that

⁶¹ Ft. Lt. A. T. de Nevill, RNZAF, 'Defence of New Zealand', 3 May 1933, Archives New Zealand, AIR 102/3/3.

⁶² McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, pp. 275-276.

⁶³ McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War*, p. 170.

bombers, which were considerably cheaper to procure than warships, could stave off raids or invasion.⁶⁴

The other element in the defence challenge was the New Zealand Army, which remained weak. The Army, having received the largest slice of the defence budget between the end of the First World War and 1928, was then neglected by successive governments. Its budgetary allocation plunged precipitously to its nadir in 1932. From this point its share rose urgently along with the other two services until they achieved an almost equal three-way division of the defence budget, which by 1939 had nearly doubled from 1932.⁶⁵ None of the services' expansion was intended purely for the defence of New Zealand. The defence budget also enabled commitments to the RN, provision of aircrew for the Empire Air Training Scheme, and an expeditionary army force. With the declaration of war the vast majority of men and materials were committed to the European and adjacent theatres forcing the creation of an almost entirely new force to defend New Zealand itself.

The 1938 Munich Crisis meanwhile had forced the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff to further reappraise the country's defence and also the broader security of the South Pacific. By the late 1930s, there was recognition an invasion or raiding force would likely have strong air support. This would be from the utilisation of aircraft carriers or the capturing of islands in the South Pacific 'barrier' group putting New Zealand within range of land based bombers. The Japanese 'mandated islands' (a reference to the League of Nations mandates) in the Central Pacific gave them bases from where ships and aircraft could strike into the South Pacific. The service chiefs concluded that Japan could seek to capture island groups south of the Equator, including possibly Fiji, Tonga, the New Hebrides and New Caledonia, which were considered to be 'a vital New Zealand interest.' After a personal tour of Fiji, Tonga and Fanning Island, the service

⁶⁴ Hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1932/nov/10/international-affairs 10.30pm British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin in a speech to the House against re-armament wove a picture of devastation from the air in line with the air power theories proposed in Giulio Douhet's book *The Command of the Air* (see reprint, Airforce History and Museums Project, Washington, USA, 1998). Baldwin said defence against bombing was futile, as 'The bomber will always get through.'

⁶⁵ See Appendix A.

chiefs produced a discussion paper that included the possibility of a Japanese brigade strength attack on Fiji and Tonga. The New Zealand Defence Council accepted this report in December 1938, with Carl Berendsen, the influential head of the Prime Minister's Department, and Commodore H. E. Horan, Chief of the Naval Staff, both emphasising the potential delay of the RN reaching Singapore would increase the importance of Fiji to New Zealand's defence.⁶⁶ Fiji was central to the New Caledonia-Samoa 'barrier' which was considered to form New Zealand's forward defence line against a Japanese South Pacific advance.

The Pacific Defence Conference 1939

Grasping the increased importance of the South Pacific 'barrier' as defence against a Japanese advance south, the New Zealand Government proposed a Pacific Defence Conference in 1939. It invited Britain and Australia to send delegates to Wellington. NZ historian W. D. McIntyre has opined the conference was 'the most ambitious initiative in defence policy taken by the New Zealand Government between the wars.'⁶⁷ The conference was largely the 'brainchild' of Berendsen, who was supported by Group Captain Ralph Cochrane, Chief of the Air Staff. The initiative reflected the growing recognition by defence planners and politicians of the scale of British military weakness. Berendsen and Cochrane recognised the danger a European war would expose New Zealand's immediate defence to, and the increased importance of the Pacific islands as air power bases.⁶⁸ The British were supportive of the conference, especially as New Zealand expressed an interest in sharing the costs of the defence expansions planned. The Australians on the other hand were more concerned about their own forward defence in New Guinea and New Britain, making them disinterested in New Zealand's geosecurity worries. The death of Prime Minister Joseph Lyons ten days before the conference's start was also a major distraction for them.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares For War*, p. 203.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 193.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 203.

In his opening address, Prime Minister Joseph Savage emphasised his concern by noting, should Japan take Fiji, 'New Zealand would be isolated.'⁷⁰ However, Sir Harry Batterbee, the British High Commissioner to New Zealand, arrived with a British Chiefs of Staff discussion paper entitled 'New Zealand's Co-operation in Imperial Defence' (dated 1 February 1939) which included a significant proposal. The discussion paper provided for a worst case scenario of a three enemy (Germany, Italy, Japan) war across two theatres (Europe, Pacific). It envisaged that in this event, the RN main fleet would sail to the Far East to protect Australia, New Zealand and India, leaving enough of a force to contain the Germans in the North Sea, with the French restraining the Italians in the Mediterranean. The dispatch of the fleet was emphasised within a promise: 'We would send the Fleet to eastern waters irrespective of the situation elsewhere.'⁷¹ However, actual RN planning at this time emphasised the principal role of British warships was protecting British interests in the Atlantic and Mediterranean.⁷² Berendsen went through a detailed analysis of all the recent papers the British had sent New Zealand and announced he had reached the 'inescapable' deduction that, while the fleet would come, the time delay due to the expected loss of the Mediterranean shipping route, due to the Italian naval presence in the Mediterranean, would be such Japan could gain 'unquestionable naval control of the Pacific'. British Air Chief Marshal Arthur Longmore, then Chief of RAF Training Command, admitted that it was 'refreshing to get a real broadside like that' and it 'shattered us somewhat of course', but not enough to stop the British delegates from giving a flood of qualified reassurances.⁷³ When the deputy prime minister Nash, expressed scepticism by asking what New Zealand should do when 'Singapore fell and the Fleet was destroyed?', Longmore gave his much quoted (and only partially facetious) reply: 'take to the Waitomo Caves.'⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 208.

⁷¹ Ibid. pp. 205-206.

⁷² Brian P. Farrell, 'Yes, Prime Minister: Barbarossa, Whipcord and the Basis of British Grand Strategy, Autumn 1941', *The Journal of Military History*, Volume 57, No.4, October 1993, pp. 606-608.

⁷³ McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War*, p. 208.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 210.

Major-General John Duigan, the New Zealand Army's Chief of the General Staff, noted in the course of the discussion that in the event the naval base at Singapore was lost, 'the scale of attack goes up for New Zealand.' When Nash questioned whether it would then be possible to successfully defend New Zealand, Major General P. J. Mackesy, Britain's chief military delegate, responded it would become 'a matter of the utmost difficulty.' The conference ended with the conclusion it had to be assumed that Singapore would be held, and the RN fleet would arrive in a timely manner, in which case New Zealand would only be subject to raids, and would not be in serious danger of invasion. However, as a safeguard, the New Zealand delegation broached the idea of utilising Fiji as a forward defensive location. The idea was to secure the island group so it could not then be used by Japan as a 'stepping stone' in a southward advance. The British and Australians showed little interest in this. Earlier the Australian Foreign Minister, William 'Billy' Hughes, who did not attend conference, claimed that given the strength of British sea power, 'the importance of these islands is low—without it, this importance doesn't matter.'⁷⁵ The Australians in any case had little reason to contribute to the defence of Fiji, as they had their own islands requiring defence, especially New Guinea and New Britain.⁷⁶ An important product of this conference was to show Australia's lack of interest in the South Pacific; New Zealand's growing unease about Singapore, Japan's intentions and Britain's needs to extract the maximum from New Zealand before vacating the Pacific with as little political damage as possible.

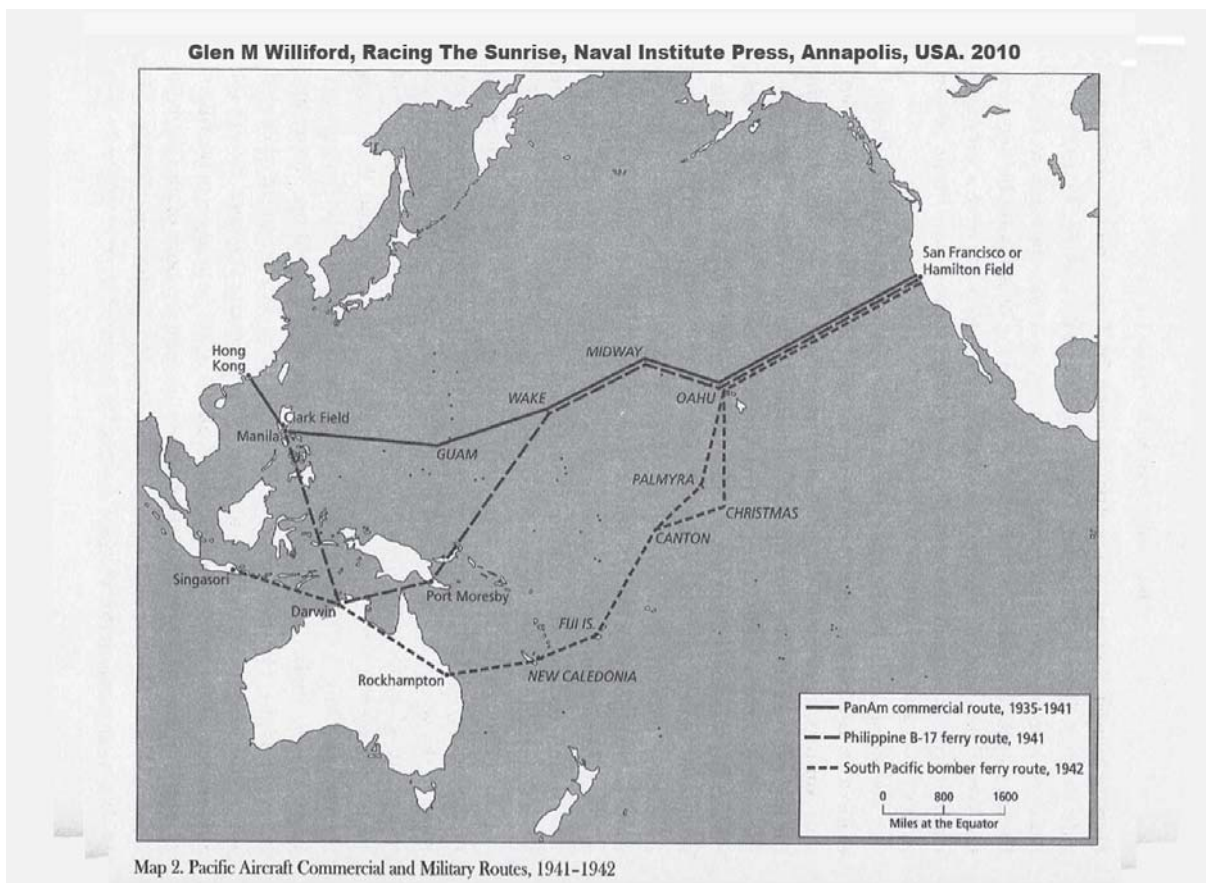
In spite of the lack of support at the time for the occupation of Fiji, the conference did result in some reasons for greater confidence. One of its seemingly innocuous concerns was the matter of air routes. The realisation that commercial and military communications would be linked both to sea and air travel had seen British Imperial Airways and Pan-American World Airways undertake the exploration of long-range air routes. From 1934, the US Government was actively studying not just landing rights but the ownership of whole islands on preferred Pacific air routes.⁷⁷ Such issues were also of interest to the British Empire. Indeed, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff took a report

⁷⁵ McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, p. 304.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-213.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-195.

to the 1936 Imperial Conference covering the meteorology, air and naval bases, trade, shipping and trans-Pacific air routes related to Pacific island groups. The USA proposed to the British a deliberately exaggerated list of unoccupied Pacific islands they intended to claim, including seven already administered by New Zealand. The negotiations were a display of political posturing, eventually overtaken by the necessities of war. The Americans' attempted land grab was a godsend to New Zealand and Australia as it created a proprietary interest by the USA in establishing and defending an air route into the South Pacific and an alternative route to the Philippines. This interest helped to draw American forces and supplies into the south-west Pacific, even before the outbreak of war with Japan.⁷⁸



Map 2: Pacific Air Routes, 1941-42

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 193-201.

New Zealand had no tradition of invasion fears but worried persistently about raiding by Britain's enemies. This worry expanded from 1870 as Britain steadily diluted the RN protection of the South Pacific region. While demanding Empire participation in the First World War for its own protection, the British largely withdrew naval forces from the South Pacific. New Zealand's first attempt to entice the RN back south by buying the RN a battle cruiser had failed, leading to the post-First World War attempt to entice the RN in another way by helping fund a naval base at Singapore. With the reality dawning this too had likely failed, New Zealand entered the Second World War frantically trying to do all Britain asked of it. Having done so, New Zealand still found Britain calling for more and more assistance while withdrawing into its own immediate defensive perimeter. New Zealand largely found itself 'alone in the ocean' with a rising fear of invasion.

CHAPTER 2

‘Walsingham’s Children’

The Price of Ignorance and the Cost of Knowledge

Crucial to New Zealand at the time is what each of the key players ‘knew’ and what they could ‘know’ about the threat that Japan posed between 1939 and 1942. Intelligence gathering and dissemination is not simply about determining an enemy’s immediate plans but in deducting, predicting and estimating their future actions. This is currently termed ‘threat analysis’. Queen Elizabeth I’s principal secretary and ‘spymaster’, Sir Francis Walsingham (c.1532-1590), who is credited with being the ‘father’ of organised British intelligence gathering, summarised its importance by observing: ‘There is less danger in fearing too much than too little.’⁷⁹

The Growth of Intelligence

Signal and communication intelligence (SIGINT/COMINT) was conceived with the onset of the twentieth century. With advances in signals technology, they were whelped in the First World War and brought to maturity in the Second World War. COMINT includes measures taken to intercept, analyse and report intelligence derived from any form of communications; SIGINT meanwhile includes COMINT plus the analysis of electronic transmissions such as radar and navigational signals. The importance of these activities is such that author Michael Smith, and others, claim the breaking of the German codes transmitted using the ‘Enigma’ electronic enciphering machine shaved

⁷⁹ John F. C. Harrison, ‘Walsingham, Sir Francis (c. 1532-90)’, *The Oxford Companion to British History* Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2009, Oxford Reference Online edition; Jane Archer, “‘There is less danger in fearing too much than too little’”: Sir Francis Walsingham and the defence of the Elizabethan Realm’, *Intelligence & National Security*, Volume 28, Issue 5, September 2013, pp. 748-753.

two years off the European war.⁸⁰ It is equally possible the breaking into Japanese codes and ciphers similarly affected the Pacific War.

Before the war, Asia was awash with spies mostly engaged in low level or colonial orientated HUMINT (human intelligence, or traditional spying). Once the Pacific War began this was largely restricted to the Asian mainland, along with some Allied 'coastwatching' based on various islands in the South Pacific. The principal Allied intelligence organisations were weakly established or absent before the war and slow to establish themselves once it began.⁸¹ The only intelligence agency operating within Japan was the Soviet Union's GRU (*Glavnoje Razvedyvatelnaje Upravlenije*), but the Soviets were not given to sharing their intelligence.⁸² This was not actually unusual, as even the British and Americans were averse to sharing intelligence with each other at the start of the Pacific War. The more effective pre-war and early war intelligence was electronic, with both the Americans and British establishing several radio-intercept stations and cryptographic units.

Both before and during the Pacific War the antagonists indulged in ethnic stereotyping and prejudged much of the intelligence they gathered.⁸³ The British saw Japanese forces as less effective than even those of the Italians, with a pervading belief the Japanese forces could not shoot straight ostensibly because of their 'slit eyes'; and a judgement was formed that the outstanding performance of the Japanese air forces over Hong Kong meant their aircraft could only have been crewed by Germans.⁸⁴ Ethnic stereotyping also produced a tendency to underestimate Japanese technology. For example, in 1940 the US Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) promulgated the performance of the Japanese oxygen powered Type 93 'Long-Lance' naval torpedo,

⁸⁰ Michael Smith, *The Emperor's Codes: Bletchley Park and the Breaking of Japan's Secret Cyphers*, Bantam, London, UK, 2000, p. 3.

⁸¹ John Barron, *KGB: The Secret World of Soviet Secret Agents*, Corgi Books, London, UK, 1974, p. 88; F. W. Deakin and G. R. Storry, *The Case of Richard Sorge*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1966, pp. 239-241.

⁸² Deakin and Storry, *The Case of Richard Sorge*, pp. 20-21.

⁸³ See Appendix E.

⁸⁴ John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, Random House, New York, USA, 1986, p. 105.

which was to prove very effective in the opening period of the Pacific War, but the report was dismissed by the USN's Bureau of Ordnance on the basis of neither the USA nor Great Britain had achieved such performance. In another instance, a USN naval attaché had the opportunity to sit in the cockpit of a prototype Mitsubishi 0 Sen ('Zero') fighter at a pre-war air show in Japan. He recorded its weight and performance off an instrument panel plaque and relayed the information to Washington where his report was dismissed, with a warning conveyed to the officer that he should be 'more discerning in future reporting.'⁸⁵

The Pacific War, Race and Intelligence

The principal sources of intelligence in the Pacific War were electronic, 'coastwatching', and military surveillance. Coastwatching saw Allied personnel located at strategic points, often remaining behind when the islands on which they were positioned were captured, observing and reporting on Japanese movements from behind enemy lines.⁸⁶ Military surveillance included aerial reconnaissance and the use of submarines to monitor shipping lanes and harbour entrances.⁸⁷ Almost all of these methods relied basically on little more than lenses and the unenhanced human eyeball to identify enemy forces. There was to begin with little photographic reconnaissance and photograph interpretation, mainly due to the US forces' lack of experience in these areas. During the whole of the 1942 northern summer (June to September), the US Army Air Forces (USAAF) flew only two photoreconnaissance sorties to Wake Island (after Japan's capture of the island) and another to Makin Island (prior to a US Marine Corps raid).⁸⁸ Because of the vast distances involved, as well as the limited intelligence networks available to the Allies in 1941-42, the only practical method to gather strategic

⁸⁵ Richard J. Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War Against Japan: Britain, America, and the Politics of Secret Service*, University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge, UK, 2000, pp. 64-65.

⁸⁶ D. O. W. Hall, *The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, Episodes & Studies, Volume 2, Coastwatchers*, Historical Publications Branch, Wellington, NZ, 1950, pp. 7-30; A. B Feuer, *Coast Watching in World War II: Australian coastwatchers in the Solomons*, Stackpole, Mechanicsburg, USA, 1975, pp. xvii-xx, 412.

⁸⁷ Clay Blair, Jnr, *Silent Victory: The US Submarine War Against Japan*, J.B. Lippincott & Company, New York, USA, 1975, pp. 114-115.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

level intelligence, and even tactical intelligence, was signals interception and analysis of Japanese transmissions.⁸⁹

There are many misconceptions of how effective the Allies' ability to decipher and decode Japanese radio communications was. These range from the questionably simplistic position of historian Clay Blair Jr that during the Pacific War the USN was able to "read the Japanese mail" with comparative ease,⁹⁰ through the more considered and informed view of the US National Security Agency's historical assessment that the staff of the principal USN SIGINT station at Honolulu, Hawaii, headed by Lieutenant Commander Joseph Rochefort, USN, 'was able to make educated guesses regarding the Japanese Navy's crucial next move (towards Midway)'.⁹¹ The phrase *educated guesses* succinctly summarises the realities of intelligence gathering for much of the Pacific War. Most times, only snippets of messages could be deciphered. Rochefort himself conceded it was not until 25 May 1942 (six months after the start of the Pacific War) that his staff was able to completely read an intercepted message.⁹² Even this success was probably something of an anomaly.

Japan set the Allies a prodigious SIGINT task.⁹³ The first challenge was of course the Japanese language itself; the second was the sheer number of different codes in use. At the end of the war, the USN estimated the IJN alone had used over 167 different codes during the war. Codes were regularly changed, and often complete code books were rewritten. Adding to the challenge was the wide range of different codes employed by the other forces and agencies including the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA), merchant

⁸⁹ D. M. Horner, *Australia and Allied Intelligence in the Pacific in The Second World War*, Working Paper 8, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, 1980, p. 2.

⁹⁰ Blair, *Silent Victory*, p. 18.

⁹¹ US National Security Agency, 'Battle of Midway'. www.nsa.gov/about/cryptologic_heritage/.../battle_midway.shtml (accessed 7 February 2012).

⁹² US Naval Cryptologic Veterans Association, 'Midway', www.usncva.org/clog/midway.shtml (accessed 7 February 2012).

⁹³ Robert J. Hancock and David P. Mowray, *United States Cryptologic History, Series IV, World War II, Volume X*, Centre for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency, Fort Meade, USA, 2008, p. xiv.

marine, and civil service, often making use of enciphering machines and later super-encryption ciphers.⁹⁴

Japan's interest in codes stemmed from the revelation of the threat posed to their security by the British and American intelligence services. The British and American armed forces and security agencies had managed, despite financial stringencies and some official disinterest, to retain through the interwar period a rump of the extensive code breaking services established in the First World War.⁹⁵ The turning point for the was the 1931 revelation that, for over a decade, the USA and Great Britain had broken into existing Japanese codes and had been regularly reading the Japanese diplomatic, naval and military communications. This had significant impact in the early 1920s when the naval balance was settled at the Washington and London naval treaty conferences. The British and Americans had negotiated with the advantage of independently knowing Japan's 'bottom line', enabling them to corner Japan into agreeing to strict cuts to naval force strength—an outcome widely unpopular among the Japanese.⁹⁶

Already smarting under a number of real and perceived racial sleights, especially those emanating from its treatment at the Treaty of Versailles negotiations, which Japan perceived to have been shaped by European racism, the realisation by Japan's that its codes had been broken was the final straw. The diplomatic service and the armed forces brought in foreign experts and completely reworked the coding systems. The *Gaimusho* (Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs), which had been particularly 'stung' by the loss of face over the outcome of the naval treaty conferences, resorted to the latest

⁹⁴ Smith, *The Emperor's Codes*, pp. 314-315; Edward J. Drea, *MacArthur's Ultra: Codebreaking and the War against Japan, 1942-1945*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, USA, 1992, p. 7.

⁹⁵ Ian Pfennigwerth, *A Man of Intelligence: The Life of Captain Theodore Eric Nave, Australian Codebreaker Extraordinary*, Rosenberg Publishing, Dural, Australia, 2006, p. 96; Smith, *The Emperor's Codes*, pp. 14-16.

⁹⁶ David Kahn, *The Code Breakers: The Comprehensive History of Secret Communication from Ancient Times to the Internet*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, UK, 1996, pp. 5, 355-365.

mechanical encryption devices. The more traditional army and navy chose codebooks, often super enciphered, and accepted regular changes to the codebooks would provide the only practical security.⁹⁷

Ironically, the Gaimusho's advanced technological solution, rather than the use of traditional codebooks, was to prove a major weakness for them. The initial Type A enciphering machine of 1931 was 'broken' by the British Code & Cypher School (GC&CS) in late 1934, enabling the interception and reading of diplomatic messages during a critical period when Japan was preparing for the possibility of a war against the British Empire. The Type A machine was replaced by the Type B in 1939 but this was in turn 'broken' by the US Army in September 1940 during another critical period when Japan was preparing for possible war against both Great Britain and the USA.⁹⁸ Codenamed 'Purple' by the Americans, the Type B used six electromechanical stepping motors to effect its coding, unlike the electrical rotors of the Type A and the German Enigma. Although more complex, the Type B's steppers produced fewer encryption combinations which actually made it easier to break. Having 'broken' the Type B, the Americans then produced their own electromechanical 'Purple' unit, which replicated the Type B's process enabling them to decrypt Japanese diplomatic messages in 'real time'.⁹⁹

'Purple' and Magic

The US Army codenamed the intelligence gleaned from the Type B intercepts 'Magic'. The story goes the head of the intelligence section that 'broke' the machine, William Friedman, considered his staff to be 'magicians' for the ingenuity of their work and thereby their product was 'magic'. Japan's ambassador in Berlin, Oshima Hiroshi, used the Type B to convey to Tokyo detailed descriptions of German intentions, defences and technology in relation to the war in Europe.¹⁰⁰ Though he also extensively discussed Japan's intentions in the Far East, his lack of current understanding of the

⁹⁷ Kahn, *The Code Breakers*, pp. 355-365.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 46; Smith, *The Emperor's Codes*, p. 67.

⁹⁹ Smith, *The Emperor's Codes*, pp. 71-73.

¹⁰⁰ Kahn, *The Code Breakers*, pp. 26, 38, 508.

Japanese Government's planning saw his dispatches on this subject treated with caution by the Allies.¹⁰¹

The 'Purple' information revealed to the Americans the negotiating tactics and positions dictated to Japanese diplomats during the American-Japanese negotiations leading into the war, but not the specific intentions of the Japanese military.¹⁰² Mistranslations of the intercepted signals further corrupted the meanings of the diplomats' instructions.¹⁰³ The inherent weakness of 'Magic' intelligence was little could be gleaned from it about the political situation in Japan and even less about the military one. The Japanese military did not take the Ministry of Foreign Affairs into their confidence in planning for the war or later its execution. Their principal contact was the Liaison Conferences, established by Cabinet Order in late 1937 to link the Japanese government with the IJA and IJN commands for planning and policy decisions. These were held every few days, but in this 'meeting of minds' on policy (especially foreign policy) senior military and naval officers imparted minimal strategic information and did not impart any specific tactical information. Thus the Ministry was only able to dispatch what little the IJN and IJA would allow it to know, and correspondingly the value of the intelligence to the Allies was limited.¹⁰⁴ Hence, the 'Magic' intercepts warned the Allies of the impending war with Japan, but without specific knowledge of the war plans (the 'what, why, when, how, where or who'.)¹⁰⁵

The weakness of 'Purple' shows in a single intercept from the early days of the Pacific War, which is dissected here as both an example of the limitation of interpreted intelligence and of how the 'evidence' of the intelligence can be misconstrued by

¹⁰¹ Nobutaka Ike, *Japan's Decision for War: Records of the 1941 Policy Conferences*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, USA, 1967, pp. 36-38.

¹⁰² Smith, *The Emperor's Codes*, p. 73; Kahn, *The Code Breakers*, p. 31.

¹⁰³ John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1936-1945*, Random House, Toronto, Canada, 1970, pp. 167-188.

¹⁰⁴ Ike, *Japan's Decision for War*, pp. xv-xviii; Kahn, *The Code Breakers*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁵ John Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded: The Secret History of American Intelligence and the Japanese Navy in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, USA, 1995, p. 165; Ken Kotani, *Japanese Intelligence in WWII: Successes and Failures*, 2009, pp. 20-21, www.nids.go.jp/english/publications/kiyo/pdf/bulletin_e2009_2.pdf (accessed 6 May 2011).

historians. On 18 April 1942 the US War Department issued an intelligence bulletin including a decrypted signal, which five days earlier, revealed Eugen Ott, the German Ambassador to Japan, had directly asked Japanese Foreign Minister Togo Shigenori whether Japan's future attacks were to be against India or Australia. He suggested, judging from Japanese operations to date, it could be India. Also recorded was Togo's reply that Japan had opened attacks on Ceylon and would gradually extend operations to western Indian seas, and 'he presumed this would no doubt coincide with Germany's wishes'.¹⁰⁶ Historians have repetitively used these 'Magic' intercepts as 'proof positive' Japan had no intention of invading Australia in 1942.¹⁰⁷ However, the evidence supporting this position is weak. The first point is it was Ott, not Togo, who suggested future attacks would centre on India rather than on Australia. Togo, with classic Japanese circumlocution, actually avoided either agreeing or disagreeing. He knew the Germans desired attacks on the main British interests in the Far East, especially India. From June 1940, Germany had pressed Japan to attack Singapore, hoping to draw British naval forces from the Mediterranean and Atlantic, thereby improving the Germans' ability to invade Great Britain. The IJA and IJN had remained noncommittal until shortly before the start of the Pacific War.¹⁰⁸

Just over a year before the Ott intercepts, Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Matsuoka Yosuke had signed the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact. Japan was massively relieved by the pact, with the IJA observing it was currently not in their country's interest to follow the Germans into war against the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Matsuoka then repeatedly assured Ott that in the event of war between Germany and Russia, Japan would repeal the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact and attack the Soviet Union from the

¹⁰⁶ See Appendix B.

¹⁰⁷ Peter Stanley, 'He's (not) coming south. The invasion that wasn't', conference paper, 'Remembering 1942,' Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia, 1 June 2002, http://www.awm.gov.au/events/conference/2002/stanley_paper.pdf (accessed 7 January 2012); Peter Stanley, 'He's (not) coming south: The invasion that wasn't', in Steven Bullard, and Keiko Tamura (eds.), *From a Hostile Shore: Australia and Japan at War in New Guinea*, AWM, Canberra, Australia, 2004, pp. 44-56; Glyn Harper, 'Threat Perception and Politics: The Deployment of Australian and New Zealand Ground Forces in the Second World War', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, 20, 1992, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Deakin and Storry, *The Case of Richard Sorge*, p. 223.

east. In reality, Japan had little intention of doing so.¹⁰⁹ Matsuoka's remark that 'he presumed this would no doubt coincide with Germany's wishes' was only partially diplomatic smoke and mirrors.¹¹⁰ It covered an evolving two-phase strategy that might coincidentally have met Germany's needs.

JN-25 and the 'Fog of War': Coral Sea and Midway

A further challenge for the Allies in 1941-42 was that much intelligence gathered in this period was from low-level 'administrational' codes, such as the 'Dockyard Code' of the IJN or Water Transportation code of the IJA, using radio directional triangulation of transmitters and 'fingerprinting'. This information, interpreted and collated, provided actual or intended locations of individual units (ships, aircraft, groupings or bases), and sometimes unit strengths and situations, but not their purpose and plans. Purpose only came from high level codes such as 'Purple', Flag Officer (Admiral's) Codes, and to a degree the code series known by the Americans as JN-25.

The best description of the importance of the JN-25 code series is in the USN GYP-1 'bible', published in July 1943, which states: 'JN-25 is the largest of the Japanese naval cryptographic systems. From sixty to seventy-five per cent of each day's radio intercepts are in this system. The system is used by all man-of-war [warships], shore stations, commands and bureaus for the administration of the Navy. It is, therefore, a fruitful source of information.'¹¹¹ The first significant Japanese naval code was their 'D' code, which was more commonly known by its USN identification as JN-25.¹¹² JN-25, frequently quoted by authors, was largely an administration code rather than a strategic or planning vehicle. The Flag Officer code carried command discussion, but as

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 224-226.

¹¹⁰ See Appendix B.

¹¹¹ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group (RG) 38, Commander Naval Security Group, Boxes 16 and 18, File 3222/65. Note: GYP-1 'Bible' was a publication by OP-20-3-GYP Office of Chief of Naval Operations, 20th Division of the Office of Naval Communications, G Section – Communications Security (Code Named NEGAT).

¹¹² JN-25 or twenty fifth Japanese naval code studied by the USN.

it was used relatively infrequently, it failed to provide the volume of material needed by cryptanalysts to reconstruct its codebooks.¹¹³

The Americans' massive effort in 1942 to understand JN-25 began to reap rewards as lines of code missing from the JN-25B 'book'—an incomplete record given to the Americans by the British Far East Combined Bureau (FECB) based in Singapore until its fall—was steadily filled in. An accumulation of all the information gathered from all the sources available to the Allies enabled logic, experience and sheer 'leaps of faith' to define further code groups. The challenge for the Americans in early 1942, after Japan's initial successes in Malaya, the Philippines, the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), New Britain, and New Guinea, was to determine where Japan might strike next. Despite intercepting masses of 'Magic' messages and partially reading many JN-25B ones, the USN intelligence on Japanese intentions was so limited in April that they could only really guess there were no pending operations in the mid-Pacific or north Pacific. Attention therefore turned to the South Pacific. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, US Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC) risked, on intelligence deduced from 'Magic' and other intercepts, committing all of his fleet aircraft carriers south to the Coral Sea, to counter an anticipated Japanese move on Port Moresby. It was not until 9 May 1942 and further signals intercepts, that USN intelligence officers were able to conclude the south-west Pacific danger had been overestimated relevant to a major Japanese operation pending in the mid-Pacific—the Battle of Midway.¹¹⁴ As late as 12 May, Admiral Ernest King, Commander in Chief, USN (COMINCH), informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington that, in his view, Japan would try again to take Port Moresby, or alternatively New Caledonia or Fiji.¹¹⁵ Therefore, the focus stayed on the South-West Pacific Area (SWPA). However, the only IJN units in the SWPA at the time were those temporarily committed to the Port Moresby operation, which the

¹¹³ Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded*, p. 82

¹¹⁴ H. P. Willmott, *The Barrier and the Javelin: Japanese and Allied Strategies, February to June 1942*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, USA, 1989, pp. 291-292.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

Japanese Combined Fleet rated as a secondary objective; the majority of IJN warships were concentrating for the Midway operation in the mid-Pacific.¹¹⁶

The Battle of the Coral Sea in early 1942 thwarted the first attempt by Japanese forces to take Port Moresby. It was a tactical loss for the Americans and only a desperate strategic draw overall. The Americans' cryptography and direction finding had told them approximately what warships the enemy were sending, probably where to, and with their intentions deducible. Japanese losses at the Coral Sea did affect their margins for the coming Battle of Midway, as the vessels (particularly aircraft carriers) used there were also assigned to Midway. However, the odds for Midway were heavily stacked against the USN except for a narrow edge forged by a combination of their own massive electronic intercept effort and an unintended intelligence gift from Japan. Instead of sailing from Japan with the complete plan, which had been the case for the Pearl Harbor attack, the IJN assembled the Combined Fleet from a number of locations with an incomplete plan for the invasion of Midway Island, north-west of Hawaii. A tight operational schedule forced the orders to be encrypted in JN-25B and radioed to units.¹¹⁷ Timely interpretation of codes with incomplete books required massive volumes of messages. The 'Midway' orders signal suite was massive. During the administrative preparation for Midway the Japanese Combined Fleet sent over 1,500 high priority signals, which was a communications security farce.¹¹⁸ The Americans' 'Hypo' station at Honolulu was able—by a combination of experience, existing knowledge, guesswork and brute force mechanical processing—to interpret enough of the IJN Midway signals traffic to reconstruct the Japanese plan of attack. However, Washington based naval intelligence officers did not readily share Hypo's 'guesswork' conclusions, creating a dangerous schism of opinions for King and Nimitz to draw their conclusions from, especially as the balance of forces favoured Japan.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 294.

¹¹⁷ Willmott, *The Barrier and the Javelin*, p. 298.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 119-120.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 172-173, 299-300; Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded*, p. 385; see also Appendix D.

By the end of May 1942 the USN gained useful intelligence from only one in ten JN-25B messages intercepted.¹²⁰ This left them with more gaps than intelligence.¹²¹ Senior ‘Hypo’ intelligence staff continued arguing the details of the Japanese messages’ meanings regarding Midway.¹²² After presenting Nimitz with the vital information he fought midway with, Lt. Cmdr. Rochefort his senior intelligence officer in Hawaii, informed him the Japanese navy had suddenly completely changed its codebooks and super encryption to a new standard, ‘JN-25C’, and nothing more could be gained for weeks. The Allies were largely back to square one.¹²³ Fortunately, the key information required by the Americans in relation to Midway had already been gleaned before the code change. The USN was therefore able to achieve a significant naval victory at Midway on 4-7 June—having benefitted from an element of luck with the intelligence gathering in the lead up to the battle.

The lack of JN-25C intelligence persisted through the next phase of operations during the crucial initial South Pacific battles for Guadalcanal, in the Solomon Islands, in August 1942. This period saw the USN fighting largely blind to the IJN’s intentions.¹²⁴ The US Marine Corps (USMC) captured a copy of the JN-25C codebook after landing at Guadalcanal, but a week later the Japanese navy switched to ‘JN-25D’.¹²⁵ Again, the lights dimmed. For some time the Americans had virtually no knowledge of the IJN’s intentions and no knowledge at all of IJA’s intentions either. At the same time, the Americans’ aircraft carrier strength was reduced by repair and servicing requirements and the USN went through most of October 1942 with only a single fleet aircraft carrier operational in the Pacific theatre.¹²⁶ Indeed, for a brief period at the end of October and the start of November, the Americans had *none at all*. This is contrary to the commonly

¹²⁰ Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded*, p. 305. Approximately 1,000 JN-25B messages were intercepted daily. Only those appearing interesting were immediately worked on, meaning that the ‘hit’ rate was probably better than 10%.

¹²¹ Willmott, *The Barrier and the Javelin*, p. 304.

¹²² Smith, *The Emperor’s Codes*, pp. 138-140.

¹²³ Willmott, *The Barrier and the Javelin*, p. 304.

¹²⁴ Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded*, p. 380.

¹²⁵ Smith, *The Emperor’s Codes*, pp. 174-175.

¹²⁶ See Appendix D.

held belief that the USN always had at least one fleet carrier operational at all times. In spite of losses at Midway, the IJN had a mixture of seven fleet carrier units, at various levels of operational effectiveness, for the June-December period of 1942. Only the Japanese recoil from their Midway defeat protected the Americans from a possible naval setback.¹²⁷

Despite the prodigious efforts of the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to collect as many Japanese signals and transmissions as possible, the benefits were severely constricted by the inability during 1942 to decrypt enough contents of the messages intercepted to understand Japan's intentions. In the case of the IJN Flag Officer's Code and the IJA Command Codes, success was non-existent.¹²⁸ Even the momentary brilliant flash of the Midway decryption was a lonely illumination. In relation to New Zealand, it needs to be understood from the above that during the first half of 1942 the Americans knew little for certain about the intentions Japan —and New Zealand knew even less.

¹²⁷ Gordon Prange with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *Miracle at Midway*, Penguin, London UK, 1983, p. 175.

¹²⁸ Edward J. Drea, 'Were the Japanese Army Codes Secure?', *Cryptologia*, Volume 19, Issue 2, 1995, pp. 113-136.

CHAPTER 3

The view across Tokyo Bay

Japan and the Onset of the Pacific War

The Japanese military are extremely warlike

The Army fights the Navy

The Navy fights the Army

If they still have any energy left they fight the Americans.

(Japanese wartime graffiti, supplied by historian G. Bain)

Japan was the most crucial player in the cast of 1942. Yet, within New Zealand, indeed within the Allies, it was the player about whom the least was known. This chapter's purpose is to illuminate Japan's rise to a Pacific power along with its intentions, its propellants and its capabilities in the drive south towards New Zealand. Special attention is paid to the national 'power structure' and the politico-military 'personality' that so coloured the Japanese decision process and its military performance. This structure directly affected Japan's military capacity and thereby its level of real threat to Australasia.

The Birth of an Enemy

Japan emerged in 1867, embryo like, from the enforced isolation of the stultifying Shogun period without effective government or armed forces. The Meiji Restoration was not so much a revolution as an adjustment of authority, accompanied by a limited civil war. The objective of the ruling class was to prevent Japan suffering the dismemberment that China had begun to endure. The Japanese established a modern nation state with a military capable of balancing the force able to be exerted by those Western nations showing an interest in the region, while at the same time preserving the

plutocratic integrity of the Japanese state.¹²⁹ In this period, the descendants of the fabled Samurai warriors of the ‘heroic’ period lost their traditional place in society, becoming administrators, landed gentry, or ‘police’ used to enforce authority.¹³⁰

The aggression of Japan in the Second World War was not simply the result of policies of the period but could be said to be in the very nature of the new Japanese state. Historian John W. Dower considered the militant politics and authoritarian structure leading Japan on the path to war in the 1930s was actually a product of the ‘incomplete nature’ of the Meiji constitution.¹³¹ When drawn up, during the Meiji Restoration, the constitution avoided the Emperor exercising direct command of the state; instead it made Japan a bureaucratic rather than a constitutional monarchy, with the Emperor’s presence merely legitimising the bureaucrats’ actions. However, Articles XI and XII of the constitution placed the armed forces outside of both the Cabinet’s and the civil bureaucracy’s control. Cabinet Ministers for the Army and Navy were put forward by the armed forces and ‘appointed’ by the prime minister, but while members of the government, they were only administrative representatives of the armed forces, not their actual controllers. In theory, the IJA and IJN served the nation state, with the Emperor as the supreme commander. In reality the individual service chiefs controlled the armed forces independent of the government and the Emperor. The armed forces ministers were serving officers whose resignation could collapse a government. Thus the armed forces, though funded by the government, were in reality independent of its authority.¹³²

Being of such recent birth, both of Japan’s armed forces needed to provide themselves with a public persona and historic legitimacy. They clothed themselves in the legends of the Samurai and in effect ordained themselves as the ‘high priests’ of the Emperor myth; like Christian priests, they ‘knew’ the will of their god emperor without the

¹²⁹ W. G. Beasley, *The History of Modern Japan*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, UK, 1962, pp. 98-136.

¹³⁰ Stephen Turnbull, *Samurai: The Warrior Tradition*, Arms and Armour, London, UK, 1996, p. 134.

¹³¹ John W. Dower, *Ways of Forgetting, Ways of Remembering: Japan in the Modern World*, New Press, New York, USA, 2012, p. 38.

¹³² Stephan Large, *Emperor Hirohito and Showa Japan: A Political Biography*, Routledge, New York, USA, 1992, pp. 10-11.

necessity of having to always ask.¹³³ However, the IJA and IJN were never intimate or cooperative. The *Choshu* and *Satsuma* were two of the principal clans of Japan, who fluctuated between being mortal enemies and careful conspirators. The *Choshu* became the font of the IJA and the *Satsuma* the IJN. The animosity between the clans flowed on into animosity between the IJA and IJN, seen principally at the higher echelons and creating deeper resentments than simple class and budgetary rivalries.¹³⁴

Five wars tested the Japanese military in its first 50 years of their existence. The most significant actions included the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), and the siege of Tsingtao (1914), the latter being an Anglo-Japanese capture of the German controlled port of Tsingtao, China at the start of the First World War. Though the IJA and IJN ‘won’ each and developed a belief in their invincibility, the belief was not entirely justified. Although the armed forces were on the whole well trained and extremely well motivated, in the years after these conflicts their command, discipline and equipment failed to progress in line with that of the West and the Russians (and later Soviets). Command and discipline problems were evident at all levels of the forces (especially among junior officers) and originated from the fractured structure of Japanese society. This was exacerbated by the financial stresses placed on the Japanese nation during the Great Depression, starting in 1929, which forced the government to attempt to reign in military expenditure. However the government’s actions were perceived by the senior echelons of the IJA and IJN as a threat to their treasured independence and contributed to major acts of deliberate disobedience including the Mukden ‘Incident’ of 1931—a barely covert simulation of a guerrilla attack on a Japanese owned railway, contrived by the Kwantung Army Group (KAG) of the IJA to ‘legitimise’ its taking over the Chinese province of Manchuria. The KAG proceeded to run the province as a virtual principality, but with evolving support from the Army Chiefs of Staff.¹³⁵

¹³³ Beasley, *The History of Modern Japan*, p. 131.

¹³⁴ Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito, and the Drama of Modern Japan*, The Overlook Press, Woodstock, USA, 2006, p. 138.

¹³⁵ P. Duus and J. W. Hall, *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Volume 6, *The Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1989, p. 294); W. G. Beasley, *The Modern History of Japan*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, UK, 1971, pp. 242-243.

Command Structure and War Strategy

The Japanese forces inherited a command structure peculiarity from the feudal period known as *gekokujo*, which Confucian ideas of leadership reinforced. *Gekokujo* implied the manipulation of superiors by subordinates, usually between officers. It suggests those nominally responsible for command were expressing the ideas of their staff rather than their own and the staff expressed their views with the understanding they would be followed. Simply put, the higher command frequently acted as ‘puppets’ of their subordinates. While commanders of other countries’ forces were ‘advised’ by their staffs, the Japanese staff approached giving directives to their superiors. This made middle ranks, particularly those involved in planning, disproportionately powerful.¹³⁶ *Gekokujo* was to significantly display its power during the 1930s and 1940s. Admiral Nagano Osami, head of the *Gunreibu* (IJN General Staff, which was responsible for naval operations and planning) during the period April 1941 to February 1944, gave a graphic example of *gekokujo* by noting he was ready to follow one hundred per cent of the recommendations presented by his subordinates of captain rank because he believed they had studied and discussed the particular issue.¹³⁷ *Gekokujo* constituted a particular threat to Australasia as it was middle-ranking staff in the IJN who most strongly promoted the invasion of Australia and the isolation of New Zealand.

The IJA and IJN suffered the same factionism and indiscipline splitting the Japanese political establishment. Beasley suggests the expansion of the war in China was conceived by the IJA staff to distract junior officer ‘hotheads’ still planning revolt at home, even after the defeat of the Kodo extremists in 1935-36.¹³⁸ This resulted in a shift from defending the Manchurian borders against the Russians to war with China.

¹³⁶ Beasley, *The Modern History of Japan*, pp. 20-25. Kodo or ‘Imperial Way’, sometimes ‘Showa Restoration,’ were groupings of extremist Imperial Japanese Army officers, of Lieutenant-Colonel rank or below, who advocated a Spartan-style, militaristic-agrarian society for Japan. During the 1930s they undertook a number of assassinations of political and zaibatsu (industrialist) leaders as well as open armed rebellion in attempts to impose their philosophy.

¹³⁷ Arthur J. Marder, *Old Friends, New Enemies: The Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy*, Volume 1, *Strategic Illusions, 1936-1941*, Clarendon Press, London, UK, 1981, p. 159.

¹³⁸ Beasley, *The Modern History of Japan*, pp. 252-253 (IJA), pp.242-244 (IJN).

However, while Japan had the trappings of a military dictatorship, it lacked an actual dictator; in fact, it never had an actual war leader *per se*. The historian A. J. P. Taylor summed up the situation with his still apt observation, ‘there was no Japanese warlord, no single figure who led Japan into war, who directed the war, who made the decisions ...’¹³⁹ Tobe Ryoichi, Director of the inter-university International Research Centre for Japanese Studies, proposed General Tojo Hideki, when he was Prime Minister, as the main candidate. However, he conceded Tojo offered no strategic vision and did not even possess a firm hand on the IJA General Staff. The various leaders of military, political and industrial groupings, lacking a coordinating central leader, ferociously defended their territories regarding all other parties as threats rather than compatriots.¹⁴⁰ This constituted a major weakening of Japan’s ability to successfully pursue total war over a prolonged period.

The ‘war strategy’ Japan developed in the 1930s, often portrayed as IJA ‘Strike North’ (*Hokushinron*) and IJN ‘Strike South’ (*Nanshinron*) but this is an oversimplification. The Japanese Kwantung Army’s seizure of Manchuria met part of their desire to expand Japan’s empire. The opportunity arose through the political void left by the 1928 assassination of Chinese warlord Marshal Chang (Zhang Zuolin). Japan was cautious of risking this vast territorial gain by pushing further north and having to confront the Soviet Union.¹⁴¹ Their real target was China itself—as it had been from early in the Meiji state’s existence.¹⁴² Historian Rana Mitter, a specialist on the war in China, suggests neither China nor Japan wanted war in 1937. They both expected war at some

¹³⁹ Tobe Ryoichi, ‘Tojo Hideki as a leader in war against Britain’, research paper presented at 1st International Forum on War History, *The War Leadership – Comparative Study on Japan and the United Kingdom in World War II*, National Institute of Defence Studies, Tokyo, Japan, 2002, www.nids.go.jp/english/event/forum/index.html (accessed 12 May 2012).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Bill Yenne, *The Imperial Japanese Army: The Invincible Years 1941–42*, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2014, pp. 42-43.

¹⁴² Edward J. Drea, Leavenworth Papers No. 1 & 2, *The Nomonhan Campaign* (May-September, 1939), US Army Command and General Staff College, Carlisle, USA, 1981, see <http://www.dtic.mil/tri/fulltext/u2/9322749.pdf> (accessed 10 November 2011); *Judgement of the IMTFE* (English Translation): Chapter V, Japanese Aggression Against China, Sections III to VII. <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/PTO/IMTFE/IMTFE-5a.html> (accessed 5 November 2011).

point—the Japanese to conquer China, the Chinese to resist—but were not quite ready.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, Japan’s obsession with China both as a perceived possession and as an economic lifeline compelled the IJA to continue to invest strength and reputation there. Having already seized Manchuria, Japan launched the Second Sino-Japanese War in July 1937. By the end of the year, the IJA had 600,000 troops, or 16 divisions, committed to the war. In 1938, after doubling its draft, Japan had increased its military presence in China to 34 divisions, still with no clear sign of winning the war.¹⁴⁴ This expenditure in China became a major factor in the IJA’s reluctance to invest heavily in ‘going south,’ yet the Army recognised it too had to contribute to any southward advance. The IJA blamed its failure to subdue China on the West’s support for it. A critical concern was the war supplies and other aid Western nations, particularly the USA, began sending to China, mostly through Burma and Indo-China.

The situation in China was complicated by a Japanese-Soviet conflict in 1938. Possessive of their new lands, the IJA reacted violently when, after several previous border clashes, a Soviet Mongolian patrol strayed across the border in mid-1938. Still emboldened by their nation’s apparent success in the 1904-05 war against Imperial Russia, the Kwangtung Army pressed the Foreign Office to deliver a demand for the Soviets to vacate the border area. The Soviets reacted by occupying it.¹⁴⁵ Underestimating the Soviet forces, the Kwantung Army subsequently escalated the fighting but encountered a force under a promising new Soviet commander, Lieutenant General Georgi Zhukov, who employed integrated battlefield tactics.¹⁴⁶ The Soviets decisively routed the Japanese forces and pushed into Manchuria but stopped at the line they had previously claimed. Knowing from their spy ring in Tokyo that Japan was desperate to end the fighting, the Soviets offered a ceasefire, which was willingly accepted and came into effect on 15 September.¹⁴⁷ Japan never again pressed the

¹⁴³ Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China’s World War II, 1937-1945*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, USA, 2013, pp. 79-91.

¹⁴⁴ Edward J. Drea, *Japan’s Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, USA, 2009, pp. 197-198.

¹⁴⁵ Drea, *The Nomonhan Campaign*.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; Deakin and Storry, *The Case of Richard Sorge*, pp. 202-220.

Soviets and would sign a Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union in April 1941, lessening the northern theatre threat and facilitating ‘Strike South’ to achieve their country’s economic needs.¹⁴⁸ The defeat by the Soviets’ at *Nomonhan* reduced Japan’s ‘Strike North’ policy to largely a pipe dream. It also curtailed the Kwantung Army’s independence from the Tokyo High Command and largely stifled *Gekokujo* within the IJA.

Oil, Steel and *Lebensraum*

The IJN’s great need was a guaranteed oil supply and a barrier from behind which it could defend Japan’s proposed new empire. As the West began to use embargoes, including on oil and scrap metals, as part of its attempt to pressure Japan out of China, Japan’s hardening attitude allowed it to see the seizure of oil supplies and other raw materials from the Western colonies as a legitimate action, indeed a matter of national survival. While the IJA had only a limited need for oil and iron, it recognised that the IJN could not protect the Japanese nation and its conquests without access to these resources. The IJA was initially prepared to go to war with the West to back the IJN’s (and its own) need for oil but only as far as the projected new southern defensive line, which on paper stretched through northern New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands. It then intended largely leaving the Navy to manage the area and return to its war in China in pursuit of Japan’s own *Lebensraum*.¹⁴⁹ It should be remembered South-East Asia has oil resources, but no iron ore. The main deposits of iron ore in the region were in China. Most of the iron ore areas taken by the IJA in China at this time were low grade and the iron ore extracted had only limited use in steel making. Quality iron ore could only be procured from areas of China still held by the Chinese nationalist

¹⁴⁸ Tanaka Hiromi, ‘Imperial Army’s Possible Advance on Australia’, seminar paper, Remembering the War in New Guinea, project, Australian National University, 19-21 October 2000.

¹⁴⁹ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/hitler_lebensraum_01.shtml (accessed 13 January 2016). The German word *Lebensraum* (living space) is used here as it most accurately describes Japan’s actions as a reflection of the German’s philosophy, actions and opportunity.

forces, the Kuomintang; alternatively, Australia had major quality iron ore deposits, which Japan had worked on obtaining through legitimate trade.¹⁵⁰

On 25 June 1940 the IJA's General Staff, looking to take advantage of the fall of France and the mounting pressure on Great Britain, accepted plans to invade the West's colonies in South-East Asia providing it did not mean war with the USA. To achieve a southward advance, the IJA required the full support of the IJN. Drea claims the IJN only agreed to the plan on 3 June 1940 on the proviso the USA was also attacked. The IJN recognised that control of the Pacific required naval defeats of the other main navies in the region—and the USN was the main opposing naval force. The IJA recognised Japan's need for assured supplies of raw materials, especially oil, but primarily it wanted to choke off China's supplies and force her capitulation. Drea succinctly encapsulates the situation: 'The IJA wanted to end the war in China quickly in order to go south in order to win the China War.'¹⁵¹

In late 1940, the German raider *Atlantis* intercepted a British registered merchant ship, SS *Automedon*, off the Sumatran coast and captured confidential British papers including a report by the British Chiefs of Staff on the situation in the Far East. This report, which was passed to the Japanese, contained a policy position to avoid war with Japan for as long as possible. While this incident did not precipitate Japan's decision to 'go south', knowing the British were reluctant to fight an Asia-Pacific war definitely made it easier for Japan to commit to one.¹⁵² Vice Admiral Kondo Nobutake, Deputy Chief of the Japanese Naval General Staff, after reading the principal *Automedon* papers, expressed his gratitude to the Germans and commented: 'Such a significant weakening of the British Empire could not have been identified from outward appearances.'¹⁵³ He was particularly interested in the declaration by the British Cabinet it would not go to war with Japan if it occupied French Indo-China or northern

¹⁵⁰ Bob Wurth, *Saving Australia*, Lothian, Melbourne, Australia, 2006, pp. 36-40.

¹⁵¹ Wurth, *Saving Australia*, pp. 210-211.

¹⁵² Eiji Seki, *Mrs Ferguson's Teaset, Japan and the Second World War: The Global Consequences Following Germany's Sinking of the SS *Automedon* in 1940*, Global Oriental, Folkestone, UK, 2007, pp. 93-94.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

Thailand. At the same time the Imperial Naval Staff became ‘convinced a war with the USA would not materialise’ and gave their support to the move south.¹⁵⁴

The southern thrust is usually, and to a degree rightly attributed to Japan’s need for raw materials and the increasing resistance of the West to supply them. However, the fact the IJA’s General Staff had accepted plans to seize the South-East Asian colonies of European nations shows a mixture of opportunism and the planning for a near self-sufficient empire rather than simply resource desperation. The Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere was partly devised by Japan to ‘sell’ its occupation to the peoples of South-East Asia was not just a daydream but serious planning for an empire based on the British example.¹⁵⁵ There was a degree of qualified altruism in the Japan’s call for ‘Asia for the Asians’ but it certainly struck a chord with the Burmese, Malays and Indonesians.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, like Britain, Japan saw itself as the ‘parent’ of the sphere and its ultimate controller.

While Japan saw a southern thrust as its principle chance of creating its own British style empire, the West’s reaction to its attempt to seize China began to close down its access to resources and threatened its plans. The process driven by both sides moved through 1941 with the West’s embargoes and restrictions herding Japan towards the cliff of war and Japan’s obsessive narcissism propelling it over the edge.¹⁵⁷ Western analysts believed Japan could not win an Asia-Pacific War and therefore such a war was easy to dismiss. It was not until the northern summer of 1941 that British and American diplomats in Japan began to fear Japan’s potential, under massive international, domestic economic and nationalistic pressure, to make a wild move which could not be anticipated by the rational, results driven culture of Westerners. They began warning their respective governments of the growing threat.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 94.

¹⁵⁵ Yenne, *The Imperial Japanese Army*, pp. 16-19.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 76-77.

¹⁵⁸ Seki, *Mrs Ferguson’s Teaset, Japan and the Second World War*, p. 92.

Planning the Boundaries of Empire

The boundary of the Japanese thrust south is usually described as a line arching from mid-Burma through the Netherlands East Indies, western New Guinea, and across to the Marshall Islands, which Japan titled the 'National Defence Zone'.¹⁵⁹ This was the area that had to be captured and held to allow the proposed empire to function and to be defended. Japan also planned to seize the Gilbert, Bismarck and Solomon Islands as part of an outer barrier. Almost as soon as the Pacific war started it realised the Fijian, Samoan and New Caledonia Island groups would also be essential if they were to dominate and neutralise Australasia so as to prevent an Allied reconquest to be based there. By mid-1942, however, the operational and command arms of the IJN realised the failure to inflict a mortal blow on the USN at Pearl Harbor, the propaganda victory of the Americans' 'Doolittle Raid' on Tokyo,¹⁶⁰ the Allied foiling of their Port Moresby landing, and the American victory at Midway made the capture of the outer barrier simply impractical.¹⁶¹

It is important to differentiate between tactical and strategic planning. Each Japanese service, especially the IJN, produced intricate, enormously detailed tactical plans full of precise timings. Their collective strategic planning was more successive processions of delusion, puffery, and propaganda.¹⁶² It is the strategic planning which would constitute

¹⁵⁹ Denys Bevan, *United States Forces in New Zealand, 1942-1945*, Macpherson, Alexandra, NZ, 1992, p. 9.

¹⁶⁰ Tomoyuki Wada, 'Japanese Perspective of Total War', research paper, 10th International Forum on War History, *The Pacific War as Total War*, National Institute of Defence Studies, Tokyo, Japan, 2011, p. 147. See www.nids.go.jp/english/event/forum/pdf/2011/17.pdf. Note: The Doolittle Raid was a USAAF operation to bomb Tokyo. Sixteen B-25 medium bombers, under the Command of Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle flew off the carrier USN Hornet 18 April 1942. The raid did minimal structural damage to Tokyo but caused a monumental change in the Japanese High Command's attitudes. The IJN command came in behind the Midway attack, as did the IJA who also allocated troops to training for an invasion of Hawaii. Expansion of the Japanese Empire's proposed boundary was extended to include Fiji, Samoa and New Caledonia and three wings of IJA fighter aircraft were returned to the Japanese mainland for its defence.

¹⁶¹ Bevan, *United States Forces in New Zealand, 1942-1945*, p. 6.

¹⁶² Jonathan Parshall and Anthony P. Tully, *Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway*, Potomac Books, Washington, DC, USA, 2005, p. 412.

a danger to Australasia. Japan entered the Pacific War—even southern Indo-China, in the lead up to the Pacific War—basically without clear plans of what to do after ‘Phase One’ (the capture of those areas comprising the ‘National Defence Zone’) was complete. The sheer vagueness of the guidelines adopted at the Liaison Conference of 27 July 1940 allowed almost any action to be included or excluded at the whim of the respective service chiefs. By November 1941, the Japanese government had settled on a broad area to be captured, promulgated in Combined Operations Order No. 1:

The Areas which are to be rapidly occupied:

- (1) Areas of Eastern New Guinea, New Britain, Fiji and Samoa.
- (2) Aleutian and Midway area.
- (3) Areas of the Andaman Islands (Indian Ocean).
- (4) Important points in the Australian area ... With the cooperation of the South Seas Detachment and the Navy we will occupy Port Moresby and ... Tulagi. We will establish air bases and strengthen our air operations in the Australian area.’¹⁶³

The concept for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which was to be established with the conquering of this area, was agreed 2 July 1941. Its breadth eventually drew India and Australia, even Hawaii and New Zealand, into its proposed shadow.¹⁶⁴ The military strategy was the means of establishing a regional sphere of influence, offering Japan to the peoples of Asia as a mentor, leader and alternative to the West. It promoted both the traditions of Japan and its modernity, emphasising its mechanisation as equal to, or better than the West, justifying Japan’s claimed right to lead Asia. Even the arch-conservatives of the Japanese armed forces treasured the ‘modernity’ of their forces and equipment, perceiving these as being able to achieve Japan’s political aims.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Bevan, *United States Forces in New Zealand, 1942-1945*, p. 23. Bevan’s book was written from notes by Lieutenant Douglas Rubb, USN Reserve, who was directed by COMSOPAC at war’s end to replace the original historical officer, Lieutenant Commander James A Michener, USN, in researching and writing the history of the US armed forces in New Zealand during World War II.

¹⁶⁴ Keiichiro Komatsu, *Origins of the Pacific War and the Importance of ‘Magic’*, St Martins Press, New York, USA, 1999, pp. 218-219; also Parshall and Tully, *Shattered Sword*, p. 19.

¹⁶⁵ Dower, *War Without Mercy*, pp. 87, 100.

Invasion, MacArthur, and other Dangers

General Douglas MacArthur was the commander of beleaguered American and Filipino forces in the Philippines until ordered to command Allied forces assembling in the south-west Pacific. The Japanese military expected MacArthur to attempt to escape from the Philippines to Hawaii. His escape instead to Australia in March 1942 focused Japan's attention there and to a lesser degree towards New Zealand. The Japanese military had simply not anticipated an early Allied counter offensive to start from Australia. While the IJN did anticipate needing to protect the southern flank of the 'National Defence Zone', they had not foreseen the American build up in Australia and the main counter attack coming from this 'flank', especially in New Guinea. The Japanese high command could not ignore MacArthur because his presence and the loosely associated Allied build up in Australia became major influences forcing them to flesh out the planning for their 'Second Phase'.¹⁶⁶

The Japanese military's intentions in regard to Australia and New Zealand are today a minefield of agendas. Those historians and other writers who believe that Japan intended to invade at least Australia and those who deny such intentions each take much the same basic facts and dress them in their own uniforms. Every 'fact' however comes with a less often extrapolated historical context. An example is found in the official history of the Royal Australian Navy in which historian G. Hermon Gill quotes the journalist Richard Hughes' last interview with General Tojo Hideki.¹⁶⁷ During the interview Hughes asked Tojo if Japan planned the invasion of Australia or New Zealand. Tojo replied that they had neither the troops nor resources to consider an invasion. He informed Hughes they intended to raid northern Australia by air 'but actual physical invasion—no, at no time.' In contrast, Prince Higashikuni¹⁶⁸ notes in his published diary that in February 1942 he suggested to Tojo (then Japanese Prime

¹⁶⁶ Parshall and Tully, *Shattered Sword*, pp. 400-401.

¹⁶⁷ G. Hermon Gill, *Australia in the War of 1939-1945*, Series 2 (Navy), Volume I, *The Royal Australian Navy, 1939-1942*, AWM, Canberra, Australia, 1957, p. 643.

¹⁶⁸ General Prince Higashikuni Naruhiko was a Japanese imperial prince, a career officer in the Imperial Japanese Army, rising to general and commanding the General Defence Command of IJA from 1941 to 1944. He was also the 43rd Japanese Prime Minister and the last in wartime (17 August 1945 to 9 October 1945).

Minister and Army Minister) that Japan should, at that advantageous moment, negotiate peace with Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and the Western Allies. Tojo outright rejected such actions, reportedly saying: 'I think we will have few problems occupying not only Java and Sumatra but also Australia if things go on like this. We shouldn't think about peace at this time.'¹⁶⁹ These quotations display the contradictory and often uncertain evidence surrounding the question as to whether Japan seriously intended to invade any part of mainland Australia. Placing both quotations in context shows the first was made after Tojo was condemned to death by the International Military Tribunal Far East (IMTFE) for waging aggressive war (the primary charge amongst a total of seven charges) and shortly before his execution,¹⁷⁰ and the second while the siege of Singapore was still in progress. Hughes did not indicate whether he thought Tojo was setting the record straight on the eve of his death, attempting to disprove the IMTFE's decision (thereby saving face for posterity) or was showing the wisdom of hindsight. The Higashikuni diary does not disclose whether the Prince thought Tojo was serious or just carried away on the tide of victories.

Even while Singapore was under siege, Japanese Prime Minister Tojo was alluding to an invasion of Australia.¹⁷¹ Meanwhile, Lieutenant General Yamashita Tomoyuki, commander of the IJA 25th Army during the Malayan campaign, after the capture of Malaya and Singapore became keen to press on to Australia.¹⁷² He explained to John Dean Potter (an American historian who interviewed him shortly before his execution) that: 'Why there was hardly enough Australians to have organised an effective resistance to the Japanese Army. All they could ever hope to do was make a guerrilla resistance in the bush. With even Sydney and Brisbane in my hands, it would have been comparatively simple to subdue Australia.'¹⁷³ The commander of the Japanese Indo-

¹⁶⁹ Prince Naruhiko Higashikuni, *Ichi-kozoku no Seno Nikki*, Nihon Shuhosha, Tokyo, Japan, 1958, pp. 102-106.

¹⁷⁰ 'The Tokyo War Crimes Trials', CND.org, <http://cnd.org/mirror/nanjing/NMTT.html> (accessed 16 June 2014).

¹⁷¹ Higashikuni, *Ichi-kozoku no Seno Nikki*, p. 106.

¹⁷² J. D. Potter, *A Soldier Must Hang: The Biography of an Oriental General*, Four Square, London, UK, 1963, pp. 11-14.

¹⁷³ Yenne, *The Imperial Japanese Army*, pp. 262-265.

China occupation force, Lieutenant General Nakamura Akihito, added his encouragement to invasion when he telegraphed Tokyo shortly after the fall of Singapore, saying: 'I pray that we may without delay accomplish the second stage, the capture of Australia and Colombo.'¹⁷⁴

The responsibility for any Japanese proposal to invade Australasia is usually laid by historians at the doorstep of 'middle-ranking' officers of the IJN.¹⁷⁵ The implication is that they lacked the power to implement their proposals. This position requires conscious ignoring of the *Gekokujo* concept described earlier. The chief 'villain' here is often named as Captain Tomioka Sadatoshi¹⁷⁶ and his proposals frequently dismissed because of his 'lowly rank. However, Tomioka was the son of a Chief of the First Section (Operations) of the IJN, a hereditary Baron in his own right, and graduated head of his class from the Japanese Naval War College. Regarded as one of the finest brains in the IJN, he was appointed Chief of the Plans Division of the Naval General Staff within 13 years of commissioning¹⁷⁷ and later in the war would be promoted to Rear Admiral.¹⁷⁸ While a strong war advocate, Tomioka doubted the wisdom of splitting the forces to both go south and simultaneously attack Pearl Harbor. Tomioka was a powerful personality within the Naval General Staff and pressed so strongly for the move into Indo-China that Forth Fleet Commander Vice-Admiral Inoue Shigeyoshi complained: 'It's like a captain is guiding the navy.'¹⁷⁹ Historian H.P. Willmott notes that Tomioka's concept of occupying parts of Australia 'was not as incredible as it might first appear'. The Japanese military recognised the danger posed by Allied forces based in Australia, New Zealand, and islands in the South Pacific. The argument within

¹⁷⁴ Noel Cruz, *The Cocos Island Mutiny*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, Australia, 2001, p. 52.

¹⁷⁵ Peter Stanley, *Invading Australia: Japan and the Battle for Australia, 1942*, Viking, Camberwell, Australia, 2008, pp. 153-155.

¹⁷⁶ 'Graduates of Naval Academy, Class 45th', <http://homepage2.nifty.com/nishidah/e/px45.htm#r023> (accessed 23 June 2014).

¹⁷⁷ Admiral of the Fleet, Sir John Henry Dacres Cunningham, RN, was a Captain when appointed Director of Plans in 1930, indicating the importance given to planners even within a navy almost devoid of *Gekokujo*.

¹⁷⁸ 'Graduates of Naval Academy, Class 45th'.

¹⁷⁹ Yoshida Zengo, *Kaigun Sanbo*, quoted in Wurth, 1942, p. 16.

the military was whether forces based in these locations constituted the greatest threat to their war aims. The main planning for war had always assumed that there would be a mid-Pacific series of battles against USN forces based in the Hawaiian chain. Once Allied forces were based in the south, Australia, New Zealand, and South Pacific islands became more important to them.¹⁸⁰

Even more interesting is the point that the idea of invading Australia likely did not originate with Tomioka but with Admiral Ugaki Matome, Yamamoto's Chief of Staff. When Tomioka visited Ugaki aboard the warship *Nagato* in Hiroshima Bay on 16 December 1941, he found him immersed in planning for an invasion of Hawaii and a landing at Darwin, Australia. This was part of Yamamoto's 'Strike on all sides' policy, designed to keep the Allies off balance until a negotiated peace could be extracted.¹⁸¹ Tomioka's concept of a southward invasion was also of special interest to Vice-Admiral Inoue Shigeyoshi, then commander of the Fourth Fleet, whose command was responsible for the defence of the south-western perimeters of the newly captured empire.¹⁸²

The Boundaries of Empire

The IJN's Combined Fleet was its principal strike force. Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku commanded it in 1942. Yamamoto was the leader of the Combined Fleet's 'Fleet Group' as against its 'Headquarters Group'. While Headquarters nominally commanded the fleet as an entity, the Combined Fleet at times approached being a separate service. Yamamoto saw his task as breaking the US Pacific Fleet. His insistence on attacking Pearl Harbor, heralded as his finest moment, was to quickly prove a strategic failure. It resulted in a ruthless cutting of 'dead wood' from the USN, extinguished the last remnants of Plan 'Orange',¹⁸³ dethroned the battleship as the principal capital vessel in

¹⁸⁰ Willmott, *The Barrier and the Javelin*, p. 40.

¹⁸¹ Prange, et. al, *Miracle at Midway*, pp. 55, 85.

¹⁸² Hiroyuki Agawa, *The Reluctant Admiral: Yamamoto and the Imperial Navy*, Kodansha, Tokyo, Japan, 1969, pp. 293-296.

¹⁸³ A USN contingency plan in event of war with Japan (Orange) and dating from the First World War. The plan conceived by the USN was a trans-Pacific drive to recapture the Philippines, destroy the Japanese navy, and blockade Japan until forcing a surrender.

the USN and replaced it with the aircraft carrier (none of which were sunk at Pearl Harbor), and almost singlehandedly united the American nation in its war effort.¹⁸⁴

Having failed to sink any aircraft carriers at Pearl Harbor, Yamamoto's primary task after the carrier raid on 7 December 1941 was drawing out and destroying USN aircraft carriers. The neutralising of Australasia and the Allies' Pacific islands was a longer term objective, which he realised, would be infinitely easier without a USN carrier force. Nevertheless, the Combined Fleet was also required to support the taking of Pacific islands. The initial Japanese planning required New Britain to be taken to provide outer defences for the main naval base at Truk in the Caroline Islands.¹⁸⁵ Vice-Admiral Inoue realised that he could not then defend New Britain without also subduing Port Moresby, nor could he hold Port Moresby without also subduing Darwin, nor hold Darwin without subduing other parts of northern Australia. With this understanding, Inoue had arrived at the need to at least partially invade Australia. He had arrived at the same conclusion as Tomioka by a different route, but for essentially the same reasons. The complication was that to achieve these objectives the Combined Fleet and IJA would need to work together—which was contrary to the IJA expectation to support operations in the south and then return the focus to China as quickly as possible.¹⁸⁶

The IJA needed consolidation to return their front line forces to China and the IJN believed it needed expeditions to keep the Americans on the defensive.¹⁸⁷ The Army, tight fisted with its troops, allowed for the initial southern strike, allocating only slightly over eleven divisions (less than a fifth of its total manpower) and for the briefest of periods. Their intent was to then rush divisions back north on the pretext of facing the Soviets. In reality their manpower was needed against the Chinese. The IJA planned

¹⁸⁴ Ronald Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*, MacMillan, New York, USA, 1985, p. 83.

¹⁸⁵ A group of mid-Pacific islands given to Japan as a mandated territory under supervision of the League of Nations following the First World War.

¹⁸⁶ Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, pp. 217-227.

¹⁸⁷ Peter G. Tsouras, *The Rising Sun Victorious: An Alternative History of the Pacific War*, Greenhill Books, London, UK, 2001, p. 146.

therefore to eventually replace the first-line troops in the south with lower quality garrison forces, intending to hold the new perimeter rather than expand it.¹⁸⁸

The IJA calculated that it would require eleven divisions and up to 1.5 million tons of shipping to invade Australia, hoping to show the attack was logistically impractical. Both sets of figures arose from standard logistical tables but exceed those required to take the whole of South-East Asia. The same argument was initially used against the planned invasions of Midway and Hawaii by the IJA.¹⁸⁹ The unspoken presumption was that there would be one force and one flight—but the reality would have been a steady build up and multiple flights. This also ignores the economy of the IJA's inclination to live off the countryside, a skill widely indulged in while fighting in China, and which could have also worked in Australia, thereby reducing the logistical requirements.

Though not usually included by historians in Phase One of Japanese planning, Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia were quickly added to these plans. By 10 January 1942 Admiral Nagano, aware of Yamamoto's planning for Midway and Hawaii, discussed these operations with General Sugiyama, then General Head of the Army General Staff. Both were against Yamamoto's plans and wary of Tomioka's Australian one, so agreed to a compromise alternative series of operations to take Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia to harden the new empire's southern perimeter.¹⁹⁰ These would have brought most of Australasia within bombing range.¹⁹¹ Yamamoto, meanwhile, authorised planning for the assault on the three islands, but only if implemented after landings at Port Moresby and Midway—Port Moresby to guard the Empire's southern flank and Midway as his first step towards the Hawaiian Islands. Whether he intended to carry this through before or after his preferred assault on Hawaii is not clear. He may well have agreed to the sequence in order to gain Navy Headquarters' support for Midway.¹⁹² Yamamoto's plan was to take Midway, then the Hawaiian Islands, using the latter and its population

¹⁸⁸ Parshall and Tully, *Shattered Sword*, p. 25.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁹⁰ Parshall and Tully, *Shattered Sword*, p.29.

¹⁹¹ See Appendix C.

¹⁹² John J. Stephan, *Hawaii Under the Rising Sun: Japan's Plan for Conquest after Pearl Harbor*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, USA, 1984, pp. 100, 109.

as ‘bargaining chips’ to force a negotiated settlement, taking the USA out of the Pacific War.¹⁹³ He also believed that the Americans would not defend the Hawaiian Islands, basing this on pre-war opinion polling which showed that only a minority of the American population wanted to defend the islands, as well as speeches in Congress railing against the very possession of the islands.¹⁹⁴

The IJA initially set their face against Midway and Hawaii when senior officers discovered Yamamoto’s intention. General Tanaka Shinichi, commander of the IJA 14th Army, produced a logistical and political argument against the operation.¹⁹⁵ Meanwhile the IJA Chief of Staff Sugiyama Hajime, attempting to call the IJN’s bluff, protested to the Emperor about the plans.¹⁹⁶ The IJA opposition prompted Yamamoto to plan to use the IJN Special Naval Landing Force to take Midway and, vaguely, an all-IJN assault on Hawaii to avoid having to ask for Army cooperation.¹⁹⁷ The Special Naval Landing Force comprised less than 20,000 men. Whereas a two division force could have taken Midway, it would have been inadequate for an invasion of Hawaii.¹⁹⁸

The 7 March 1942 Liaison Conference between the IJA and IJN finally agreed on ‘the Outline to be Followed in the Future for Guiding the War’. Whereas an earlier conference on 15 November 1941 had planned on ending the war as soon as possible, by March the war was going so well for the Japanese forces that the planning was changed to deciding ‘specific tactics of further aggressive grand strategies.’ In keeping with the nebulous plans for the First Phase, the March conference produced an outline for the Second Phase with no more detail. Each service took from either agreement what they chose to.¹⁹⁹ In the first half of the second agreement the IJA insisted that the nation

¹⁹³ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁹⁶ Stephan, *Hawaii Under the Rising Sun*, pp. 114-115.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 112-113.

¹⁹⁸ G. Nila and R. Rolfe, *Japanese Special Naval Landing Forces*, Osprey, Oxford, UK, 2011, pp. 6-7.

¹⁹⁹ Noriaki Yashiro, ‘Japanese Strategy in the Second Phase of the Pacific War’, research paper, 8th International Forum on War History, *Strategy in the Pacific War*, National Institute of

go on the defensive within its new perimeters, but in the second half the IJN insisted on an offensive stance, while making a concession to the IJA to make its planned attacks 'defensive operations'. Both the IJA and IJN left the conference clear on the other's preferences but able to draw from the meeting their own interpretation of the matters decided. Sugiyama followed the agreement with a tour of the southern battlefields, which satisfied him that the Army could now reduce the troops there from 450,000 to 250,000, concentrate on the China war, and leave the southern war to the IJN.²⁰⁰

The Second Stage

On 15 April 1942 the IJN released its 'Imperial Navy Second Stage Operation Plan', which allowed for attacking the Americans' Pacific naval bases until they forced a 'decisive engagement' and destroyed not only the American naval forces but also the British naval forces ranged against them.²⁰¹ Doolittle's raid on Tokyo on 18 April 1942 then short circuited the interservice disputes over Midway and Hawaii. The shock of the raid and its damage to the Emperor's dignity exposed the hollowness of Japanese home defences, resulting in gross loss of face by both services, and revealed that the much vaunted 'perimeter defence policy' was a vulnerable illusion. The 14th Army commander, Tanaka, immediately offered up IJA troops for the operations and ordered specific units to begin planning and training for both.²⁰² The Japanese historian Noriaki Yashiro explains that to simply protect the newly occupied territories was not enough; consolidating Japan's long-term war capabilities required that the IJA actively support the IJN's offensive operations in the Pacific Ocean, including the South Pacific.²⁰³

The so-called 'Yamaguchi Plan' is often cited as the ultimate invasion fantasy, yet Admiral Yamaguchi Tamon, the commander of the 2nd Carrier Division, was regarded as one of the finest and most aggressive aircraft carrier commanders in the IJN; indeed,

Defence Studies, Tokyo, Japan, 2009, p. 82.

www.nids.go.jp/english/event/forum/pdf/2009/04 (accessed 4 May 2012).

²⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 83-84.

²⁰¹ Yashiro, 'Japanese Strategy in the Second Phase of the Pacific War', p. 84.

²⁰² Stephan, *Hawaii Under the Rising Sun*, p. 119.

²⁰³ Yashiro, 'Japanese Strategy in the Second Phase of the Pacific War.'

he was also regarded as the natural successor to Yamamoto as Commander, Combined Fleet. Shortly before Midway Yamaguchi gave limited promulgation of his (ambitious) draft plan to take Midway, Hawaii, the Panama Canal, Fiji, Samoa, New Caledonia, Australia and New Zealand, plus a raft of other areas. His motive for this plan is not clear. However, between Fleet Headquarters and the Combined Fleet's active plans for conquest, Yamaguchi's plan only differed by including the Panama Canal and New Zealand.²⁰⁴

Like the IJN, the IJA had field and headquarters components. Where the 'field' component's primary interest was China, the 'headquarters' grouping was thinking much further afield and ahead. The Army Ministry's Research Department produced a paper in February 1942 titled 'Proposal For Land Distribution in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.' It proposed the appointing of various types of Governors for New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, New Caledonia, Hawaii, Tahiti, Samoa, Tonga, Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Ceylon, Alaska, Western Canada, Washington State, and Central America. It could be said that 'Victory Disease' was still alive and well this far into the war.²⁰⁵

The IJN Headquarters Staff believed taking over New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa was a viable alternative proposition to neutralise Australia and New Zealand as bases for an Allied offensive. Fiji and New Caledonia would provide forward naval bases and more importantly forward air bases from which the most direct supply route flowing from the USA to Australasia could be economically interdicted.²⁰⁶ The IJN air bases, under construction on Guadalcanal, in the Solomon Islands, were part of this concept that included preparations for the assaults on Port Moresby and Pacific islands to the east. Plans for a further assault on Fiji were captured during the Americans' assault on Guadalcanal.²⁰⁷ However, there remained a disagreement over the best course of action

²⁰⁴ Stephan, *Hawaii Under the Rising Sun*, pp. 103-105.

²⁰⁵ Ikuhiko Hata, 'Comparative Analysis of Japan and U.S. Global Strategy 1941-43', 8th International Forum on War History, *Strategy in the Pacific War*, National Institute of Defence Studies, Tokyo, Japan, 2009, www.nids.go.jp/english/event/forum/pdf/2009/04 (accessed 4 July 2012).

²⁰⁶ See Appendix C.

²⁰⁷ Army Board, *Pacific Story*, Government Printer, Wellington, 1945, p. 21.

at this stage. Yamamoto saw the Midway-Hawaii thrust as more important because it could eliminate the USN aircraft carrier threat, which were the Allies' principal means by which they could keep open the sea lanes to Australasia as well as the principal means of a decisive naval action in the mid-Pacific.²⁰⁸

While IJN planning for the main attacks on Port Moresby and also Tulagi, in the Solomon Islands proceeded, they suffered a delay in early April when American naval aircraft attacked the first Japanese landings in northern New Guinea at Lae and Salamaua on 10 March 1942.²⁰⁹ The Japanese operation, code named SR, was designed to establish the forward airfields from which aircraft could dominate the Coral Sea area and facilitate the two subsequent landings against Port Moresby and Tulagi, which in turn would enable the taking of Nauru and Ocean Islands.²¹⁰ The USN saw the carrier based airstrike against the Japanese landing force at Lae and Salamaua as having little effect on the Japanese advance.²¹¹ However, the airstrike badly shook the IJA, as several troop and supply transports were sunk or damaged in the raid. While still determined to take Port Moresby, the IJA now doubted the IJN's ability to protect their troops while at sea. It required the promise of aircraft carrier protection to again get the IJA 'on board' for the planned taking of Port Moresby as part of the hardening of the southern perimeter against an Allied counter thrust.²¹²

Midway to Guadalcanal

By early May 1942, Admiral Inoue had replaced the transports lost at Lae-Salamaua and was ready to undertake Operation MO, the landing at Port Moresby which he planned to achieve with a force sailing from Rabaul and through the Coral Sea to attack Port Moresby directly while also launching carrier based air raids against airfields in north-

²⁰⁸ Parshall and Tully, *Shattered Sword*, p. 36.

²⁰⁹ The Japanese used two letter codes to designate individual operations. The intended landing at Port Moresby was MO and Midway was MI.

²¹⁰ Willmott, *The Barrier and the Javelin*, pp. 54-56.

²¹¹ John B. Lundstrom, *The First South Pacific Campaign: Pacific Fleet Strategy, December 1941-June 1942*, US Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, USA, 1976, pp. 38-39.

²¹² Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, p. 195.

eastern Australia. The ensuing naval battle was perceived by the Japanese navy as a draw, and Japanese naval staff very quickly turned their attention to the planned mid-Pacific battle at Midway being optimistic that the First and Second Carrier Divisions could deal with the remaining USN aircraft carriers there.

Noriaki explains that the IJN concentrated their battle evaluation on tactical victories, with very few staff showing interest in strategy, especially strategic failures.²¹³ In contrast historians J. Parshall and A. Tully claim that the Combined Fleet anticipated the Americans would bring not only their fleet aircraft carriers but also their remaining operational battleships to Midway, with the carriers operating as a screen to the battleships. The Combined Fleet approached Midway in a similar formation. Yamamoto wielded his carriers as a raiding force because he was still a ‘big gun man’—meaning he was inclined to be reliant on his battleships more than aircraft carriers. He sailed into the Battle of Midway in the first days of June aboard a battleship, as part of a battle fleet force with which he intended to effect the classic Mahanian ‘decisive engagement’. Rear Admiral Raymond A Spruance, USN, meanwhile flew his flag at Midway on an aircraft carrier, in a force of aircraft carriers, recognising the new naval reality.²¹⁴

The IJN lost its four principal fleet carriers at Midway. Nevertheless, the IJN produced a somewhat unrealistic ‘Immediate Operation Guidance Policy’ on 13 June 1942. This policy made only minor changes to the policy issued on 15 April 1942 and concluded that naval operations planned would ‘be feasible.’ It stated the IJN would remain focused on offensive operations in the Pacific and the Americans would not launch a counter offensive before 1943 at the earliest. Three weeks later, starting on 7 August, the USMC 1st Marine Division landed at Guadalcanal and Tulagi Islands. Without a clear understanding of their task or bothering to undertake any serious research into its practicalities, the Imperial General Headquarters decided to retake Guadalcanal and Tulagi Islands.²¹⁵ The Japanese forces countered the American landing with successful a fleet action in the Battle of Savo Island off Guadalcanal on 8-9 August. This was a night

²¹³ Yashiro, ‘Japanese Strategy in the Second Phase of the Pacific War’, pp. 86-87.

²¹⁴ Parshall and Tully, *Shattered Sword*, pp. 51, 407. Spruance was a ‘cruiser’ man, never flew himself, and never commanded a carrier until May 1942.

²¹⁵ Yashiro, ‘Japanese Strategy in the Second Phase of the Pacific War’, p. 87.

surface action of the type the IJN had trained for and was a notable defeat for the USN. Basking in the reflected glare of the IJN's Savo Island victory, the IJA set out to retake the two islands with a force that Noriaki describes as 'using its war capabilities sparingly.' The IJA presumed they were countering a minor raid and sallied forth. Imperial General Headquarters based this presumption on the conclusion that 'the war situation would be in favour of the Axis for the time being,' with the American and British Empire forces seemingly only able to 'start taking offensive stance from the second half of 1943.'²¹⁶

The Road to Defeat

While the Japanese forces were fighting in the South Pacific, the Germans, whose forces were battering at the remnants of Stalingrad's defenders as well as pushing forward well inside Egypt, pleaded with the Japanese navy to use their submarines to stem the flow of supplies through the Indian Ocean to the British in the Middle East. They also appealed for a blockade of American supplies to the Soviet Union through Vladivostok. However, the Japanese command could not countenance antagonising the Soviets at this point. They expressed a preference for German forces to strike south from the Caucasus into Western Asia, but offered no support, not even with use of their submarines, to facilitate this. The moment passed and any opportunities for stronger German-Japanese cooperation were lost.²¹⁷

As late as mid-October 1942, the IJN was optimistically speaking of 'shaking off the fire sparks' in the South Pacific. However, after a string of failures, particularly on Guadalcanal, the IJA had begun preparing for a withdrawal of effort in the region and instead a major attack in northern China. Although the battles on Guadalcanal and in Papua-New Guinea continued, there was a progressive weakening of Japan's resolve in these operations. Instead of planning for further offensive actions; both the IJA and IJN

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 89.

were preparing to complete their transitions to *defensive* operations in the South Pacific.²¹⁸

With this changing stance, any threat to New Zealand and its sea lanes waned. While the IJA (and the Germans) wanted Allied cargo ships targeted and sunk, the IJN only included an anti-shipping campaign in their Third Stage Plan, not to be implemented until 1943. Even then, only two long-range submarines were allocated to operations in the Indian Ocean.²¹⁹ In the South Pacific, the only Japanese submarines to approach New Zealand were trying to locate USN vessels and showed no interest in New Zealand mercantile shipping. By the end of 1942, following a string of defeats including the Coral Sea, Midway, Papua, and Guadalcanal, Japan's attitude towards the South Pacific changed. Whereas there had been an interest in controlling access to Australasia, including New Zealand, the Japanese interest was turning to protection of the expanded empire. Historian Masayasu Hosaka perceptively summarised the position at the end of 1942 as: 'Japan was fighting not to win, but to avoid defeat.'²²⁰

²¹⁸ Ibid., pp.89-90.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Masayasu Hosaka, 'Strategic Thought behind the "Honourable Death (gyokusai) of the Attu Garrison', Sixth International Forum on War History, *New Perspectives on War in the Pacific: Grand Strategies, Military Governments and POWs*, National Institute of Defence Studies, Tokyo, Japan, 2007, p. 121.
<http://www.nids.go.jp/english/event/forum/pdf/2007.pdf> (accessed 4 July 2012).

CHAPTER 4

The views over three waters

Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States: their influence on New Zealand's defence

New Zealand was always too limited in population and resources to defend itself and could only survive a serious threat as part of an alliance. The British Empire provided its defence umbrella. By the 1870s the umbrella's owner was continuously looking at taking it home to Britain, making New Zealand acutely aware of its vulnerability. The rise of Japan as a military power graduated it from an ally around the turn of the century to a perceived threat. By the 1920s Japan had become the principal threat, especially with the size and capacity of its navy. Seemingly alone in the ocean, New Zealand needed a navy to protect it. Britain may not quite be the *Perfidious Albion* of historian David Day's *The Great Betrayal*, but progressively revealed that it was prepared to sacrifice all or any in the drive for its own survival.²²¹ Australia showed little interest in New Zealand's worries, leaving the USA as the only other 'gang on the block.' While friendly towards New Zealand, 'Uncle Sam' was an isolationist at heart with little interest in defending other people's empires—especially the British one.²²²

The British

A significant British influence on New Zealand's pre-war and wartime defence planning was Winston Churchill. At various times he was Secretary of State for the Colonies, Chancellor of the Exchequer, First Lord of the Admiralty, and finally Prime Minister/Defence Minister. He approached the issue of the defence of New Zealand as a

²²¹ David Day, *The Great Betrayal: Britain, Australia and the Onset of the Pacific War*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1988, p. 134.

²²² Jane Calabria, 'Franklin D. Roosevelt's Attitude Toward The Asian Empires of Great Britain and France', MA thesis, University of North Texas, 1971, see www.digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc131461/m1/2/ (accessed 1 July 2012).

British politician to whom New Zealand's security was always a secondary (or lower) consideration. In 1927, while he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, Churchill supported the continuation of the ten-year rule. This was a British Government guideline established in 1919, primarily as an economy move, which stated the British forces should form their estimates of expenditure 'on the assumption that the British Empire would not be engaged in any major war during the next ten years.'²²³ Churchill stated it was impossible for Japan to launch an attack on British outposts without giving warning of their intentions.²²⁴ He deliberately downplayed any potential Japanese threat to the region, by expanding on his opinion: 'I do not think in our lifetime or that of our children, you are going to see an attempt (by Japan) to invade or colonise Australia by force.'²²⁵ During 1931, he further argued against the League of Nations' condemnation of Japanese aggression in China, seeing Japan as a bulwark against the advance of Communism.²²⁶

As the 1930s progressed, Britain could no longer ignore the possibility of a two theatre war. The reason the 'Singapore strategy' was so challenging was that it compelled defence planners to consider how they could possibly respond to the 'nightmare scenario' of simultaneous wars in Europe and Asia. In March 1932, the Imperial Chiefs of Staff warned the Cabinet of Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald's National Government that the politically inspired ten-year rule was a failure and the British armed forces were dangerously weak. After years of post-1918 defence cuts, Britain was not ready for war.²²⁷ The Chiefs pointed out no other nation based its defence on such a concept as the ten-year rule. Indeed, the USA had a comprehensive scheme in place to mobilise its industry in time of war, as did Russia, but Britain on the other hand

²²³ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, Penguin, New York, USA, 2004, p. 273.

²²⁴ Gordon Corrigan, *Blood, Sweat and Arrogance, and the Myths of Churchill's War*, Weidenfield & Nicholson, London, UK, 2006, pp. 86-87.

²²⁵ N. H. Gibbs, *History of the Second World War – Grand Strategy*, Vol 1, *Rearmament Policy*, Her Majesty's Printing Office, London, UK, 1976, p. 274.

²²⁶ R. R. James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, Littlehampton, Worthing, UK, 1970, p. 329.

²²⁷ (British) War Cabinet, Papers, 22 March 1932, pp. 9, 134, The National Archives UK (TNA UK), CAB/24/229, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/

was falling behind in naval and armaments preparations. They further warned that the Singapore strategy was fundamentally flawed as British Empire forces at Singapore, Hong Kong and Trincomalee (Ceylon) would not be able to hold out long enough for the promised RN fleet from Europe to arrive and relieve them. They estimated it would take the fleet dispatched from Europe 38 days of sailing to reach Singapore and another ten days to reach Hong Kong, by which time the Japanese bombing would have destroyed facilities and oil supplies required to support the fleet.²²⁸ There was further concern that Australia and New Zealand could cause the diversion of significant components of the fleet as they ‘would likely press for exaggerated amounts of local protection.’²²⁹

A long-standing British tenet was that wars were won by aggressive action, thus planning for the Far East remained offensive orientated. Up until 1932, Hong Kong was perceived as the most vital asset in the region, serving as the forward fighting base, while the bases at Singapore and Trincomalee were considered to serve only as service and support facilities.²³⁰ At the time, the RN had 54 warships stationed at Hong Kong, including the light aircraft carrier HMS *Hermes*. However, the increasing uncertainty in Europe and the expansion of Japanese air power, including with the establishment of airfields on Formosa, made Hong Kong’s position increasingly precarious. The idea of an offensive stance in the Far East was further weakened by the expanding demands of British home defence due to the collapse of the Geneva disarmament conference in 1933 and the subsequent rise of Nazi Germany.²³¹ The fleet at Hong Kong was therefore

²²⁸ (British) War Cabinet. Papers, 17 March 1932, pp. 2, 6, 8-10, 32, TNA UK, CAB/24/229, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

²³⁰ C. M. Bell, ‘Our most exposed outpost: Hong Kong and British Far Eastern Strategy, 1921-41’. *The Journal of Military History*, Volume 60, No.1, 1996, pp. 66-67.

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 69.

²³⁰ John McLean, *A Mission of Honour: The Royal Navy in the Pacific, 1769-1997*, Winter Productions, Derby, UK, 2010, p. 392.

²³⁰ Marder, *Old Friends, New Enemies*, p. 353.

²³¹ Bell, ‘Our most exposed outpost’, p. 69.

progressively reduced. By December 1941 there was only one British destroyer, four gunboats and seven patrol or auxiliary craft based there.²³²

The winding down of British sea power in the region required a procession of promises to Australia and New Zealand that the RN would still be available to protect them from a Japanese attack. Defence planning was, however, influenced also by racial contempt for the Japanese. At the 1937 Imperial Conference, the First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, expressed a belief that in the event of a two theatre war, which seemed increasingly likely, Britain could still meet its imperial defence obligation by sending a slightly inferior fleet to the Far East as the ‘superior fighting qualities of the British race’ would make up the difference.²³³ For Pound, the focus on race, while questionable, was a convenience. British defence planners played the race card to themselves and to the Dominions—especially Australia at the time exercising its ‘White Australia Policy’. The focus on race was seen as one means of placating the increasingly nervous Dominions and took the focus away from the inadequacies of the RN. This was important, for as Day has pointed out, any failure to supply Australasia with the promised protective fleet would bring into question the RN’s capacity to defend anywhere, for the RN was rightly perceived as the ‘glue’ of Empire.²³⁴

The outbreak of the Second World War required Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand to consider their responses to the war in Europe and the developing threat in Asia. The concern regarding the latter was especially evident in the Australian decision of September 1939 not to dispatch an expeditionary force to Europe until Japan’s intentions could be gauged. Churchill, who at that stage was First Sea Lord, noted with some disdain, ‘Australia appeared to be forming only one division and even that was remaining at home at present.’²³⁵ After receiving British assurances of continued commitment to the Singapore strategy and the unlikelihood of a Japanese assault, both Australia and New Zealand dispatched infantry divisions to the Middle East. However, three days after Italy invaded France on 10 June 1940, the War Office admitted to the

²³² McLean, *A Mission of Honour*, p. 392.

²³³ Marder, *Old Friends, New Enemies*, p. 353.

²³⁴ Day, *The Great Betrayal*, p. 10.

²³⁵ (British) War Cabinet Conclusions, 19 October 1939, TNA UK, CAB 65/1, W.M. 53(39).

Australian prime minister Robert Menzies, that without the French fleet defending the Mediterranean it would be most unlikely Britain could send adequate reinforcements to the Far East in the event of war with Japan. This meant that Whitehall would likely have to call on the USA 'to safeguard our interests there.'²³⁶

The fall of France, the threat of an invasion of Great Britain, and the deteriorating situation in North Africa combined to force a rethink of British war policy and a further shortening of her horizons. On 4 September 1940, the British Chiefs of Staff presented their proposals for the future conduct of the war. They emphasised the absolute importance of the European theatre; as had long been suspected in New Zealand and Australia, British Empire interests in the Asia-Pacific were secondary. The Chiefs summed up their view of the Singapore naval base as only a 'potential' base for the RN and one that would not actually act as a deterrent to Japanese naval action. However, while they saw Singapore was a logical military objective for Japan, the Chiefs did not consider that there was a great threat of a swift southward advance. They believed Japan would not mount an invasion of Australia or New Zealand until its forces had occupied Singapore and 'consolidated herself in the Far East'.²³⁷

With the RN forced from the equation, the obvious solution was to induce the USA to take over the defence of British Empire interests in the region. The Foreign Office, however, maintained it was against Britain's interests to have the Americans play a leading role in a Pacific war as it would reduce Britain's post-war position in the Asia-Pacific region.²³⁸ Churchill, then Prime Minister of a beleaguered Britain, qualified this with a declaration, 'nothing can compare with the importance of the British Empire and

²³⁶ Lord Caldecote, Dominions Secretary, to Whiskard, British High Commissioner to Australia, for Prime Minister Menzies, 13 June 1940, Document 376 in H. Kenway, H. J. W Stokes and P. G. Edwards. (1979). *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, Volume 3, 1940, January-June, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, Australia.

²³⁷ 'Future Strategy, An Appreciation by the [British] Chiefs of Staff', 4 September 1940, TNA UK, CAB 66/11, W.P. (40)362.

²³⁸ (British) War Cabinet conclusions, 2 October 1940, TNA UK, CAB 65/9, W.M 264 (40).

the United States being co-belligerents.’ He would contemplate a war in the Pacific, providing it also guaranteed the entry of the USA into the war against Germany.²³⁹

The geographical separation of Britain and the Far East reinforced the War Cabinet’s inclination to be dismissive of the scale of the threat emerging there. Historian Arthur J. Marder describes Churchill, and to a lesser extent the Chiefs of Staff, as fairly certain Japan would not risk war unless Great Britain was ‘about’ to be defeated.²⁴⁰ As 1941 wore on, the British also became increasingly confident of American intervention in the war. At the same time, however, the German attack on Russia increased the threat to Australasia as it relieved Japan of the Russian threat to their northern borders in China. The additional demands placed on the RN by the convoys to Russia also lessened the chance of their sending strong naval forces to the Far East.²⁴¹ Churchill had reason for greater confidence after August 1941 when he met with US President Franklin D. Roosevelt at Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, where the leaders proclaimed the Atlantic Charter. The Americans agreed to move substantial parts of the USN from the Pacific to the Atlantic, thereby enabling the British to send vessels east if required; alternatively, the USN would step in to provide protection for Australasia and the Far East should war eventuate there.²⁴²

Britain’s military contraction back into its own islands actually began in the 1870s. The Americans’ post-Civil War expansion, German unification, and French rearmament after the Franco-Prussian War generated an arms race. Principally this drove investment in ironclad battle fleets. The naval demands caused major drains on their countries’ respective economies, especially Britain’s. Admiral John Fisher, then First Sea Lord, realised the RN could no longer afford to police the Empire and defend Britain itself against the rising power of other fleets.²⁴³ A combination of economics and Mahan’s theory of national resilience through naval strength and force concentration justified the

²³⁹ Minute from Churchill to Eden, 4 October 1940, TNA UK, PREM 3/476/10.

²⁴⁰ Marder, *Old Friends, New Enemies*, p. 218.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 219.

²⁴³ John Beeler, *Birth of the Battleship: British Capital Ship Design 1870-1881*, Chatham, London, UK, 2001, pp. 120-125.

RN drawing its fleet back to Europe.²⁴⁴ In addition the Cardwell Army reforms of 1870-80 saw the doubling of the British Regular Army at home, primarily by the simple process of withdrawing troops based in places such as Australia and New Zealand.²⁴⁵

Britain had less to lose economically in the Far East and solved its immediate domestic defence problems by reducing its naval defence there and working towards the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance, with the growing power of the IJN acting as an RN stand-in. This for the moment protected Britain's interests against the perceived threat of Russia's expansionism. Britain's forced military contraction was then cemented in by its economic exhaustion following the First World War and subsequent stagnation in the 1920s. Arriving at 1939 and still paying for the First World War, Britain was in no position to meet the cost of defending the Empire, let alone herself. Forced to bleed the Empire of manpower for her own defence, Britain could only hope the Americans would take up the slack.²⁴⁶

The Australians

Australia, like New Zealand, took a close interest in the British stance towards the Far East. Although geographically close and sharing the political and cultural membership of the British Empire, Australia and New Zealand, while born of the same origins, had quite different perceptions of national risk. Throughout their respective histories New Zealand and Australia had strong fears of raiding by enemies of Britain, but because of its remoteness New Zealand did not develop Australia's abiding fear of invasion. Australia has a long history of invasion fears and was much closer to the main potential

²⁴⁴ A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, Little, Brown & Coy, Boston, USA, 1890, pp. 58-59, 82.

²⁴⁵ Albert V. Tucker, 'Army and Society in England 1870-1900: A Reassessment of the Cardwell Reforms', *The Journal of British Studies*, Volume 2, No. 2, 1963, pp. 108-142.

²⁴⁶ B. R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics 1750-1970*, McMillan, London, UK, 1975, pp. 398-410.

enemy, so that the expressions of fear rose to a crescendo when the Japanese thrust south in 1942.²⁴⁷

In 1939, both Australia and New Zealand declared war in unity with Great Britain, and both raised volunteer forces at the outset and subsequently dispatched stocks of their limited small arms to Britain after Dunkirk. However, there was often a lack of consultation between the two, revealing the thinness of the bilateral political contact during this period. For example, Australian Prime Minister Menzies' proviso at the outset that he would only commit Australian troops to Europe once the question of Japan's belligerency was settled. This proviso was shattered, to his fury, by New Zealand's announcement that its division would be dispatched overseas almost immediately.²⁴⁸ As the war progressed, the prime ministers of the two Dominions increasingly pursued their own national interests ahead of bilateral ones. As war with Japan neared, Australia committed to regional defence with land, air and naval forces deployed to Singapore, as well as assuming an increasingly prominent role in regional defence planning. For example, talks on regional defence preparations during 1941 were conducted between British, American, Dutch, and Australian officials, but not New Zealand ones.

The Australia-New Zealand governmental relationship was barely warm in this period and after Japan entered the war it became remarkably cold. The new Australian Government of Prime Minister John Curtin (1941-1945) became obsessed with the possibility of a Japanese invasion. The Australians saw New Zealand as disloyal to the region for not demanding the return of New Zealand troops from the Middle East when they called for the return of theirs after Japan's entry into the war. New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser and his Deputy, Walter Nash, saw the Australians as 'selfish', putting their own interests ahead of those of the British Empire.²⁴⁹ Curtin did not know

²⁴⁷ Anthony Burke, *Fear of Security: Australia's Invasion Anxiety*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2008.

²⁴⁸ John Robertson, 'The Distant War: Australia and Imperial Defence, 1919-1941', in Michael McKernan and Margaret Browne (eds.), *Australia, Two Centuries of War and Peace*, AWM, Canberra, Australia, 1988, p. 229; McGibbon, *Blue Water Rationale*, p. 356.

²⁴⁹ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, pp. 180-181.

Fraser had warned Churchill that if the Australians managed to get their 9th Division home, along with the 6th and 7th Divisions that had already been released to return home, New Zealand would have to demand the return of its 2nd Division due to public and political pressure.²⁵⁰

In February 1942, a member of the New Zealand War Cabinet, Gordon Coates, headed to Australia in a quest for war stores and greater military cooperation. However, he received a disinterested reception. He considered the Australian Government was 'incompetent and one or two of its ministers ... crooked and anti-British'.²⁵¹ For Australia, the threat to New Zealand was very much secondary to its own; and New Zealand's interest in holding Fiji to ensure the Japanese forces would not gain airfields there was not supported by Curtin. While the Australian Chiefs of Staff advocated the holding of Fiji, Curtin regarded the argument for deploying forces there as 'thin'.²⁵² He believed it was much more important to defend the northern Australian harbours at Darwin and Port Moresby (in the Territory of Papua) to ensure Japan could not push onto the Australian mainland.²⁵³ For Curtin, New Zealand only came to be valued, very briefly, after Singapore and the Netherlands East Indies fell, leaving New Zealand as the 'last cab on the rank'.²⁵⁴ At that point, Australia and New Zealand may have been able to forge stronger bilateral defence ties, but when the USA stepped in to assume command of the war against Japan this was no longer necessary. Further meaningful contacts between Australia and New Zealand were largely severed when the US Joint Chiefs of Staff decided on 8 March 1942 to form two strategic areas, the South Pacific Area (SPA) (incorporating New Zealand) and the adjacent SWPA (incorporating Australia) from which to prosecute the war in the region.

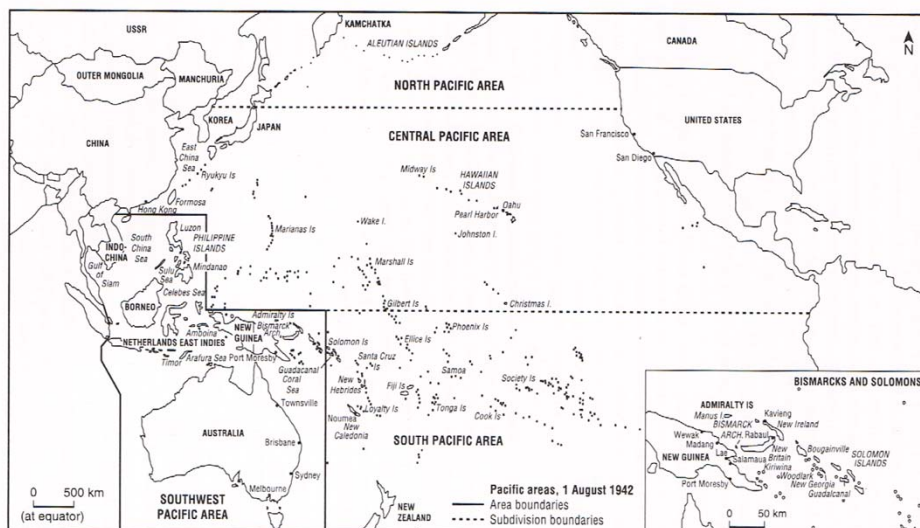
²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 186.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 182.

²⁵² Paul Hasluck, *Australia in the War of 1939-1945*, Series 4 (Civil), Volume II, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, AWM, Canberra Australia, 1970, p. 17.

²⁵³ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, p. 182.

²⁵⁴ Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, p. 111.



Pacific Ocean areas, as allocated by the US Chiefs of Staff on 1 August 1942
 J. Miller, *Guadalcanal: The First Offensive*, US Army in World War II (series)

Map 3: Pacific Ocean Areas, 1942

The division of the Oceania region into two separate strategic theatres of war was done for several layers of reasons and timing. Fundamentally the SWPA was seen primarily as a land war and the SPA as a naval one.²⁵⁵ The initial divisions such as the American-British-Dutch-Australian (ABDA) Command and the ANZAC Naval Area were of short duration.²⁵⁶ Oceania may well have remained a client state of the USN but for the unexpected arrival of General Douglas MacArthur in Australia. His deposit there was the result partly of American politics and partly of the US Army's need for a soldier to lead a land war.²⁵⁷ Interservice rivalry was strong in the American forces. Admiral

²⁵⁵ McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area—First Year*, p. 17.

²⁵⁶ Louis Morton, *The US Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific, Strategy and Command: The First Two Years*, US Government Printing Office, Washington, USA, 1962, pp. 201, 241.

²⁵⁷ The people who primarily decided the separation of Australia and New Zealand were Admiral King who saw the Japanese as the USN's principal enemy, only just ahead of MacArthur; and Marshall, who as the US Army's Chief of Staff had no wish to see a previous Chief of Staff (MacArthur) already returned to duty and on his doorstep, particularly given MacArthur's inflated sense of entitlement. The arrival of MacArthur in Washington would have been most awkward to President Roosevelt as it was known that

Ernest King, Chief of Naval Operations, USN, saw MacArthur as an enemy only slightly behind Japan and refused him command over American naval forces.²⁵⁸ The compromise was to basically divide Australia from New Zealand and issue each of them to separate commands. This division was not collectively popular with Australia and New Zealand, but suited their individual perceptions of their war needs.²⁵⁹

Australia was an underpopulated, over-resourced vastness on the edge of a vast population of under-resourced countries. Its sense of insecurity is seen as the cause or the result of its oft lambasted 'White Australia Policy'. The Australians' promulgation of this policy in 1901 differs from other countries' such policies (including those of Japan, the USA, Canada and New Zealand) by the naming of the policy along racial lines. Other countries merely legislated their policies while leaving them unnamed. For example, the Americans legislated in 1882 against further Chinese immigration, nearly two decades before the Australians did so in 1901, but without naming the legislation in a blatantly racist way.

Japan, inflated with expansionist pride and a growing sense of entitlement, took offence at race based banning of immigration. While the Australians softened their legislation by allowing a steady trickle of Japanese residents, virtually to the verge of the war, the sting of wounded pride and frustrated entitlement provided much of the 'right' to strike south in 1941. Kawai Tatsuo, the Japanese Ambassador to Australia at the start of the Pacific War, wrote in his 1937 book *The Goals of Japanese Expansion* that: 'nations with rapidly growing populations and inadequate resources have far more legitimate claim to the world's remaining unexploited areas than nations which already enjoy the

MacArthur had pretensions as a Republican president. MacArthur actually made his presidential move in 1943 but it floundered at nomination. See Paul Rogers, *The Good Years: MacArthur and Sutherland*, Praeger, New York, USA, 1990, pp. 36-39.

²⁵⁸ David Horner, 'Strategy & Command in the Australian New Guinea Campaign', Remembering New Guinea Project Symposium, Australian National University, Canberra, 19-21 October 2000. <http://ajrp.awm.gov.au/AJRP/remember.nsf/Web-Pages/Symposium> (accessed 12 July 2013).

²⁵⁹ Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1942-1945*, p. 111.

blessing of abundance.²⁶⁰ Australian military intelligence saw Kawai's interest in Australian iron ore in particular as an extension of this claim.²⁶¹ Robert Menzies, when he was Minister of Industries in the late 1930s, clashed with the Waterside Unions over the exporting of pig iron to Japan;²⁶² and later Prime Minister Curtin in 1941 discussed possible giving Japan concessions to export iron ore from Yampi Sound, Western Australia.²⁶³ Both men were at this time warning of the military threat Japan constituted, but were prepared to continue trading. New Zealand quietly followed Australia's lead but was of less interest to Japan and attracted less pressure to accept Japanese immigrants.

The Americans

For the Americans, the responsibility for the defence of New Zealand and of Australia was not one that had been planned for before the war. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, American planning for a war against Japan, encapsulated in the USN's Plan 'Orange', envisaged a massive naval thrust across the Central Pacific, and a 'decisive' naval battle. The US Government, while ostensibly committed to the policy of keeping the USA out of any 'foreign' war, was not unsympathetic to the Australasian fears of Japanese aggression. In April 1941 the State Department organised the USN to dispatch a small task force of four cruisers and a destroyer squadron on a tour of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Tahiti as a demonstration of the American solidarity with the British Empire and 'to hearten our Antipodean friends who felt forgotten and virtually abandoned by Mother England'. President Roosevelt, enthused by the concept, asked for more ships to be dispatched at intervals to 'keep them popping up here and there, and keep the Japs guessing.' An alarmed Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Harold R.

²⁶⁰ Kawai Tatsuo, *The Goal of Japanese Expansion*, 1937, cited in Wurth, *Saving Australia*, pp. 35-36.

²⁶¹ Wurth, *Saving Australia*, p. 37.

²⁶² Carl Bridge, 'Appeasement and After: Towards a reassessment of the Lyons and Menzies Governments' Defence and Foreign Policies, 1931-41', *Australian Journal of Politics & History*, Volume 51, No. 3, 2005, pp. 372-379.

²⁶³ Wurth, *Saving Australia*, p. 81.

Stark, USN, quashed the idea as he had no intention of having warships dashing about the Pacific ‘merely to say Boo to the Japs’.²⁶⁴

The delayed entry of the United States into both world wars was the result of internal power struggles between internationalists and isolationists. The isolationists were not pacifists and neither was the USA. Under the Monroe Doctrine of 1823,²⁶⁵ the USA had up to 1932 undertaken at least 38 ‘splendid little wars’ within the Americas. Following the First World War, the US armed forces saw the potential for another round of fighting in Europe and planned accordingly. As early as 1934, the US Army had planned and trained for a war in Europe, probably against the Germans, and by 1935 war plan exercises concluded that in the case of a two theatre conflict encompassing the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, it would be essential to first defeat the Germans.²⁶⁶ This partly reflected the fact that the US Army traditionally had little interest in the Pacific, even the Philippines, seeing the islands as simply too small for the well-armed massed divisions and overwhelming logistics they believed essential to defeat an enemy.²⁶⁷ This was further reinforced by US Army Air Corps (later USAAF) planners seeing Europe as their natural theatre of operations. The Pacific was simply too wide, with too little land and too few significant targets within range, for the air corps to demonstrate the theories of strategic bombing there.²⁶⁸

It was the USN that most identified the Japanese navy as the principal enemy and the Pacific as its natural battlefield. This was especially the case after the demise of the Imperial German Navy during the First World War. By 1940, USN planning recognised

²⁶⁴ Quotes from Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, Volume 3, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April 1942*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, USA, 1975, p. 56.

²⁶⁵ The Munroe doctrine, named after President James Munroe and formulated by then Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, was against US intervention in Europe and European intervention in the Americas. In effect this made the Americas the US’s private preserve.

²⁶⁶ Henry Gole, *The Road to Rainbow: Army Planning for Global War, 1934-1940*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis., USA, 2003, p. 22.

²⁶⁷ Paul Kennedy, *Engineers of Victory: The Problem Solvers who Turned the Tide in the Second World War*, Penguin, London, UK, 2013, p. 110.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

the potential for multiple enemies in different theatres causing it to basically glue its long standing, and much developed Plan 'Orange' (Japan) to its less well known Plan 'Black' (Germany) to produce a plethora of scenarios covered by the 'Rainbow 5' plan.²⁶⁹ 'Rainbow 5' envisaged that in the event of a two theatre war the USN would endeavour to hold Japan in check while defeating the Germans, before then turning on Japan. As with the earlier 'Orange' planning of the 1920s and 1930s, 'Rainbow 5' envisaged a war across the Central Pacific and therefore it contained no commitment of forces to the South Pacific. Australia and New Zealand simply did not factor in the envisaged Pacific campaigns until they became important in early 1942.²⁷⁰ Interestingly, one of the concepts Rainbow 5 was based around was there would be no RN battle group in the Pacific. In May 1939 a RN liaison officer informed the USN the RN would in fact not be committing a major fleet to Singapore; however the British rather hoped the USN would be able to.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, p. 226.

²⁷⁰ Lundstrom, *The First South Pacific Campaign*, pp. 14-15.

²⁷¹ Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations In World War II*, Volume 5, *The Struggle for Guadalcanal, August 1942 – February 1943*, Little Brown & Coy, Boston, USA, 1949, pp. 49-50.

Throughout 1940 and into 1941, the situation in Europe was the primary concern of the US Government; however there were also those within its ranks who carefully watched Japan. Their intention was to prevent Japan becoming an active enemy, particularly by manipulating, if possible, the Japanese economy. The Americans appreciated Japan was short of nearly all resources required for an industrial war except manpower, and had to trade externally to make up the difference. By manipulating Japan's access to oil and metals, the Americans hoped to make war too expensive, and possibly even to bankrupt the

Edward S Miller *Bankrupting the Enemy Naval Inst 2007*

FREEZE: THE CRUCIAL MONTH OF AUGUST 1941

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The financial freeze of 26 July 1941 choked off most of Japan's vital supply of oil. (Library of Congress)

Japanese economy. Only in late 1940 did the Americans begin to discover Japan had secret gold reserves to stave off bankruptcy.²⁷² The USA moved to embargoes and the freezing of Japanese funds in American accounts, in an attempt to stem the expansion of Japan's military, especially limiting access to oil and steel.²⁷³ Historian Edward Miller notes that in Japanese eyes, 'bankruptcy was a lethal threat, an assault on their nation's very existence.' In light of their almost total dependence on foreign resources, Japan saw the American led embargo as economic warfare that was more drastic than armed conflict. They began to perceive the option of aggression against the Western allies (and potential allies) as an act of self-preservation.²⁷⁴

The main American territorial interests in the Pacific Ocean were the west coast of the USA, Hawaii, and the Philippines. The completion of the Pearl Harbor naval base on the Hawaiian island of Oahu in the 1930s enabled the USN to redeploy much of its fleet to the Pacific, with the Philippines and also small islands in the Central Pacific (Guam and Wake) serving as forward bases. Well into 1939, the US military still based

²⁷² Edward S. Miller, *Bankrupting the Enemy: The US Financial Siege of Japan before Pearl Harbor*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, USA, 2007, pp. 53-55.

²⁷³ *Ibid.* pp. 89-95.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 242-243.

planning for operations against Japan around Plan 'Orange' which included a plan for the American and Filipino garrison in the Philippines to withdraw into the Bataan-Corregidor 'fortress area' in the face of Japanese landings and await relief by the US fleet on its way to the long planned 'decisive battle' with the IJN.²⁷⁵

In 1940, Roosevelt declined a suggestion to mobilise the Philippine Army, fearing it would antagonise Japan, a decision reinforced later that year when a US Army mission to the Philippines judged the defences there to be 'adequate'.²⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the US War Department was alarmed by the Tripartite (Germany, Italy, and Japan) Agreement of September 1940 and came to the conclusion that reinforcing the Philippines, especially with the deployment of a fleet of long-range heavy bombers, was necessary to deter the Japanese forces from attacking.²⁷⁷ The staging of US heavy bombers to the Philippines via northern Australia, after the Guam route became too precarious, was likely the first clear 'usefulness' of Australia to the US Army. New Zealand was too far south to be of any interest in this endeavour. Reinforcing of the Philippines was also seen as preferable to expending resources on assisting the British at Singapore and the Dutch in the Netherlands East Indies as the British repeatedly tried to inveigle the Americans to do.²⁷⁸ Historian Glen Williford notes an interesting irony of the decision to reinforce the Philippines, was that Japan became concerned that the increasing American presence in the region would enable a flank threat to its intended thrust into the 'Malay Barrier' and therefore added a plan for the taking of the Philippines to counter this threat.²⁷⁹

Japan preferred to trade for its essential strategic supplies such as oil and iron. These were seen as the 'lifeblood' of its military and especially essential to continue the war in

²⁷⁵ Richard B. Franks, *MacArthur: A Biography*, Palgrave, NY, 2007, p. 42.

²⁷⁶ Glen Williford, *Racing the Sunrise: Reinforcing America's Pacific Outposts, 1941-1942*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, USA, 2010, p. 2.

²⁷⁷ Papers of General George Catlett Marshall (hereafter Marshall Papers), Editorial Note, 2-601, <http://www.marshallfoundation.org/database.htm>.

²⁷⁸ Williford, *Racing the Sunrise*, p. 85.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

China.²⁸⁰ The USA wanted Japan to withdraw its forces from China but wishing to avoid war with it, resorted to economic weapons. Reclassifying oil and steel as strategic assets enabled the Americans to reserve these supplies for their own military needs.²⁸¹ Japan turned to the Netherland East Indies for oil but the Dutch, with their homeland already occupied by Axis forces and under pressure from the British and Americans, declined to sell to them.²⁸² Japan, now strategically cornered and suffering from further asset freezes, leaped over the precipice of war rather than withdraw from its investment in China.²⁸³

The attack on Pearl Harbor was a heroic, magnificently planned and executed failure. Yamamoto established himself as an early advocate of naval airpower, even though he and some other senior IJN officers saw carriers only as a raiding force.²⁸⁴ The American battleships were Yamamoto's primary targets as he persisted to consider them key to a 'decisive battle'. For this reason the attack went ahead even though the Japanese command knew from their spy network that no aircraft carriers were in port.²⁸⁵ For the Americans, while 7 December 1941 became, as Roosevelt famously put it, 'a date which will live in infamy', the attack could have been even worse. The raid ended with the aircraft carriers safe and the naval base's submarine depot and 4.5 million gallon oil reserves relatively unscathed. Nevertheless, the immediate reaction was to pull warships back from Hawaii to the US west coast, utilising naval bases in California. Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, urged his Hawaiian commander, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, to 'harbour no ship larger than a submarine at Pearl Harbor.'²⁸⁶ A general air

²⁸⁰ Miller, *Bankrupting the Enemy*, pp. 89-95.

²⁸¹ Waldo Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 1988, pp. 132-136.

²⁸² *Ibid.* pp. 178-179.

²⁸³ Toland, *The Rising Sun*, pp. 145-147.

²⁸⁴ Mark Stille, *Yamamoto Isoroku*, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2012, pp. 124, 146 (Kindle edition); Sadao Asada, *From Mahan to Pearl Harbor: American Strategic Theory and the Rise of the Imperial Japanese Navy*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, USA, 2006, p. 283; Carl Boyd and Akihiko Yoshida, *The Japanese Submarine Force and World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, USA, 2002, p. 4.

²⁸⁵ Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, pp. 44, 167.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

of despair swept through the USN ranks in the first days of the Pacific war. Indeed, Rear Admiral Chester Nimitz, shortly to be promoted and appointed Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC), remarked in the aftermath of the raid, 'we have suffered a terrific defeat. I don't know whether we can recover from it.'²⁸⁷ Momentarily, the USN attitude was against operations in the area of Australasia, but this changed rapidly in late December 1941 when Admiral Ernest King was appointed Chief of Naval Operations and days later ordered the newly promoted Nimitz to guard the US west coast, hold the Hawaiian Islands out as far as Midway, and maintain the southern trans-Pacific supply routes.²⁸⁸

While the American Plan 'Orange' had envisaged a mid-Pacific naval campaign, with the series of Japanese victories pushing their empire southward the American planning needed to be hurriedly revised. Japan commenced its advance in the south-western sector from their bases in the Caroline and Mariana island groups by taking the Gilbert Islands on 10 December. The USN assessed that a landing on American Samoa, with the intent to cut the supply line to Australia, was possible. A landing appeared to be heralded on 11 January 1942 by a Japanese submarine shelling Pago Pago. Meanwhile, an Australian aerial reconnaissance of the Japanese naval base at Truk, in the Caroline Islands, gave indication of a pending southward advance. Intelligence staff predicted the Japanese forces would strike at Fiji, which prompted New Zealand to request military assistance for the New Zealand garrison positioned there. The Americans declined to reinforce Fiji, as defence of American Samoa had precedent. Accordingly, on 6 January, the 2nd Marine Division sailed from San Diego, California, landing in Samoa 17 days later. The next day, Japan's intentions were revealed when the force assembled at Truk arrived not off Fiji but off Rabaul, New Britain, overrunning a small Australian garrison to capture its deep-water harbour.²⁸⁹

USN intelligence staff warned once the Japanese forces secured the base at Rabaul, they would be in a position to continue a southward advance, with the possibility that they

²⁸⁷ Lundstrom, *The First South Pacific Campaign*, p. 19.

²⁸⁸ Ian W. Toll, *Pacific Crucible: War at Sea in the Pacific, 1941-1942*, Horton, NY, USA, 2012, p. 128.

²⁸⁹ Morison, *The Struggle for Guadalcanal*, p. 259.

would attack the New Hebrides and New Caledonia in order to cut the direct sea routes between California and Australia and New Zealand.²⁹⁰ This created a conundrum for the US Army, as the USMC did not have sufficient presence in the South Pacific to protect these islands. Committed to the ‘Germany First’ strategy, the USA was nevertheless beset by siren calls from the Pacific for troops and supplies. These calls came not only from the USA’s new allies in the region—the British, Australians, New Zealanders, and Dutch—but also from their own, as the American-Filipino forces in the Philippines were hard pressed. On 14 January, Brigadier General Dwight Eisenhower, Chief of the US Army’s Washington based War Plans Division, reported to the Army’s Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, that if the Japanese command committed a major force against the Philippines it would be: ‘Impossible to save the garrison.’ Marshall responded that Eisenhower should ‘do your best’ to save the force there.²⁹¹ In truth, though, the White House had already resigned itself to losing the Philippines. On 8 December, Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson wrote in his diary that the news ‘continues [to be] very bad’ and in all likelihood it would be impossible to reinforce the Philippines garrison ‘in time to save the islands.’ The last attempt to directly reinforce the Philippines from the USA was the ‘Pensacola’ convoy (named after its principal escort, the USS *Pensacola*), which was at sea when the raid on Pearl Harbor occurred and was diverted to Australia—tacit acknowledgement the Philippines could not be saved. The supplies and men offloaded in Australia were used to establish the first US Army base there.²⁹²

In this period, the USA needed to consider the roles Australia and New Zealand could play in the Pacific War, having not factored either country into pre-war military plans. This was to be a relationship of consultation, but it was an American dominated theatre of war with Australia and New Zealand supplicants and subservient. While there was general understanding of the advantages of holding the Australian mainland, there was not universal agreement to begin with. Lieutenant General Henry ‘Hap’ Arnold, Commanding General of the USAAF, actually advocated that supplies to Australia ‘be

²⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 265

²⁹¹ Alfred D. Chandler, Jr, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, Volume 1, *The War Years*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, USA, 1970, p. 5.

²⁹² Williford, *Racing the Sunrise*, pp. 166-167.

cut almost completely, even accepting the loss of Australia and the rest of the SW Pacific to Japan in order to secure the speedy ruination of Germany.²⁹³ Some in Australia feared this could be an option. The loss of Australia would have elevated the importance of New Zealand to the Americans, as it would have become the last remaining substantial base located in the South Pacific; accordingly, this would also have elevated its importance to Japan. However, the Americans committed to the defence of both Australia and New Zealand.

The broad expanse of ocean and inability of the RN to respond in force meant the USN automatically assumed a leading role in the Pacific theatre of war. On 27 January, Admiral King, who appreciated the importance of the sea lanes linking the USA with the theatre, warned Nimitz the Japanese movements in the south-western Pacific represented a 'serious enemy threat to communications with Australia'. New Zealand emerged as a concern in early February when Vice Admiral Herbert Leary, USN, took up duty in Wellington as Commander of the ANZAC area.²⁹⁴ In February, work on a naval refuelling base on Bora Bora planned in December 1941 was begun. It acted as a secure refuelling point on the long run from Panama to Australia, and could also be used for the southern route south if Japan occupied the Fiji-Samoa groups to cut the primary US-Australasia route.²⁹⁵

The Americans perceived the greatest danger to the whole Australasian area would be Japan's occupation of the French colony of New Caledonia. The Australians had assumed responsibility for defence of the island but proved not to have the resources to adequately garrison it. American intelligence reports indicated there was an imminent danger of the Japanese landing on New Caledonia, and Eisenhower ordered its occupation by a scratch American force.²⁹⁶ Having sailed from the USA, the New Caledonia bound force of 20,000 men landed in Melbourne at the end of February.

²⁹³ Lundstrom, *The First South Pacific Campaign*, p. 55.

²⁹⁴ Morison, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific*, pp. 257, 261

²⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 258; Thomas N. Kane, *Military Logistics And Strategic Performance*, Routledge, London, UK, 2001, p. 26.

²⁹⁶ Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years*, p. 93.

There it was equipped for combat and sailed again on 6 March, arriving at Noumea on 12 March. Air raids were anticipated so the force was immediately dispersed.²⁹⁷

Part of the Allied challenge in this period was to assess, and accept, which territories had to be defended or abandoned to their fate. When it became evident the Singapore base was in danger of being lost, the Allies formed ABDA (American-British-Dutch-Australian) Command with the objective of holding key islands of the NEI, but the prospect of success was slim so ABDA was largely starved of resources.²⁹⁸ The USN, in particular, was reluctant to be drawn into a campaign in the NEI, which was expected to be short and unsuccessful. Signals intelligence indicated the Japanese forces were determined to cut the USA-South Pacific lines of communication, with possible targets including New Caledonia and the New Hebrides. USN resources were therefore directed towards the developing threat in the South Pacific.²⁹⁹ The USN's carrier-borne air raid on Lae and Salamaua in northern New Guinea, while seen to have achieved little by the Americans, markedly changed the Japanese command's conduct of the war in the SWPA. The IJA, fearing major losses if moved by convoy, opted to undertake the Port Moresby invasion by coastal leapfrogging using landing craft. Admiral Inoue, grossly embarrassed by the loss of face, offered carrier protection for the invasion convoy.³⁰⁰ A projected USN carrier raid on Rabaul was cancelled when it became evident the Japanese navy was in a position to attack, and probably sink, the aircraft carrier USS *Lexington*. At this stage of the Pacific War, USN carriers were too few in number to risk.

By late April the USN was sufficiently confident for Nimitz to actively seek a major naval engagement. Intelligence anticipated the IJN would utilise up to seven of its fleet carriers in a planned invasion of Port Moresby and the Solomon Islands. Such was Nimitz's confidence that he could counter the Japanese navy; he was permitted to commit all four USN fleet carriers, then in the Pacific, to what would become known as

²⁹⁷ The New Caledonia force became the Americal Division (American Forces in New Caledonia) and was later renamed the 23rd Infantry Division.

²⁹⁸ Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years*, p. 77.

²⁹⁹ Lundstrom, *The First South Pacific Campaign*, p. 31.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 67, 70.

the Battle of the Coral Sea.³⁰¹ American intelligence was unable to detect any major Japanese operations in the Central Pacific and instead considered the main actions in the coming months would be further raids and landings in the Coral Sea, Fiji or Samoan areas.³⁰² This emphasis on operations in the South Pacific reinforced the importance of New Zealand and Australia in these early months of the Pacific War as potential future bases. The promise of basing American troops in New Zealand also enabled the New Zealand 2nd Division to remain in the Middle East but American troops did not begin arriving until June-July 1942. The US Army's 37th Division, which has set sail for New Zealand in early May, was diverted to Fiji. Naval historian John B. Lundstrom pointedly notes this was neither in the word nor spirit of the American agreement intended to convince New Zealand to keep its troops in the Middle East.³⁰³ On the other hand, holding Fiji was important as it would directly inhibit a further southward advance by the Japanese forces, a strategy New Zealand defence planners had identified before the war.

The outcome of the Coral Sea battle in early May 1942 has been widely set in concrete by historians as a strategic victory and at the worst a tactical draw for the USN. This was not how the USN saw it at the time. Nimitz informed King the USN could not sustain equal losses with the IJN as they had more aircraft carriers. He called for an urgent increase of American air strength in the Pacific, especially carrier based.³⁰⁴ On 17 May, King in turn forbade Nimitz to engage in any 'decisive action' with the IJN as the USN could simply not afford to meet the Japanese navy head on.³⁰⁵

King and Nimitz expected Midway to be at the very best a draw, with losses on both sides and only a temporary check on Japan's intentions. The Americans were aware by this point of Japan's plans, in the event of a Midway victory, to take and hold the Port Moresby-Samoa line and use it as a 'barrier' to the principal Australia-US supply route. King appreciated the USN aircraft carriers were in need of repairs and maintenance and

³⁰¹ Ibid., p.x.

³⁰² Ibid., p. 90.

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 136.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 151.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 175-176.

their crews were weary after months of continuous war. He was in fact so concerned about the intentions of the Japanese navy he advocated the boosting of the Pacific fleet by transferring any available RN warships from the Indian Ocean and even some warships from the Atlantic. He also pleaded with the US Army for reinforcements to strengthen island defences, but to no avail. This made the victory at Midway an even greater relief to the American naval commanders.³⁰⁶

Guadalcanal

The Midway victory made it possible for the USMC's 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions, which until this time had been held at San Diego, California, to be shipped to the South Pacific to take part in the counteroffensive ordered by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.³⁰⁷ This movement brought New Zealand into greater focus, if only for a short time, as the 1st Marine Division was transported to Wellington for concentration and training in the southern part of the North Island. The divisional commander, Major General A. A. Vandergrift, was given six weeks from 26 June to prepare his division to land at Tulagi in the Solomon Islands to seize a flying boat base the Japanese navy had established; subsequently, he was ordered to also take an airbase constructed on another island, Guadalcanal.³⁰⁸ A flying boat base in the southern Solomons was a threat to Allied operations in the area, but a bomber base was a critical strategic threat to the primary supply route between the USA and Australasia.³⁰⁹

After a less than successful practice landing in Fiji, 25,000 half-trained marines with limited supplies, no heavy equipment, and little hope of immediate reinforcements were fortuitous to land unopposed on Guadalcanal. The next night, near Savo Island, their supporting naval forces were subject to the USN's worst defeat outside of Pearl Harbor, losing three cruisers sunk and three ships badly damaged to the Japanese navy sustaining only three ships lightly damaged. The American fleet withdrew, leaving the

³⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 170-172, 204-5.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 175-176.

³⁰⁸ Eric Hammel, *Guadalcanal: The US Marines in World War II*, Zenith, St Paul, USA, 2007, p. 13.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

1st Marine Division temporarily stranded. Fortunately for the 1st Marine Division, while the IJN reacted violently and effectively to the landing, the IJA saw the American action as only a large raid and, already occupied with New Guinea, were slow in countering the American landing.³¹⁰

Whereas the IJN could offer little assistance to the battle along the Kokoda Trail in Papua-New Guinea, in the Solomons it was able to actively engage the Americans. The naval battles in and around the Solomon Islands were hard fought, costing the USN the aircraft carriers USS *Wasp* and *Hornet*, with *Enterprise* badly damaged. However, the Japanese carriers, still rebuilding their air arms after Midway, were so exhausted by the end of October they had to withdraw to Japan to re-equip and retrain.³¹¹ By this time, despite nightly shelling and bombing of Henderson Field on Guadalcanal, air superiority over the battle area had passed to the Americans.³¹²

The IJA steadily built up land forces on Guadalcanal. By late September the Japanese army had equality with the Americans; by early November they had numerical superiority, with more supplies and reinforcements landed nightly. Japanese military structures also saw a greater percentage of combat troops per unit, compared to the Americans.³¹³ By early October, however, the Americans perceived the Guadalcanal situation as grave, even precarious and began increasing the commitment to the battle. On 16 October, Marshall informed MacArthur he would weaken the defences of Port Moresby to reinforce Guadalcanal. He understood the Japanese planners saw taking control of the southern Solomons as a precondition for reinforcing New Guinea.³¹⁴ Roosevelt was so alarmed he ordered the immediate sending of air force reinforcements, even to the detriment of forces in New Guinea and the build-up in Europe. His

³¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 17, 37.

³¹¹ Ibid., pp. 54, 132.

³¹² Ibid., pp. 62, 113-114.

³¹³ Ibid., p. 101.

³¹⁴ General George C. Marshall to General Douglas MacArthur, 16 October 1942, The Marshall Papers, 3-372.

memorandum concerning this was so secret it was addressed for Marshall, King and Arnold's eyes only—the senior Army, Navy and USAAF commanders.³¹⁵

Nimitz, a man not given to hyperbole, reported the naval actions to mid-October were in the IJN's favour, expanding: 'It now appears we are unable to control the sea in the Guadalcanal area, Thus our supply of the positions will only be done at great expense to us. The situation is not hopeless, but is certainly critical.'³¹⁶ In a 'blaze' of leadership Nimitz himself landed on Guadalcanal on 30 September. Vandergrift and his men were both stunned and elated to see the supreme USN commander in the Pacific standing in their embattled enclave. Not one to miss a golden opportunity, Vandergrift made his situation clear to Nimitz and explained what he needed to hold out, even win at Guadalcanal. MacArthur meanwhile refused to meet Nimitz on New Caledonia during this tour, offering only to send a representative. As if to add insult to insult, MacArthur and Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, USN Commander, South Pacific, strongly advocated the American forces be withdrawn from Guadalcanal. Nimitz saw Ghormley had lost his command capacity and had to be replaced; he never forgave MacArthur. Fifteen days later Admiral William Halsey Jr, USN, replaced Ghormley and took over the command of forces in the South Pacific Area.

Halsey's drive was immediately effective. He brought MacArthur on side, stiffened the USN's defence of the seas around Guadalcanal, and ensured Vandergrift continued to be supplied and reinforced. With this action, victory at Guadalcanal was virtually assured. This battle heralded the end of the IJN's supremacy in the South Pacific. The USN had proved itself to be a united force, with strong leadership, clearly defined goals and a ready willingness to rapidly learn from its mistakes, the complete opposite of the IJN.³¹⁷

In seeming contravention of the 'Germany First' policy, by the beginning of December 1942 there were slightly more US troops in the Pacific than in Britain or North Africa. By the year's end, the emergency of 1942 was behind the Allies. The British were also

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Morison, *The Struggle for Guadalcanal*, pp. 136-137, 178.

³¹⁷ Lundstrom, *The First South Pacific Campaign*, pp. 204-205.

slowly being pried from their invasion fear bunker mentality by the arrival of American forces in Britain as well. The British regretted New Zealand's alarm during the year but with the assistance of the Americans had ensured New Zealand's commitment to the war in the Middle East. New Zealand remained a 'brick' in the Imperial wall keeping Britain safe. To the Australians, focussed on the war in the SWPA, New Zealand was largely irrelevant. To the Americans, New Zealand had become a useful friend and ally as well as an essential supply base for forces beginning the advance into in the South Pacific Area. It could be said New Zealand had been exploited by mother, ignored by a brother and rescued by Uncle. The cold winds of 'realpolitik' had howled down Lambton Quay and were blowing the accumulated dust of empire out to sea.

CHAPTER 5

A Second Look over Port Jackson

The Storm Breaks

New Zealand moved unenthusiastically towards war, without a clear British promise of support. With its War Book finished and its administrative process in place the country, in a dour, organised manner, tramped over the border into war.³¹⁸ The Navy, always the closest service to a continuous war footing, moved easily into that state. The Air Force, driven by the highly effective Cochrane, was organisationally ready, but much of its effort was aimed at supplying aircrew for the RAF, rather than the defence of New Zealand. The Army, the *bête noir* (black beast) of Savage,³¹⁹ starved of funds for years and hamstrung by a prolonged muddle of political misdirection, entered the war with only the bare bones of a structure and desperately short of equipment. It produced and dispatched a division overseas, ill-trained, ill-equipped, and rushed away for reasons of political expediency—only the division's leadership and the quality of its manpower redeemed it.³²⁰

The End of a Brief Era

The death of Prime Minister Savage in 1940, while a personal tragedy for many New Zealanders³²¹ reflected by the national grief during his final progress north and the beauty of his tomb, was in reality a release for the nation's war effort. He was a humanitarian in nominal charge of a war machine; a leader who had heroically refleshed and reclad the bleached bones of Seddon's welfare state was sending its people to war. Berendsen, the head of the Prime Minister's Department, saw Savage as a sweet natured

³¹⁸ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, pp. 17-18, 21.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22; McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares For War*. pp. 223-236.

³²¹ 'Funeral Procession for Prime Minister Savage, 30 March 1940', New Zealand Military History, website, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/the-funeral-of-michael-joseph-savage>

but shrewd man, sadly clinging to the simple belief that economic inequities caused war which men of good will could surely resolve. He perceptively summarised Savage as ‘the most Christ-like man I have ever known and an absolute ninny’.³²²

Savage hated conscription with a passion and maintained an ambiguous stance towards the concept while protesting it was nothing ‘to get excited about.’ He constantly tried to tailor the realities of war to his and the Labour Party’s ideals, going as far as saying he wanted every soldier to feel he was being ‘trained in the arts and crafts of citizenship,’ not simply ‘to learn the arts of war.’ While asking Major-General John Duigan, the New Zealand Army’s Chief of the General Staff during 1937-41, to report on the feasibility of a 50,000 man home defence force accepting men up to 50 years old, he qualified it to the Press by saying there was no need to panic as ‘we are just preparing for the worst.’³²³

The Grey Leader

The main deficiency of the New Zealand Army at the beginning of the war was it largely did not exist. There was no body of trained men who could immediately step forward to protect the country until the Territorial Army was mobilised and brought up to standard. New Zealand was, based on Savage’s concept, trying to defend itself with the veterans of the First World War. On 22 May 1939 Savage broadcast an appeal for troops to populate his military training scheme, but did so with ‘regret and reluctance’ and noting the troops would be for home service only. He declared: ‘I am not asking them to go to war, but to be prepared if war comes to them.’³²⁴ Even Savage’s famous rallying cry ‘where she [Britain] goes, we go’, given virtually from his death bed, were another’s words.³²⁵

³²² Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, p. 24.

³²³ McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares For War*. p.232.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 233-235.

³²⁵ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, p. 21. ‘With gratitude for the past and confidence in the future we range ourselves without fear beside Britain. Where she goes, we go; where she stands, we stand. We are only a small and young nation, but we march with a union of hearts

Fraser, the grey eminence behind the throne, became Fraser the grey eminence *on* the throne after the death of Savage. He was a natural war leader, at his best coping with great issues. Where Savage had been essentially a local humanitarian, Fraser was an internationalist with an international horizon. He could be devious, ruthless, autocratic and a bully, given to sudden rages and smouldering resentments; but he was ‘still a great man,’ with the courage to meet a challenge. Berendsen relates that when Fraser was faced with the shock of bad news, ‘he rubbed his great nose, thought it over for a moment or two—and just carried on.’ He was not pious and could resort to politically expediency, but was a man of principle. The need to start from a principle was his distinctive way of arriving at a decision.³²⁶

By mid-July 1940 Japan, exploiting events in Europe, demanded the closure of the Burma Road, which was used to deliver supplies for China, to strengthen their position in China. A letter from the Dominions Office to the New Zealand Governor-General on 26 June gave amongst the reasons why Britain should appease Japan, the fact that a war in the Pacific could become American dominated would be ‘disastrous’ to Britain’s vital interests and diminish the flow of material assistance to her at a crucial point.³²⁷ Churchill, facing a potential German invasion of Britain, sought to buy time by conceding to the demand and contacted Australia and New Zealand for their support. Australia agreed, but New Zealand objected vigorously, arguing appeasement was ‘a concession at the expense of our friends, our rights and our principles’. This stance was not for the faint hearted; being not long after the fall of France, it upset the ‘realpolitik’ of both the British and the Australians. In the end the British closed the Burma Road for three months. This was a face-saving gesture for both sides, as the road was largely useless at this time because of the heavy monsoon rains.³²⁸

and souls to a common destiny.’ Written for the dying Savage by Henry Cornish, Solicitor General.

³²⁶ Ibid., p.75.

³²⁷ F. L. W. Wood, *The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945*, The New Zealand People at War, *Political and External Affairs*, Historical Publications Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, NZ, 1958, p. 78.

³²⁸ Ibid. pp. 76-77.

The war came to New Zealand's waters in the form of German merchant raiders, who sank nine ships, totalling over 61,000 tons, in Tasman/NZ waters. These included the RMS *Niagara*, which was carrying the majority of New Zealand's small arms ammunition reserve, intended to help replace that lost by the British Army at Dunkirk.³²⁹ The sacrifice of this action was emphasised when on 13 June London sent a particularly bleak situation review, which, after detailing Britain's own desperate situation, added she now had insufficient ships to counter the Axis navies in Europe. The fear was, should Japan exploit the situation and attack, Britain could not relieve Singapore. The Singapore strategy, on which Australia and New Zealand had for two decades based their strategic defence, began to crumble.

New Zealand protested the decision of the British to, in effect, desert the Singapore strategy; with Fraser reminding Britain of its promise to abandon the Mediterranean to come to Australasia's defence. Fraser followed the protest with a personal note to Churchill pledging New Zealand would stand by Britain even if she had to surrender to Germany, saying: 'Whatever decision the British Government took in the difficult circumstances in which it found itself it would be understood, accepted and supported by New Zealand to the very end.' Fraser was not a man of theatrical gesture and meant this in all sincerity. It struck such a chord with Churchill, at such a moment, forever establishing Fraser's and New Zealand's steadiness in his mind. Later he remarked to a colleague: 'New Zealand has never put a foot wrong from the start.'³³⁰

A chronically deteriorating situation forced the Fraser Government, in May 1940, to take sweeping powers upgrading the already draconian 1939 Emergency Regulations Act to give the government the right 'as required' to command the direction and use of all the wealth, materials and people in the country. Only a month earlier the Labour Party conference had declared it would never consider conscription and Fraser had told the same gathering he had never thought of it. Fraser had in fact foreshadowed it in radio broadcasts but needed to sell the concept to his own party. One of the most telling

³²⁹ S. D. Waters, *The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945*, Episodes and Studies, *German Raiders in the Pacific*, Historical Publications Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, NZ, 1949, pp. 3-32.

³³⁰ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, pp. 80-81.

speeches in this process came from Walter Nash who explained why he had given away pacifism. Of the leading German socialists he had met at the 1921 Second International in Geneva, not one was alive by 1938. He concluded - if existence was worthwhile, it had to be fought for. Twenty-five years of Labour resistance to conscription drained away.³³¹

Faced with the war in Europe and the growing potential of one in the Pacific too, Fraser attempted to draw the Opposition into a British style coalition government. Despite a few stuttering attempts, New Zealand politics remained stubbornly partisan, with only Gordon Coates joining the most successful innovation, the War Cabinet, a structure which competently saw the country through to the war's end.³³² The scale and ferocity of the European war tended to distract New Zealand from the perils of its location. Wood noted of white New Zealanders, though settled in the Pacific, 'their thinking, their strategy, their economic interests remained obstinately European.' He added, 'from time to time the Pacific forcibly invaded New Zealand's consciousness.'³³³

Robert Menzies, the Australian Prime Minister during 1939-41, emphasised in his first broadcast to his nation that Australia and New Zealand bore the 'primary risk' in the Pacific and worried about what could trigger the Commonwealth's entry into a war against Japan. He questioned whether the Dominions would go to war if Japan attacked the NEI, or Thailand, or even the Soviet Union. In July 1941 New Zealand wanted a commitment to protecting the NEI but, to her disappointment, Australia and Canada were reluctant to make such a commitment. Nevertheless, Australia committed forces to regional defence including most of its 8th Division, some air force squadrons, and some warships being positioned in Malaya and Singapore. Menzies advocated an armed response if Japan moved against Thailand, but New Zealand saw little point unless there was an adequate force available to resist a Japanese advance.³³⁴

³³¹ Ibid., pp. 82-83.

³³² Ibid., pp. 84-87.

³³³ Wood, *Political and External Affairs*, p. 191.

³³⁴ Ibid., pp. 192, 201.

Looking to America

Increasingly the worry over the Americans' isolationism raised its head. Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador to the USA, warned early in the war, 'there was not any particularly strong feeling ... for Australia and New Zealand, though they were popular as young democracies.' However he also believed the USA would be at war long before Japan was able to threaten the Dominions. New Zealand tended to hopefully view American isolationism as a reaction to 'European entanglements' rather than a disinterest in the Asia-Pacific.³³⁵

Despite his overwhelming re-election in November 1940, Roosevelt had to move carefully away from the isolationist position that was entrenched in the USA. He gradually increased his support for the British Empire but even in July 1941 the British had no clear indication which way the Americans would go should the Japanese attack only British possessions in Asia and the Pacific. Fraser meanwhile tried to have a 'Security Line' established, running from Malaya through the NEI to New Zealand. His intention was, should Japanese forces breach this line, the Commonwealth and NEI would declare war on Japan. Australia and South Africa were against the idea and Britain cautious. Exasperated, Fraser wanted to appeal directly to Roosevelt but Churchill stymied his move.³³⁶

The New Zealand government and military became in any case so distracted by the European war they considered reducing the scale of local defence. The navy suggested that as local defence was at best an insurance policy it was time to see if the premiums were too high. The fall of France, the entry into the war of Italy on the side of the Axis, and the arrival of the German commerce raider *Orion* off New Zealand, all in June 1940, raised the level of worry, but in London self-preservation still ruled. In October the British Government informed New Zealand's Governor-General, the Viscount Galway, George Monckton-Arundell, Britain was in the process of reviewing downwards the supply of warlike stores to all Dominions. The Viscount Galway replied that the situation was changing in the Pacific. While some months before a serious

³³⁵ Wood, *Political and External Affairs*, pp. 192, 193.

³³⁶ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, pp. 156-157.

attack on New Zealand was improbable, now it was sufficiently within the bounds of possibility that defences would need to be built up and maintained to meet the threat.³³⁷ London remained reluctant to arm New Zealand's home defences, other than for protecting shipping. Shortly after 11 March 1941 when Roosevelt signed Lend-Lease into law, ensuring greater supply of the British Empire's forces, the Americans suggested it would be more efficient for supplies destined for the Dominions to go directly there rather than through Britain. The Dominions were supportive but Britain opposed the idea as it would weaken their stranglehold on war supplies and the political leverage the supplies gave the British. Harry Hopkins, Controller of Lend-Lease, was apparently incensed by the British greed. He urged Coates, the New Zealand War Cabinet member responsible for overseas procurement, during a visit to Washington in mid-1941: 'Don't go back to New Zealand until you have obtained your requirements to help defend your country and to help arm your men, where ever they may be.'³³⁸

The New Zealand and British defence chiefs meanwhile persisted with their claims New Zealand had little chance of being subject to any action more than sporadic enemy raiding should Japan enter the war. Fraser was far from convinced. In 1942, speaking with a New Zealand officer seconded to the embassy in Washington, Geoffrey Cox, he noted: 'This war has been one of constant surprises, one which had not followed the course which military advisors had planned.'³³⁹

In early 1941, General Sir Guy Williams, former commander of the Eastern Area forces in Britain during the 1940 invasion scare, was dispatched to New Zealand on the pretext of reorganising its military forces.³⁴⁰ One of his primary purposes was to deflect New Zealand from asking for the 2NZEF back for its own defence. His report for the War Cabinet, delivered on 1 October 1941, grudgingly conceded there was a possibility New Zealand could be subjected to 'limited' invasion. Williams calculated such an invasion would only occur if the Japanese navy obtained a base in the South Pacific and Malaya,

³³⁷ Cooke, *Defending New Zealand*, pp. 246-248.

³³⁸ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, pp. 151, 154-155.

³³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 148.

³⁴⁰ Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman (eds.), *War Diaries 1939-1945: Field Marshal Lord Alanbooke 1939-1945*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, UK, 2001, pp. 148-151.

Singapore and the NEI were lost. Within four months, Japan had provided every one of the worst possible situations he described.³⁴¹ Another of his purposes was to persuade New Zealand to form an armoured brigade (part of a proposed Australian-New Zealand armoured formation) to be deployed to the Middle East 'after the threat of danger to the Dominion has passed.'³⁴² However, Williams abandoned the idea in the face of 'insuperable objections' from Fraser. He did try to recoup some of the War Office's plans by offering forty tanks to enable the creation of a New Zealand Armoured Fighting Vehicle (AFV) school. While this enabled 2NZEF reinforcements to have AFV training, Fraser anticipated the tanks becoming part of New Zealand's home defence forces.³⁴³ The offer was in any case of limited generosity as the Marks I and II Valentine infantry tanks promised were, by late 1941, obsolete.³⁴⁴

The Enemy is Afield

As late as October 1941, the US Chiefs of Staff stated they could contain any Japanese thrust in the Asia-Pacific, with Churchill later writing: 'I confess that in my mind the whole Japanese menace lay in some sinister twilight, compared with our other needs.'³⁴⁵ In November, Japan tried to draw the British into their negotiations with the USA, threateningly pointing out the Dominions had a lot to lose in a Pacific war and bargaining the British would more readily compromise their principles than would the Americans. London carefully avoided entanglement.³⁴⁶ A part of the US State Department was, however, heading in a somewhat different direction. During the same month its Far Eastern Division was working on proposals to give the Australian and Dutch holdings in New Guinea to Japan in exchange for a settlement covering the

³⁴¹ General Guy Williams, 'The Defence of New Zealand Against Japanese Attack', 1 October 1941, Archives NZ, Wellington, EA 1/555, 85/1/8 Part 2.

³⁴² 'Appreciation of the Defence Requirements of New Zealand in the Event of War with Japan', 1941, Archives NZ, Wellington, EA 1/555, 85/1/8 Part 1.

³⁴³ Cooke, *Defending New Zealand*, pp. 251-252.

³⁴⁴ Jeffery Plowman, *Armoured Fighting Vehicles of New Zealand 1939-1959*, JEP Publications, Christchurch, NZ, 1985, pp. 12-14.

³⁴⁵ Patrick Mahoney and Martin Middlebrook, *The Sinking of the Prince of Wales and Repulse: The End of the Battleship Era*, Pen & Sword, Barnsley, UK, 1977, p. 19.

³⁴⁶ Wood, *Political and External Affairs*, pp. 203, 204.

whole of the Pacific. The head of this division asserted it was not a form of appeasement.³⁴⁷ The idea was never advanced.

Japan entered the Second War as a 'surprise' everyone expected. Only the ferocity and effectiveness of their strikes was unexpected. Alister McIntosh, of the Prime Minister's Department, recalled an incident in Wellington barely two days after Japan's entry into the war: 'I shall always remember taking into our cabinet after 11 o'clock at night the BBC news flash that the [battleship HMS] Prince of Wales and the [battle cruiser HMS] Repulse had been sunk by Japanese air attack [off Malaya], and the sombre discussion that ensued.'³⁴⁸ The catch cry published at the time of Luckie's 1873 hoax, 'From the depths of our despair, we cry – Where is the British Navy?', now had the brutal reality to it. New Zealand entered the war against Japan with the same bewildered determination and the same lack of enthusiasm it had entered the war against Germany.³⁴⁹ Organisationally, New Zealand was largely ready, but militarily it was almost defenceless. Wood notes Churchill realised that in order to defeat the Germans there would 'be some hard forfeits to pay in the Far East.' New Zealanders were afraid their country might be one of the forfeits. This was in a sense the end of New Zealand's 'phoney war'. Her traditional and 'fall back' saviour, the RN, could not offer assistance; New Zealand's protective moat seemed to have become an enemy sea lane.³⁵⁰

New Zealand formally declared war with Japan on 9 December 1941.³⁵¹ Two days later Fraser informed the British Government his country had virtually no air force with which to defend itself. There were squadrons of training aircraft and aircrew to help populate the RAF with, but only five modern combat aircraft (Hudson general

³⁴⁷ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, p. 15.

³⁴⁸ Malcolm Templeton (ed.), *An Eye, an Ear, and a Voice: 50 Years in New Zealand's External Relations 1943-1993*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Wellington, NZ, 1993, p. 23.

³⁴⁹ Wood, *Political and External Affairs*, p. 210.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 164. See also <http://WWW.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1942/1942-01-29a.html>, giving Churchill's Commons speech when he admits the possibility of 'paying forfeits in the far east' (accessed 26 January 2017).

³⁵¹ Prime Minister Fraser to SSDA, 'Declaration of war with Japan', 9 December 1941, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/15.

reconnaissance bombers) for New Zealand's own defence, all based in Fiji.³⁵² On 11 December, a secret session of the New Zealand parliament gave the Chiefs of Staff a severe grilling, especially as Lieutenant-General Edward Puttick, Chairman of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, had already given his opinion that anticipated attacks on New Zealand would not amount to more than raids. Puttick saw no reason to mobilise the Territorials as a whole, simply the Fortress Troops. In contrast, the government used the session to order the mobilisation of the Territorial Army, intending a force of 50,000 men ready for home defence by early January.³⁵³ However the Territorial Army, having been bled of experience, arms and equipment in order to dispatch and support 2NZEF in the Middle East, was by now desperately impoverished.³⁵⁴

Historian Peter Cooke notes the Chiefs of Staff maintained their calm about the threat to New Zealand by declaring in January 1942, '[Japanese attacks] cannot rise to the level of war operations experienced in other parts of the world...' The reasons they gave were the country's remoteness, Japan's limited capabilities, and that there were insufficient resources in New Zealand to warrant the effort of an invasion. Cooke goes on to note that the day after the fall of Singapore (15 February 1942) the Chiefs were in a different mood, stating: 'The defence of New Zealand is now primarily related to the possibility of invasion ... It is of the utmost urgency that the organisation for battle control in the north should be completed.'³⁵⁵ Fraser appealed to both the British and Americans for arms. Churchill himself was not as reluctant to help New Zealand as were the British Chiefs of Staff. He pressed his own staff to consider the loyalty shown by New Zealand, declaring: 'They have behaved so well and deserve every help possible.'³⁵⁶

The British Government employed a mixture of intelligence intercepts, considered deduction and some outright guesswork on Japan's intentions. On 13 December 1941 the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs cabled Fraser that the British presumed the

³⁵² Air Staff Notice, 'Outbreak of hostilities', 11 December 1941, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/15.

³⁵³ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, pp. 164-166, 256-257.

³⁵⁴ Wood, *Political and External Affairs*, pp. 211-213.

³⁵⁵ Cooke, *Defending New Zealand*, p. 258.

³⁵⁶ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, pp. 164-166.

Soviets would remain neutral in the Pacific and Japan's initial primary objectives were the taking of Malaya, Singapore, the Philippines and Hong Kong, with repeated attacks on Hawaii. The Secretary went on to foresee raids on the Panama Canal and the possible occupations of Canton and Christmas Islands. He anticipated raiding of India, Australia, the Pacific Islands and New Zealand, with a remote possibility of a landing on Madagascar. Finally, his advisors claimed attacks on the NEI and British Borneo would follow the initial attacks.³⁵⁷ New Zealand was rapidly approaching being in a war zone, not simply a war. The question was whether the ensuing planning was for defences against raiding or invasion, and if the preparations were precautionary or actual.

Forward Defence

New Zealand's defence perimeter was not just its own islands but included Fiji, and to a lesser degree New Caledonia, Western Samoa and Tonga. This was a similar forward defence concept to the Australian perception that their national frontline included the northern shores of Papua-New Guinea and New Britain.³⁵⁸ New Zealand's Emergency Regulations enabled in May 1940 and promulgated on 14 December 1941 were some of the most draconian powers enacted by a Western power during the war. They were at least equal to those in Britain and stronger than either the Australian or American ones. They were multipurpose and would serve to increase the country's war effort and cope with raiding or isolation by Japan, even invasion. On the same day Hong Kong fell, the National Security Organisation (NSO) received a memorandum from the Chief of Naval Staff noting planning for immobilisation or destruction of New Zealand's ports if they were within seven to ten days of being seized by an enemy. This was invasion planning.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ SSSA to Fraser, 'Anticipated Japanese forces next moves', 14 December 1941, Archives NZ, Wellington, PM 81/1/6.

³⁵⁸ Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, pp. 2, 4.

³⁵⁹ Chief of Naval Staff to Organisation National Security, 'Invasion Planning', 31 December 1941, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 020/4/1.

The first sign of American aid nearing New Zealand came on 6 January 1942, when the Royal New Zealand Navy cabled authorities at Apia, Samoa, noting 5000 infantry of the USMC, a company of tanks, and artillery would be landed at Pago Pago, American Samoa, on 17 January.³⁶⁰ Two days after this first message, the Navy warned Apia to expect air raids and to take precautions.³⁶¹ Apprehension increased as the Japanese forces continued advancing down the Malay Peninsula and across Luzon in the Philippines. The Royal Australian Navy had already communicated with the USN Commander in Chief Pacific that Australian and New Zealand intelligence concluded a major build-up of Japanese naval forces was occurring in the Marshall and Caroline Islands, with the New Zealanders believing the target to be Fiji. The Australians offered two Australian and two New Zealand cruisers, asking the USN for additional ships to attack this reported concentration.³⁶²

New Zealand politicians worked through this period cautiously. On 11 January, Fraser cabled Churchill, expressing with measured alarm that all the authoritative opinions of the British Chiefs of Staffs and the warm assurances of British politicians were crumbling. He could see with every boot mark the Japanese forces made advancing south the threat appeared to be increasing. Assurances based on the presence of British and American forces throughout the Far East decreased daily as ships were sunk and garrisons surrendered. The failure of Allied arms became increasingly obvious to Fraser when his own Chiefs of Staff decreased their previous warning of possible Japanese attacks on New Zealand from six months to three months and Fiji could be attacked any time after 17 January. He ended his cable with an apology for troubling Churchill but had achieved the purpose of noting the alarm in New Zealand.³⁶³

³⁶⁰ RNZN to ARTIC 97, Apia, 'Cooperate with Marines landing Pago Pago', 6 January 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/15.

³⁶¹ RNZN Operational Intelligence to Fanning, Apia, Nukualofa, and Raratonga, 'Prepare for air raids', 8 January 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/15.

³⁶² ACHB to Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, 'Concentration of Japanese forces in Caroline and Marshall Islands reported request permission to attack with ANZAC forces', 10 Jan 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/15.

³⁶³ Fraser to Churchill, 11 January 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, PM 011/1 42.

New Zealand authorities also reached out to the Americans at this time. On 25 January, the New Zealand Naval Board pleaded with the British Mission in Washington, asking if American troops headed for the defence of New Caledonia needed to be diverted then could they be sent to New Zealand, due to the perceived imminent threat of invasion. They also warned of a possible Japanese landing on Fiji's Vanu Levu in preparation for an assault on Vitu Levu. Not to be outdone, the British Government cabled New Zealand, on 29 January, noting its 'scorched earth' planning for Pacific colonies and recommended New Zealand undertake planning for the same.³⁶⁴ Four days later the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff advocated the same planning.³⁶⁵

Scorched Earth

'Scorched Earth' or 'Resource Denial,' as planned for New Zealand, was to be scoped in detail by the Emergency Precautions Scheme (EPS) Authority and instigated on command of the local military authority; it was recommended that 'scorched earth' be instigated with 'ruthless efficiency.'³⁶⁶ The concept involved destroying New Zealand's infrastructure and food supplies, avoiding their use by an invading/occupying force. The sole consideration to New Zealand's population was they were to be given as much stockpiled food as they could take away and the remainder destroyed. The planning was undertaken in both great detail and secrecy as the authorities were concerned it would not be carried out as often the people designated to undertake the destruction were also the owners of the property to be destroyed. The authority recommended that in each area a local person be designated and given the authority to enforce the destruction. There was no apparent provision for the welfare of the population post-conquest.³⁶⁷ The concept was not seriously reviewed until March 1943, by which time the threat had

³⁶⁴ SSSA to High Commissioner, UK, Wellington, 'Scorched earth planning', 30 January 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/18/13.

³⁶⁵ 'Advocating scorched earth policy', in minutes of 74th NZ Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 2 February 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/18/13.

³⁶⁶ Circular from Secretary, Emergency Precautions Scheme, 'Don't call it "Scorched Earth"', 11 March 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 020/1/7.

³⁶⁷ Memorandum, Deputy Chiefs Staff General, Navy and Air, 10 January 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/13.

passed, when the EPS was recommended to update and file its planning for the process, but be able to instigate it at short notice, should this ever be required.³⁶⁸

The disaster in Malaya saw a flurry of cables between Wellington and the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (SSDA) over supplies, mostly fighters, required for the defence of New Zealand. Fraser pleaded for fighters to defend New Zealand with. However, with the needs of the Soviet Union and the Middle East having precedence, it was unlikely Britain would spare any of its own aircraft production for a country no longer its direct defence responsibility.³⁶⁹ On the very day the British withdrew from the Malayan mainland onto Singapore (30 January 1942), Fraser dispatched a detailed cable to the SSDA pleading again for fighters.³⁷⁰ On 3 February the SSDA replied, indicating other countries had priority over New Zealand.³⁷¹ The reply arrived at 12.30pm on the following day, followed by another half an hour later listing all the equipment (including Kittyhawk fighters) designated for New Zealand, as and when they became available.³⁷² There is a strong possibility within the second message's wording that it was realised how demoralising the first would be to New Zealand. Apparently this did not mollify Fraser for the following day he sent another cable to the SSDA basically demanding fighters.

The demands by New Zealand to be able to defend itself appear to have stung Churchill for he replied to Fraser explaining the difficulties of shipping fighters from Britain to New Zealand and that any fighters supplied would likely come from the USA. Fraser was sympathetic about Churchill's dilemma replying he was happy to accept the American fighters. However the shift in political power was revealed in Fraser's request

³⁶⁸ Circular, Secretary, EPS, 'Denial of Resources', 11 March 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 020/1/7.

³⁶⁹ Graham Clayton, *Last Stand in Singapore: The Story of 488 Squadron RNZAF*, Random House, Auckland, NZ, 2008, pp. 9-10.

³⁷⁰ Fraser to SSDA, 'Need for fighter aircraft', 30 January 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/10.

³⁷¹ SSDA to Fraser, 'Difficulties in sending supplies', 4 February 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/10.

³⁷² SSDA to Fraser, 'List of weapons which may be sent', 4 February 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/10.

to Churchill to pass his cable on to Roosevelt. Fraser also listed four principal reasons why Britain needed to ensure Australia and New Zealand were defended: they were British Dominions; they fed and clothed Britain; they contribute to Britain fighting forces; and ‘they were intrinsically desirable to the enemy for colonisation and commodities.’ He went on to list Australia and New Zealand’s principal benefits to the USA, including they were an essential intermediate stage in the trans-Pacific resupply routes, and the only Allied land left from which to defend the SWPA should the ABDA Command areas fall.³⁷³

Fraser, still arguing New Zealand’s case, noted he recognised Japan’s capacity for conquest was not unlimited but that it was still possible their next moves could include securing Burma, invading India through Burma, or invading Australia or New Zealand. He opined the invasion of India was not practical in the near future but ‘the invasion of Australia appears immediately advantageous to the Japanese.’³⁷⁴ Fraser maintained Australia and New Zealand were essential as bases for a counteroffensive because ‘Without these two, the US’s chances of effectively operating from the South Pacific are exceedingly thin.’³⁷⁵ A highly secret cable arrived on 3 March from the SSSA addressed to Fraser. In it the British noted a concentration of the IJN at Singapore but reassured Fraser the Allies were ready to deal with any aggression by Japan.³⁷⁶ In reality the signal prompted fear of the next possible Japanese move. The Australians conferred with New Zealand and dispatched a cable to SSSA on 5 March reiterating that Australia and New Zealand were in danger of attack, as were Port Moresby, New Caledonia and Fiji. The Dominions argued the loss of Australia and New Zealand would mean the loss of the only areas from which to launch offensive action against Japanese forces.³⁷⁷

³⁷³ Fraser to SSSA/Churchill, ‘Reasons for supplies’, 17 February 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/10.

³⁷⁴ Fraser to SSSA, ‘Reasons for supplies’, 17 February 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/10.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ SSSA to Nash, ‘Situation with Japanese’, 3 March 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, PM 081/1/6.

³⁷⁷ Australian Prime Minister John Curtin to Fraser, 5 March 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, PM 081/1/6.

Return of the Sons Home

At the same time, New Zealand became caught in the crossfire between the British and the Australians over the return of Dominion troops to defend their own countries from the Japanese assault. While New Zealand never directly asked for its infantry division back, the collapse of Allied forces in the Asia-Pacific made the country acutely conscious of its lack of trained men and equipment. Britain, well aware of this apprehension, promised to organise for American troops to be landed in New Zealand instead of returning the 2nd Division. The US Army division offered was ill-trained, untested, and slow to arrive. Apparently fearful the New Zealand government would actually demand its division be brought home, as the Australians had done, the British took off the velvet gloves. On 10 March 1942, the same day as the Australian 7th Division embarked at Port Said for home, the SSSA dispatched a cable to Fraser threatening twice not to send additional American troops to Australasia unless both the 2NZEF and the Australian 9th Division (the last of the three Australian divisions in the Middle East) remained in Egypt. Further flights of American troops were dangled in front of Fraser to influence his decision, with the suggestion that having American troops in New Zealand would make the country more attractive for the Americans to defend. The SSSA ended with the blandishment: 'The United Kingdom has admired your constancy of spirit and devotion to the cause which has animated your government and people for not asking for your troops back.'³⁷⁸

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Clement Attlee, sent Fraser a further cable on 15 March indicating all shipping was committed to reinforcing the Middle East and India, leaving none to bring the New Zealand division home. He went on to explain that distance and the USN would make any invasion of Australia or New Zealand impractical and repeated the very questionable promise that should either be 'strongly' invaded then Britain would 'come to your side at all costs.' Attlee concluded the Dominions could be subject to minor invasions in attempts to draw off British forces

³⁷⁸ SSSA to Fraser, 'Movement of reinforcements to ME and FE', 11 March 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/10.

but neither should ask for the return of their troops as the already offered American troops would reach their shores before any of their own could be returned.³⁷⁹

Fraser replied the same day with a lengthy cable, addressed directly to Churchill. Using measured, but pointed, wording he rebutted the British position and raised serious NZ fears. He welcomed the promised American troops but feared their arrival date could prove too late for New Zealand, adding a preference for 'half the troops, in half the time.' He emphasised New Zealand had not asked for its troops back and did not then, but when the 2NZEF learnt of the Australians' return home it would create a very difficult position for the Government. The men had already been away from home for two years, seeing hard fighting, and the feeling was spreading within the division that 'their proper place is at home when their country was in danger.' This was a point of view for which Fraser had a lot of sympathy. Having shown this card, Fraser then trumped Churchill with his own constant excuse of a shortage of shipping by declaring that with this shortage New Zealand could not see the possibility of reinforcing 2NZEF for some while. Fraser noted also Freyberg's trained troops would be of much greater value to the country than would any inexperienced US division. Finally, Fraser broached the possibility of New Zealand being targeted by the Japanese forces as a stepping stone to the east coast of Australia and warned the loss of either would make the conduct of the Pacific war extremely difficult if not impossible.³⁸⁰

On 21 March, Fraser cabled Nash, New Zealand's Deputy Prime Minister and Ambassador to the USA, regarding the latest appreciation of the New Zealand defence situation by the British Chiefs of Staff. In their appreciation, the Chiefs had expressed the view that New Zealand's defence was primarily a naval matter and the chance of invasion was slight. They then explained, should Japanese forces take a limited area of New Zealand, it would only require between two and seven divisions for the complete occupation of the country. Somewhat distrusting of the British Chiefs of Staff opinions, Fraser asked Nash to emphasise to the Americans that the British appreciation of New Zealand's position was vastly different from the latest New Zealand one. Fraser was alarmed by the suggestion the Japanese forces could successfully occupy a dominating

³⁷⁹ SSSA to Fraser, 15 March 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/10.

³⁸⁰ Fraser to Churchill, 15 March 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/10.

portion of New Zealand with as small a force as two divisions.³⁸¹ Three days later Nash relayed to Fraser a message given him by Roosevelt who agreed with Fraser's appreciation of the urgent need to defend Fiji. Roosevelt assured Fraser the USA would do everything it could to ensure its defence. The inherent suggestion from Roosevelt's reply is he agreed with Fraser's appreciation rather than that of the British.³⁸² Fraser cabled the SSDA the same day, rejecting the British appreciation of New Zealand's defence situation and demanding assistance.³⁸³ Four days later the British High Commissioner to New Zealand sent Puttick, Chief of the General Staff, a long list of the equipment New Zealand would require to defend itself from the various levels of attack the British saw as possible. He then pointed out the British could not help and that New Zealand should approach the Americans.³⁸⁴

On 25 March 1942, Lieutenant Commander W. E. Parry, RN, New Zealand's Chief of the Naval Staff and First Naval Member, presented a naval appreciation of New Zealand's position. He acknowledged Australia and New Zealand were essential bases for any offensive against Japan and this required keeping open their sea lanes to the USA. Parry also noted 'present indications are that Japan intends to strike simultaneously westward towards India and southwards towards Australia and New Zealand.' The southern strike was to deny the Allies bases in Australasia. Concentrations at Rabaul suggested there would shortly be an attack on north-west Australia and northern Queensland. The Japanese military were assessed as having adequate forces to undertake these attacks, but a shortage of troop transports would limit forces able to be landed at any one time. Parry doubted the current defences of New Caledonia and Fiji could withstand a serious assault. He perceived New Zealand was in slightly less danger than Australia but noted her defences were inadequate to cope with a landing should one occur.³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ Fraser to Nash, 31 March 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, PM 081/1/6.

³⁸² Nash to Fraser, 24 March 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/10.

³⁸³ Fraser to SSDA, 24 March 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/4.

³⁸⁴ NZ High Commissioner, London, to CGS, NZ, 28 March 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/08/10.

³⁸⁵ Commodore Parry, 71/19/4, Imperial War Museum, London, UK.

On 18 April, New Zealand received Security Intelligence Circular No. 16 from Australia. It noted the Japanese forces were moving towards Australia and New Zealand, but it was 'hoped' the enemy's commitment to the developing Burma campaign would influence their strategy in the South Pacific by reducing the forces available. The Australians anticipated a Japanese offensive in eastern New Guinea. The report saw the Japanese forces taking a two-month consolidation after occupying New Britain and then striking south to the New Hebrides, New Caledonia and mainland Australia. A seaborne assault on Port Moresby was expected. This of course was subsequently blunted by the Battle of the Coral Sea during 4-8 May 1942, after which New Zealand received another Security Intelligence Circular (No. 20) giving the USN losses in ships accurately but vastly overestimating the losses suffered by the IJN. It is an excellent example of the poverty of accurate intelligence at this time.³⁸⁶

The first meeting of the Pacific Powers was held in Washington on 26 May 1942, where Admiral King detailed the situation in the Pacific at this time. He pointed out the Japanese controlled a considerable proportion of the SWPA, holding positions enabling them to threaten or attack Australia or the lines of communication between there and the USA. King regarded the Coral Sea action as successful but only the first of many needed. He had, as his first act on taking command, ordered Nimitz to hold the Midway-Hawaiian line and the Hawaiian-Fiji-Australia sea route at all costs. The next action King anticipated would be a Japanese strike at Midway and another at the Aleutian Islands off Alaska. He emphasised that if Hawaii could not be held, then the westward communications would be broken and Australia could be lost.³⁸⁷ At the same meeting, Field Marshal Sir John Dill, Chief of the British Staff Mission in Washington, speaking for the British, explained the recent Japanese air attack on Ceylon had been beaten off with heavy losses to the Japanese forces and this defeat had severely disrupted their plans. The Japanese navy actually lost only seven aircraft, with fifteen damaged. The British had meanwhile lost a number of major naval units and the

³⁸⁶ Security Intelligence Circular No. 20, 'War with Japan', 16 May 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, REC 353/1/7 Part 1.

³⁸⁷ Nash to Fraser, 1 June 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/10. p.1.

Japanese navy, having secured its western flank, were able to return the aircraft carrier used in the raid on Ceylon to the Pacific in time for Midway.³⁸⁸

A Meeting with Uncle

The next meeting of the Associated Pacific Powers was held in Washington on 28 August 1942. This was 21 days after the first American landings on Guadalcanal, 19 days after the Battle of Savo Island, and seven days after the Battle of Tenaru (Alligator Creek), which was a significant land victory for the Americans at Guadalcanal. King saw Allied basic strategy in the Pacific as holding current positions, keeping open the supply lines to Australia, and conducting limited offensive objectives. He downplayed the Battle of Savo Island attributing the Allied losses to the IJN's warships being equipped with 'all up-to-date forms of radar'. He then went on to explain the Americans had landed on Guadalcanal just in time to prevent the Japanese finishing the construction of a 'large and complete (air) base, from which to conduct operations to the south-eastwards.'³⁸⁹ King also elaborated on the Japanese landing four days earlier at Milne Bay, Papua-New Guinea. He speculated Japan could attempt the seizure of Port Moresby or even an operation against Australia, under cover of the Solomon operations. He also saw as a possibility a Japanese attack against Fiji or Samoa. King believed the major portion of the Japanese Combined Fleet was still based at Truk in the Mandated Islands, with intelligence indicating the Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet (Yamamoto) had arrived at Rabaul. King emphasised he considered the main Japanese attack had not been 'launched yet' and the Japanese reactions to date could be termed as only 'reconnaissance in force'.³⁹⁰

Communications between the USN South Pacific Command and New Zealand did not include intelligence. On 31 October 1942 the USN Liaison Officer in Wellington, Captain J. P. Olding, USN, cabled his superiors that the New Zealand Government had complained to him they 'literally and actually receive no information from the South Pacific area headquarters. Their only information comes from press releases and daily

³⁸⁸ Ibid. p.1.

³⁸⁹ Nash to Fraser, 1 June 1942, Archives NZ. P.1.

³⁹⁰ Ibid. p.1.

intelligence reports from SWPA in Melbourne.’ He noted they ‘were not asking for operational information.’ Olding explained the Commander South Pacific had asked permission to attach a RNZN liaison officer to his staff, but this was declined.³⁹¹ This attitude left the New Zealand government in an intelligence limbo forcing it to prepare for the worst as it knew nothing different.

At the fourth Pacific Powers conference on 20 November, King explained the Americans now believed the Japanese forces, while keeping up the bombardment of the US forces on Guadalcanal, were husbanding their ground troops and building them up in preparation for a major assault designed to ‘recapture Guadalcanal’. King saw the Japanese forces building up for a major strike but he was unsure whether it would be at Guadalcanal or New Guinea.³⁹² By this time, regular security briefings were being distributed to the New Zealand Government and military. These came from a variety of sources and had a wide range of secrecy ratings. MacArthur’s General Headquarters signals intelligence section, the Central Bureau, issued regular secret summaries; the British daily intelligence telegrams came through the Governor-General; and a multitude of other reports and assessment were issued to New Zealand. FRUMEL (USN Fleet Radio Unit in Melbourne) meanwhile offered little to Australia and less to New Zealand.³⁹³ The FRUMEL reports received by New Zealand were sanitised to disguise their data’s origin, especially if gained from signals intercepts such as ‘Ultra’ and ‘Magic’.³⁹⁴

The contrast between what ‘senior’ and ‘junior’ national leaders were told at this time was quite marked. While Churchill and Roosevelt read ‘raw’ Ultra/Magic intercepts and were briefed daily on the material obtained, lesser leaders were not given access to them. Fraser, Nash and the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff were almost certainly not given

³⁹¹ Captain J. F. Olding, USN, Attaché, Wellington, to Admiral Halsey, 31 October 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/68/15.

³⁹² ‘Meeting of Military Representatives of Associated Pacific Powers’, 28 August 1942, Archives NZ, Wellington, NA 030/08/10.

³⁹³ Smith, *The Emperor’s Codes*, pp. 169-170.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

any such briefings; they simply read the sanitised Intelligence Summaries.³⁹⁵ It is believed limited and specific material was given to New Zealand's Chief of Naval Staff who had limited awareness of 'Ultra' and 'Magic'.³⁹⁶ New Zealand intelligence gathering personnel meanwhile fed HUFDUFF (High Frequency Direction Finding), Electronic Fingerprinting and signal intercepts to overseas units for processing but they did not receive back the processed data except in sanitised periodic intelligence summaries.³⁹⁷ Basically kept in a very dim intelligence light, New Zealand's leaders were only occasionally given the full glare of reality. For example, a few days after the Battle of Savo Island a New Zealand party, including Fraser, arrived by flying boat at New Caledonia and presented themselves at Admiral Ghormley's headquarters. Ghormley aggressively informed Fraser about the enormity of the defeat and the resulting precariousness of the Allies' position before finishing by stating there was nothing more he could do for New Zealand at that point and telling Fraser he should return home and 'look to his country's defences.' A very chastened and apprehensive group of New Zealanders returned home.³⁹⁸ With no other sources of high grade intelligence the delegates could only take Ghormley's information at face value—though it would transpire Ghormley had become excessively pessimistic, and was shortly to be replaced.

The Reality of Compromise

The last quarter of 1942 saw Fraser and the New Zealand government in the cleft stick of contesting demands precipitated by a growing manpower shortage in New Zealand. The Australians, faced with rapidly growing attrition of their troops in Papua-New Guinea, demanded and received their 9th Division home from the Middle East. From

³⁹⁵ Ronald Lewin, *Ultra Goes To War*, Pen & Sword, Barnsley, UK, 1978, pp. 62-63; Kahn, *The Code Breakers*, p. 24; Dr John Tonkin-Covell, Massey University, email to author, 25 November 2011; John Brandon, historian, Government Communications Security Bureau, email to author, 21 December 2011.

³⁹⁶ Tonkin-Covell, 25 November 2011.

³⁹⁷ John Tonkin-Covell, 'The Collectors: Naval, Army and Air Intelligence in the New Zealand Armed Forces during the Second World War', PhD thesis, University of Waikato, 2000, p. 55.

³⁹⁸ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, p. 208.

this point there was no Australian land force presence in the Middle East. This created the trigger point at which Fraser had warned Churchill he would have to ask for the New Zealanders' return too. The 2nd Division had recently taken 4,000 casualties at the First Battle of El Alamein and took a further 10 per cent loss at the second battle and, having received no reinforcements since Pearl Harbor, the division was in considerable difficulties.³⁹⁹

With the main threat to the South Pacific having passed, the contest at this stage was between better relations with the Australians by bringing the 2nd Division home to eventually fight alongside the Australians in the Pacific or to remain onside with the British and the Americans who both demanded the division remain in the Middle East. In December 1942, the New Zealand Parliament bit the bullet and decided to leave 2NZEF in the Middle East.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹ J. R. M. Butler (ed), *The History of the Second World War*, United Kingdom Military Series, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume IV, *The Destruction of the Axis forces in Africa*, Naval and Military Press edition, London, 1966, pp. 784-798.

⁴⁰⁰ Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield*, p. 208-223.

CONCLUSION

The Concluding View

Peril or ‘nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror’

This thesis has considered whether New Zealand’s 1942 defence preparations and the population’s alarm in relation to Japan were justified. This thesis has worked its way through the principle drivers which confirmed or denigrated the need for New Zealand’s defence preparation, teasing them out and now weaving the strands into a conclusion.

Fear of Invasion

New Zealand had an historical fear of being raided by Britain’s enemies but not one of invasion. The concept of being protected from invasion by the RN was deeply embedded in the Australasian psyche. Even after years of the British racking up qualifications and conditions on its fleet coming to the rescue in the event it was needed, and even when the RN literally announced it would not be coming, the British were still asked for assistance. The reality was Australia and New Zealand could not defend themselves against a determined invasion by a major maritime power and required protection by another major maritime power. In the end, all New Zealand could do was follow Ghormley’s dismissive remark after Savo Island and ‘look to their defences.’ With every British position paper on Japan as a threat seemingly disproved or questionable, the New Zealand Government could only prepare to destroy the country’s infrastructure and pauper its people rather than gift the country to Japan.

Intelligence

Intelligence on the Japanese actions and intentions is one of the primary drivers during 1942, but one that shed only occasional in-depth insights. Too often the Americans’ successful decryption of IJN messages before the Battle of Midway is presumed to be the norm rather than the exception it was. ‘Magic’ transcripts were vast in numbers but the military insights revealed by the medium’s owners were relatively few and limited;

the political data was often poorly read and even more poorly extrapolated. The IJN's codebooks were only partially understood for most of 1942, and the IJA's codebooks were not understood until after the invasion scare had passed. The difficulty of the task and the paucity of available knowledge during 1942 left governments such as the New Zealand and Australian War Cabinets so bereft of insight they had to prepare defences against the worst scenario case. This was a natural reaction. Even Britain refused to let down its massive anti-invasion guard until well into 1942, despite the threat of German invasion having long since receded and the growing knowledge of German planning through Enigma.

Australia

Unlike New Zealand, Australia had a deep fear of invasion, especially from Asia. Like Britain in 1940-41, Australia, faced with a realistic and imminent threat of invasion in 1942, pulled back from supporting New Zealand. Only in the early desperate months of 1942 did it briefly cooperate with New Zealand and lend actual support. Then, when the Americans separated Australia and New Zealand into different theatres, for their own political needs, New Zealand all but disappeared from the Australians' radar. Even worse, the Australians perceived New Zealand as selfish and unsympathetic to Australia's needs, a point of view reciprocated by New Zealand.

Britain

Britain, so long the centre of New Zealand's world, proved a 'paper tiger' or rather 'lion' when Japan entered the war. Only prepared to or actually capable of actively defending itself, the Mediterranean, the Middle East and (if pressed) India, she basically abandoned the defence of Australasia to the Americans—or more accurately to the hope the Americans would and could defend the region. Not unsympathetic to Australasia's plight, especially faithful New Zealand, Britain saw herself as so central to the survival of the British Empire that she was prepared to lose distant appendages to retain its core. The value of these appendages was the reinforcements and materials they could provide Britain rather than their actual existence. There was a strategic argument for this position and one that required a sacrificial attitude in the appendages.

America

New Zealand, having found itself basically abandoned by its tribal group, turned for help to a nation it perceived more by its myths than its reality. The USA in 1941 proved a disjointed society lacking the unity of race, heritage or religion, with the 'American dream' still wounded by the Great Depression and isolationist memories of the First World War. It was unified, not so much by the threat of Germany, but by astute leadership and the reality of Japanese assault. The 'great arsenal of democracy' was a cupboard nearly bare and very unready for war in 1941-42. The US Army, like the New Zealand Army, had for years been starved of resources and training; the USN however was much more ready for war and, rapidly recovering from the initial defeats and promptly carried the battle to the enemy.

The USN's enemy of choice was the Japanese navy and the Pacific their battle area of choice; added to this was the near battle-ready USMC. This combination saved Australasia from at the least isolation, at the worst invasion. The cost was terrible. The USN's fleet carriers remained the Americans' only real strike force in 1942 and one which on several occasions was reduced to one flight deck against multiple Japanese ones. On at least one occasion the USN had no operational flight decks in the Pacific, displaying how thin this naval shield, so essential to New Zealand, actually was. But from the American victories at Midway (enabled by intelligence) and Guadalcanal, the threat to the South Pacific and to New Zealand receded.

Japan

Japan entered the Pacific War carefully tending the seedlings of its own defeat. The country was administered by a compromise committee of 'tribal elders', headed by a succession of compromise leaders who bowed to a god-king without power and of only limited influence. The massive weapon the state created to protect its independence in a colonising world outgrew the state's ability to control and began to set their own agendas of conquest. Driven by a hubris of perceived military capacity, Japan built an effective but brittle force of attack that succeeded only when the enemy was ill-equipped and ill-prepared. Japan entered the Second World War when it considered its

potential enemies either on the brink of defeat or incapable of resisting their form and capacity for brief, ruthless warfare.

The initial agreement between the IJN and the IJA was to seize the resources of South-East Asia and encapsulate them in a defensive perimeter in order to maintain their war capacity. The IJN believed it needed to continue on the attack in order to keep the Allied forces off balance and thereby incapable of mounting a major counterattack. Having established the planned defensive perimeter the IJA desperately needed to concentrate on its real target, China. The Doolittle raid on Tokyo in early 1942 exposed the fallacy of the Japanese defensive perimeter. The Japanese forces realised that without expanding the perimeter to incorporate Fiji, Samoa, New Caledonia and possibly Midway and Hawaii they stood to have the initial perimeter gnawed into collapse as the Allies recovered. Even the taking of northern Australia had logic if the expanded perimeter was to be held. However, the Japanese forces, astounded at their initial successes, paused, not so much for a lack of capacity or aggression but for a lack of plans. Literally they could not agree what to do next. The losses at Midway caused the IJN to recoil in order to recover. They still had superior numbers but had lost the initiative.

In Summary

Were New Zealand's 1942 defence preparations in relation to Japan justified? New Zealand, basically abandoned by its mother state and its nearest sibling, denuded of its principal forces, and mostly denied reinforcements and supplies, while an apparently unstoppable enemy advanced towards them. Britain, the only source of intelligence and military advice at the start of the Pacific War, almost completely reversed its positive military prophecies and instead began warning New Zealand of imminent invasion, while abandoning the Dominion to an unknown ally whose interest and capacity were yet to be proved.

Japan was determined to dominate New Zealand by air and sea, severing it from its allies and thus preventing it from acting as a base for any counter attack; only battle losses, not lack of intent, prevented this happening. New Zealand's desperate hardening

of its defences throughout 1942, the draconian legislation enacted, and the mobilisation of its people, its resources and its wealth were all justified in light of the enemy's intent, the paucity of knowledge regarding its enemy's intentions, and the uncertainty whether its allies would help defend it.

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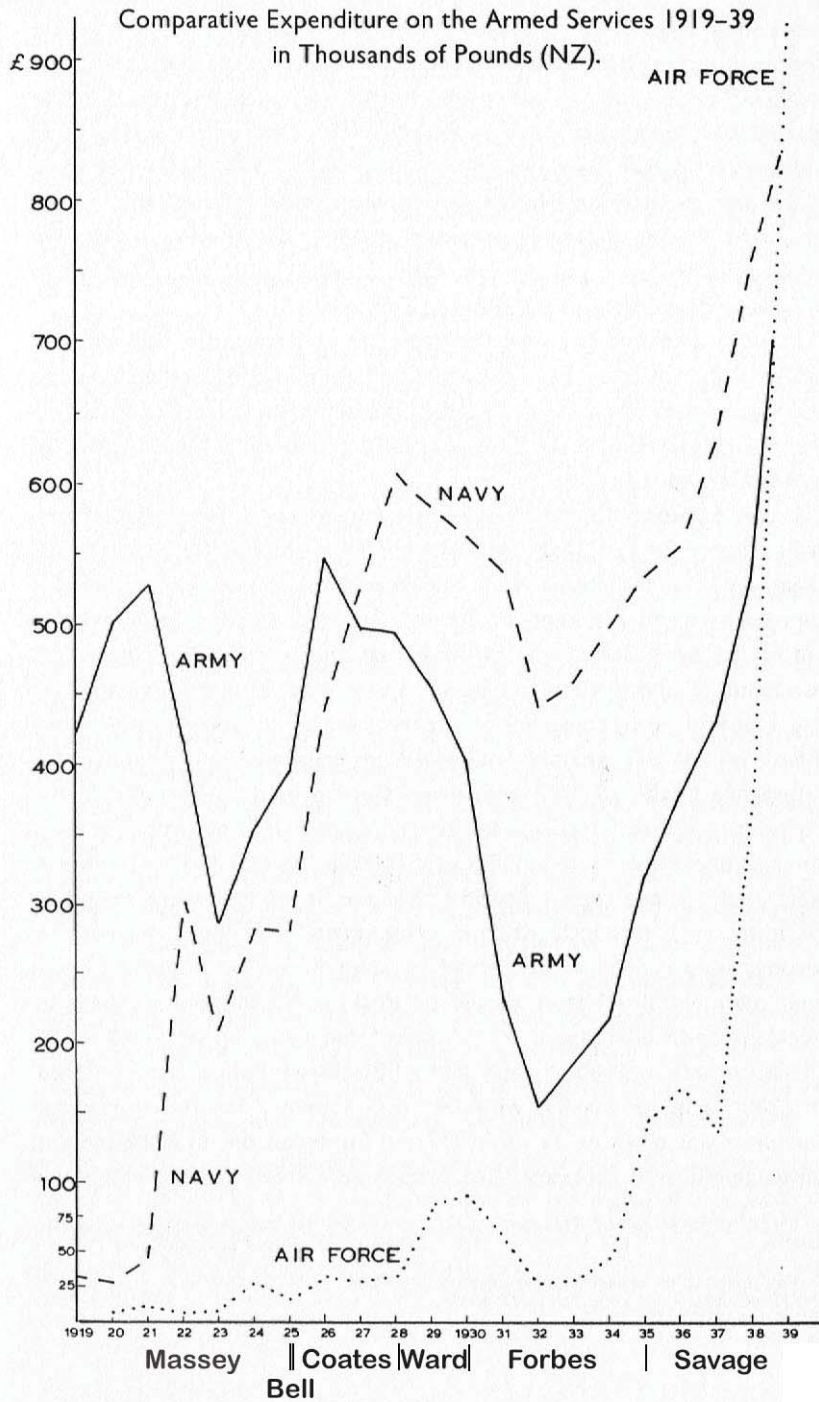
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Appendix A: Expenditure on NZ Armed Forces 1919-1939



Appendix B: 'Magic' summary issued 18 April 1942

1. The accompanying 'Magic' summary was issued by the United States War Department on 18 April 1942.
2. It is filed by the United States National Archives under Record Group (RG) 457, Entry 9001, Box 1.
3. The entire summary for 18 April 1942 is reproduced here for purposes of integrity even though the relevant section 1 occupies only part of page 1.
4. It should be remembered this is the translator's version and represents only a summary of the original message.
5. There is nothing in this summary which indicates the item is regarded to be of particular significance by the Chief of Staff's intelligence personnel save that it is the first in the Indian Theatre section.

Togo Shigenori
Japanese Foreign Minister
OCT 41 - SEPT 1 42
APR 45 - ~~APR 45~~
SEP 2

SRS 575

War Department
Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2
April 13, 1942.

MAGIC SUMMARY

INDIAN THEATER

1. Direction of Japanese Future Attacks

On April 13th, the following conversation occurred between Ambassador Ott and the Japanese Foreign Minister:

"Ott said that he would like to ask whether Japan's future attacks were to be centered in India or Australia, and also that the recent Japanese attacks on Ceylon would indicate to him that Japan was doing this in order to interfere with British-Indian relations. Judging from these Japanese operations he said he was thinking that probably it was the former. In reply to this the Minister said, although Japan had opened attacks on Ceylon and ports north of that, gradually they would extend operations to Western Indian Seas, and he presumed this would no doubt coincide with Germany's wishes."

2. Axis Declaration on India

The Japanese Foreign Office is pressing for speed on a joint Japanese, German and Italian declaration regarding India. On April 13th, after the apparent failure of the Cripps mission, the Japanese Foreign Office urged the present time as a "golden opportunity." On the 15th, German Ambassador Ott and Japanese Foreign Minister Togo conferred and at that time Ott said he would without doubt be able to obtain permission of Germany to publish the declaration at once. Italy seems to agree.

ANZAB THEATER

3. Garrison of Madagascar

The Japanese Ambassador at Ankara forwarded to Tokyo on April 14th the following information obtained from the Italian Military Attache:

Present troops now on Madagascar seem now to consist of:

Infantry:	6 Battalions
Artillery:	5 Companies
Old-style tank troops:	1 Company
Cruisers:	1
Submarines:	3
Auxiliary craft:	2
Airplanes:	20
Airfields:	15

DECLASSIFIED per Sec. 5, E. O. 11652
by Director, NSA/Chief, CSS

Date: 1 Feb 78

MEDITERRANEAN AND NEAR EAST THEATER

4. Characteristics of American Light Tank M-5

Weight: 13 tons
 Thickness of armor: -----millimeters, and it is
 equipped with:
 37 millimeter machine guns: 1
 Brownings: 7
 Machine guns, Model 62: 4
 Anti-aircraft machine guns: 1

Their speed is 28 kilometers per hour

GENERAL

5. Distribution of British Fleet as of March 21st

<u>Locality</u>	<u>Battle-ships</u>	<u>Carriers</u>	<u>Heavy Cruisers</u>	<u>Light Cruisers</u>	<u>Destroyers</u>
North Sea and English-French coast	4	5	14	5	128
Mediterranean	1	2	10	0	48
Red Sea--Indian Ocean	3	2	13	5	99
Eastern Atlantic	0	0	3	2	13
Western Atlantic	0	2	3	0	11
Pacific	1	0	7	1	14

ATLANTIC THEATER

6. Production of Conveyances, Electric Power and Aluminum by Germany

Ambassador Oshima, on April 13th, reported from Berlin to Tokyo as follows:

"The grand scale mobilization of men has shown its effect in shortage of industrial manpower, while the increase in number of locomotives and freighters sent to the East (it is estimated that about 10% of the total has been sent to the East), has resulted in decreasing internal transportation power. The above

two conditions have affected all branches of industry greatly. It is especially noticeable that, due to this, the price of coal has risen, and the supply of raw materials has become disrupted; thus the indirect effects cannot be considered lightly.

"As a matter of fact, at this time to actually carry out the plan for a great increase in production would seem to be a most difficult thing to accomplish. What the Government is praying for now in regard to the production of defense material is, first, to establish a rational division of work between the industries of the home country and the occupied countries; and, second, to complete the centralization plan by simplifying all domestic industry. Thus by accomplishing a complete cooperation internally and externally, Germany hopes to produce the maximum from their already existing production plants.

"Important points in different production lines are as follows:

"a. Ship construction. In order to lessen the difficulty connected with shortage of transportation, they are planning to increase the use of river boats and are planning for an increase of river boat construction, both in the home country (Germany proper) shipyards and the Poland shipyards, to a total of 60,000 tons for the coming year.

"b. Railways. The new plans include the plan to make all of the German railways double track, as well as the construction of a new line, with the object of developing the Ukraine, between Rostov, Odessa, Lemberg, Breslau and Berlin. Although some work has been started on the latter, for the present at least not much can be expected of this construction. As regards locomotives and cars, in order to make up for those that have been sent to the Eastern Front and those which have been lost to the enemy, new construction is being carried out in the factories of the occupied countries, and newly made locomotives and cars are often observed now on the railways of the German lines.

"The plan of construction for this year is 200 locomotives (50% to be produced in the Western occupied parts), 500 passenger cars (80% to be produced in the occupied countries in the West), 1,000 freight cars (50% to be produced in Western occupied countries.)

"c. Electric power. Domestically, in order to develop a heavy industry center in Silesia, a plan has been made to build an electric power plant here. In the occupied countries the water power at Trondheim and Telemark in Norway is being considered. Also a single electric power company is to be established

in the Baltic mountain area, and any already existing electrical power plants are being merged into one large plant in various districts.

"d. Aircraft. Besides the factories in the home country the factories in occupied France are especially being used, and every effort is being made for increased production (20% of total output is from occupied France.) - - - - - Including all types, the production will probably be about 2,000 and several hundred per month ?

"Also the most important material, aluminum, is being produced in Norway, and in connection with the before mentioned electrical power plant, a new plant for the production of aluminum has already been completed and the total production here has already reached 40,000 tons ? As reference, I might mention that the total aluminum production in the home country (Germany proper) per year is about 250,000 tons, and the French occupied territory also produces about 50,000 tons."

ATLANTIC THEATER

7. Soviet Defense Production

Japanese Ambassador OSHIMA has submitted the following as reflecting the German military opinion of Soviet defense production as of February 1942:

Compared to before German attack:

Tanks	-	59% *
Motor cars	-	62% *
Plane bodies	-	27%
Plane engines	-	23%

* Probably only 40% due to shortage of steel, iron and parts.

Guns (monthly)

310 - Light (7.52 - 10.5 millimeters)
220 - Medium (15.2 millimeters)
105 - Heavy (over 15.2 millimeters)

The Light and Medium gun factories are at Gorky and the heavy at Leningrad.

Ammunition (monthly)

1,100,000 rounds for light guns
350,000 rounds for medium guns
25,000 rounds for heavy guns

Tanks (monthly)

525 light tanks
750 heavy tanks

Tokyo estimates 600 planes and 1,000 trucks are being produced although their reports indicate 2,000 planes and 100 trucks per month.

However, remodeling of tank factories for production of improved T 60 (5 to 8 tons) and KV (45 to 62 tons) has probably reduced the above figures to about 385 light tanks, 525 heavy tanks.

CHINA THEATER

8. United Nations and Japanese losses in China

On April 7, 1942, the Japanese Foreign Minister sent the following War Bulletin to his Ambassador in Rome:

China is completely rid of British and American domination. From the beginning of the Greater East Asia war until the end of March, the enemy lost 5,333 dead and 18,453 captured; 30 airplanes shot down, 4 gunboats sunk, and 13 river craft sunk. Captured material:

Airplanes	-	5
Tanks	-	17
Automobiles	-	1470
Railroad cars	-	30
Torpedo boats	-	2
Anti-aircraft guns	-	201
Heavy and light machine guns	-	1333
Rifles	-	12443

The Japanese casualties were 2,538 killed and 6,332 wounded. In the attack on Colombo on April 5th, the Japanese Navy Air Forces inflicted heavy losses upon enemy shipping and airplanes and military establishments. This bulletin was also sent to Switzerland and Chile.

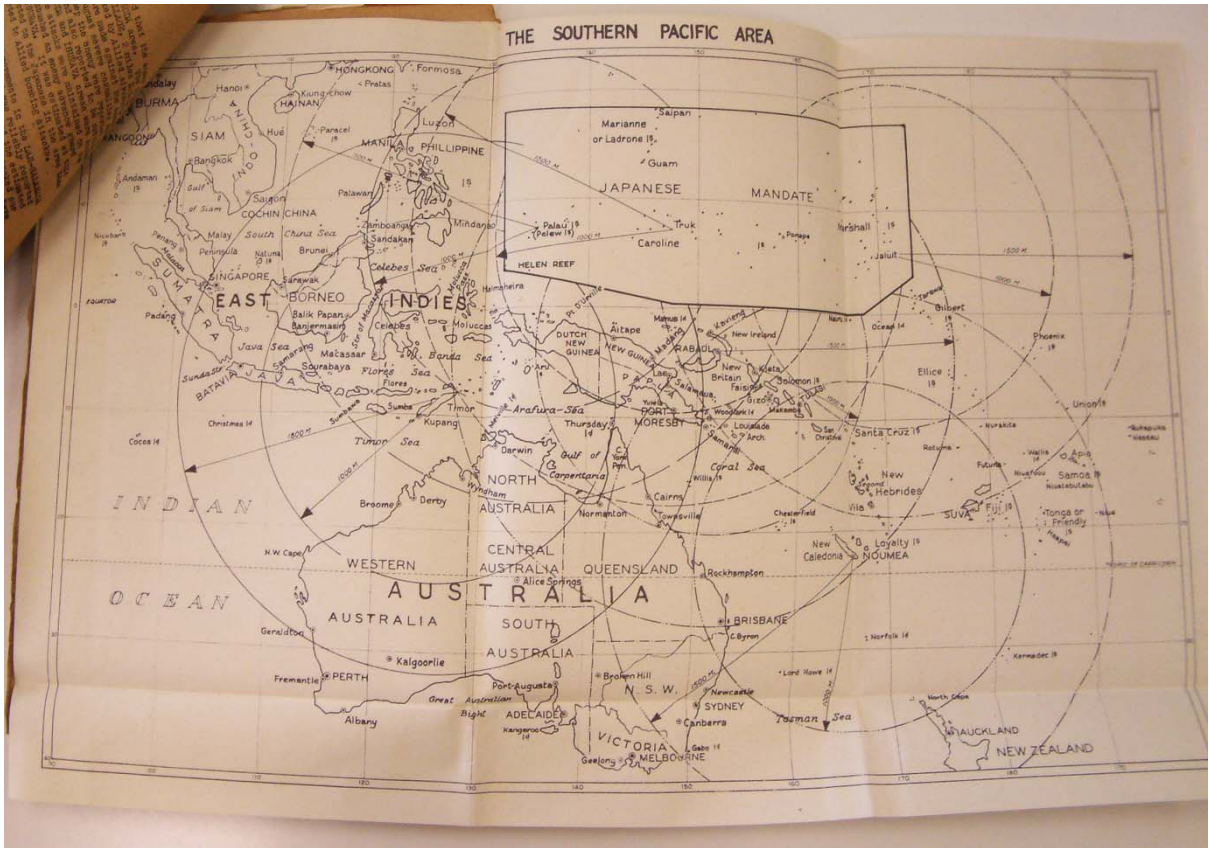
Appendix C: Maps of potential air domination of Australia and New Zealand from proposed Japanese air bases, original war time Allied map and a modern edition.

The Wartime Map

1. The displayed operational radius markings on this map are 1500 and 1000 miles, approximately those of the G3M Nell and the A6M Zeke.

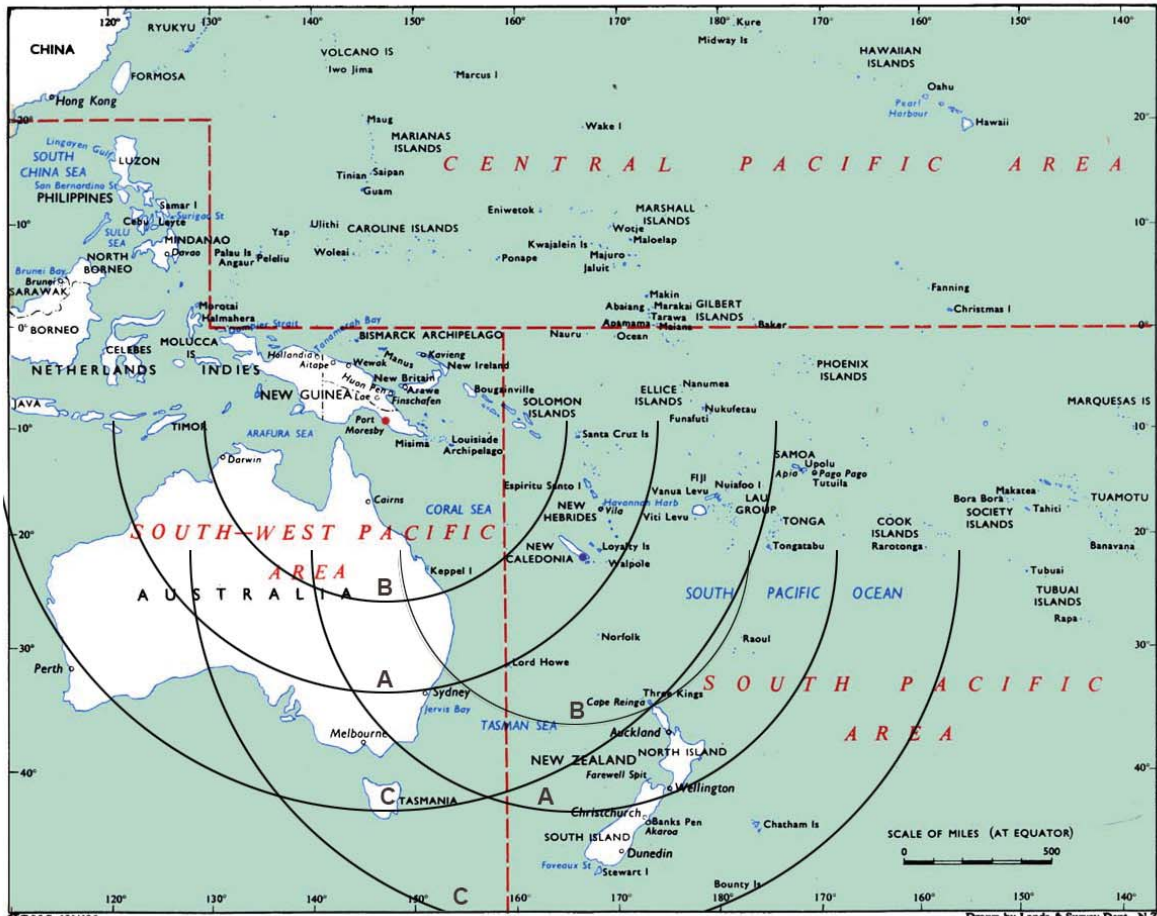
Potential Air Domination of Australia and New Zealand.

1. The aircraft chosen to display operational radius are standard IJN units during 1942, they are a fighter, a dive bomber and a medium bomber.
2. The G3M Nell was selected over the G4M Betty as the Nell was more commonly in service during this period.
3. Operational radii are infinitely variable, depending on such as war load, additional fuel tanks and aircraft models. The G3M performance chosen is an average of common marks operating under common conditions.



Undated war time map of South Pacific Area showing distances from actual and proposed Japanese air bases. New Zealand Archives Wellington P.M.85/1/22, file closed 26 September 1949.

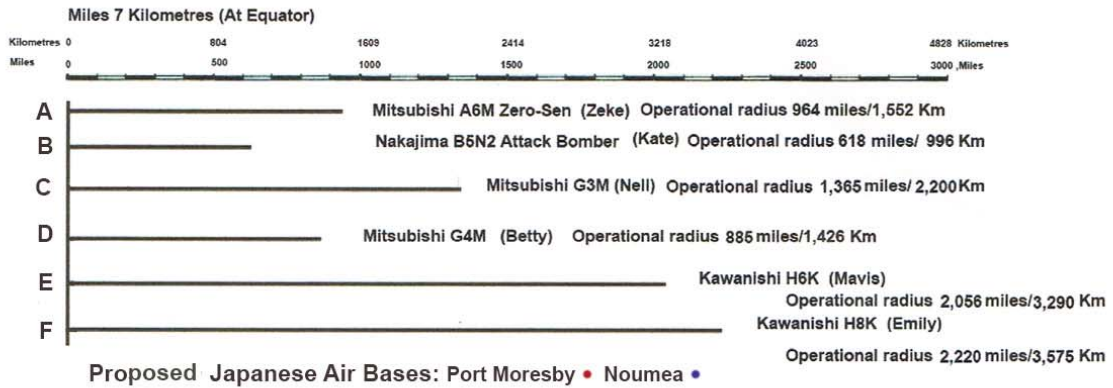
POTENTIAL AIR DOMINATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND FROM PROPOSED JAPANESE AIR BASES



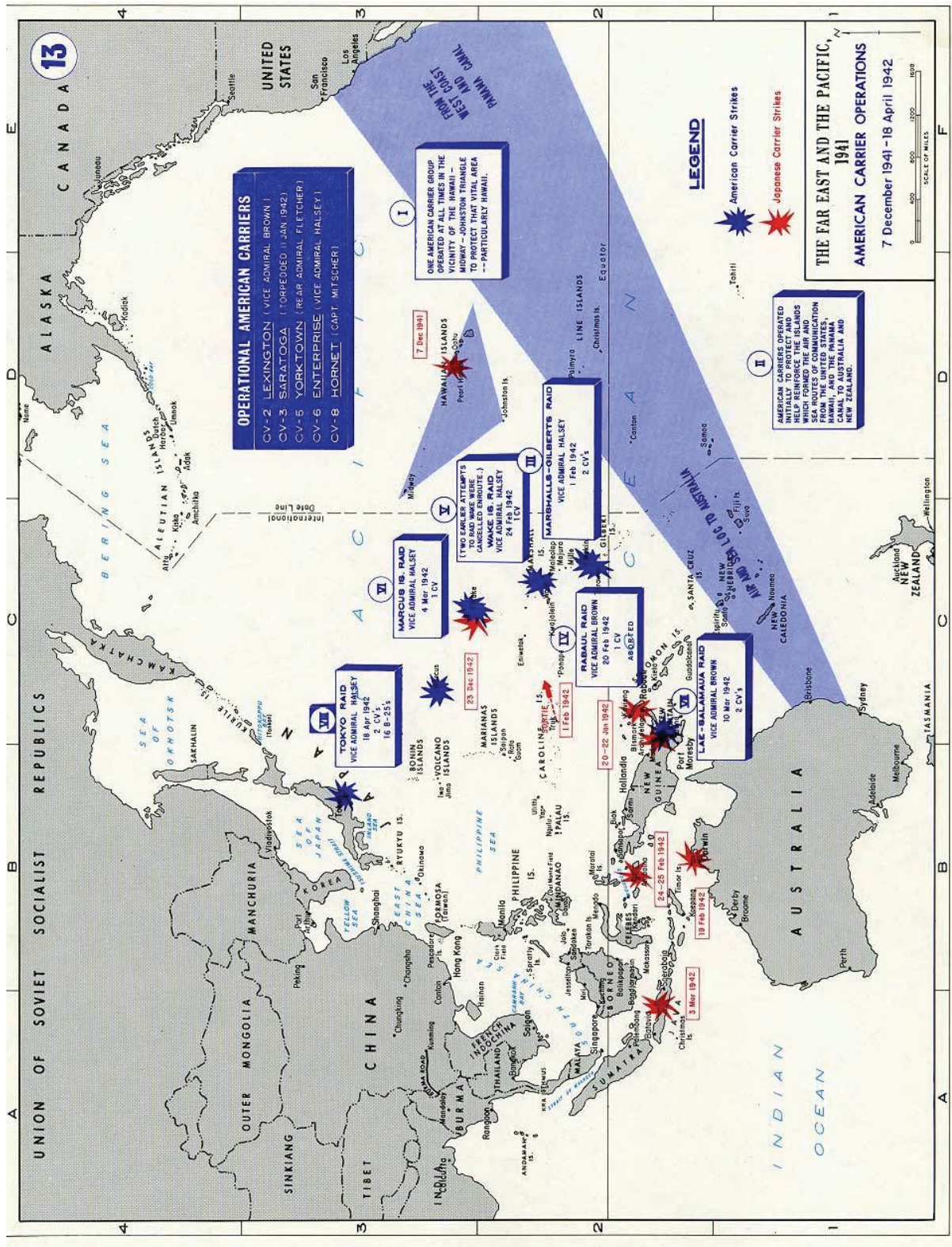
N.Z.M.S. 101/196

Drawn by Lands & Survey Dept., N.Z.
Modified by P.C. Wilkins 2014

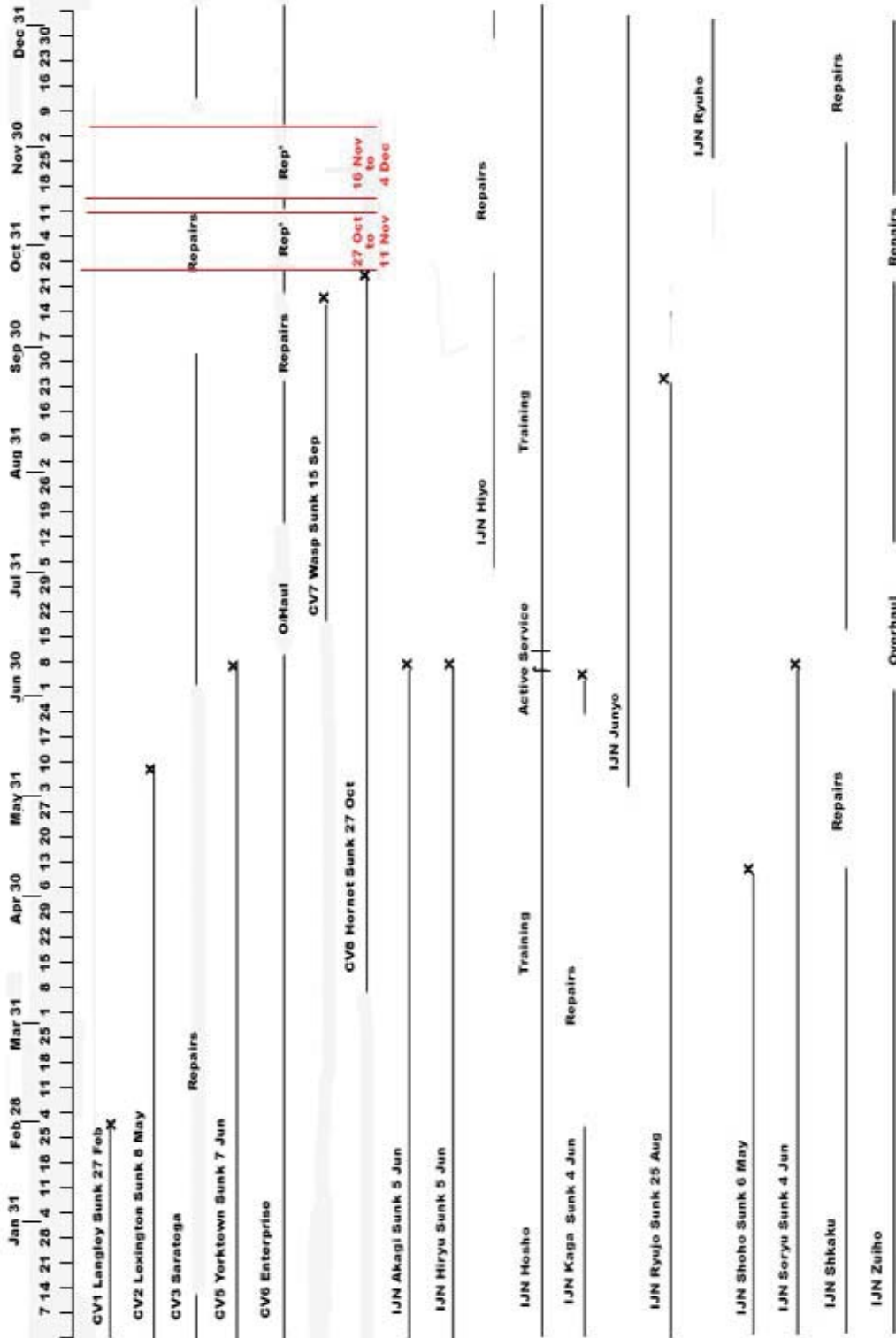
South-west & South Pacific



Appendix D: USN & IJN fleet carrier operational availability, Pacific Theatre 1942.



UNITED STATES NAVY & IMPERIAL JAPANESE NAVY AIRCRAFT CARRIERS IN THE PACIFIC THEATRE DURING 1942



Appendix E: Example of American pre-Pearl Harbor attitude on effectiveness of Japanese Forces



By Leonard Engel

Because the Japanese air force has devastated helpless Chinese cities does not mean it is a potent aerial armada. Here are some cold facts.

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There is only one considerable air force in the world about which less is known today than about the mysterious Red air fleet of the U.S.S.R. That one is the Japanese. The editors of *FLYING AND POPULAR AVIATION* therefore — or should I say, nevertheless — feel it a fit subject for inquiry.

Here is that it has been possible to learn about the men and planes that have been battering virtually defenseless Chinese cities day after day for nearly 3½ years. The information comes from a variety of sources, none of them public and none of them official Japanese. Tokyo doesn't talk much about anything military or economic and that silence goes double for matters aeronautic. It has not been possible to obtain up-to-the-minute figures in all cases.

Japan has two air forces — an army air corps and a naval aviation service — as does the United States, the only other major power without a unified and separate air command. At this writing the Japanese army has something under 2,500 ships of all types, including trainers; the navy, less than 500. Numerically, the Japanese forces are the smallest of the six major air fleets, whose approximate current strengths are: Germany, 25,000-30,000 planes; Great Britain, 10,000-12,000; U.S.S.R., 10,000-20,000; Italy, less than 5,000; U.S.A., about 5,000. Japanese planes are also the poorest qualitatively, but more about that later.

A year ago, the air corps had 3,000 pilots including reserves, and the navy, 2,100. Just about half of these were commissioned officers, the rest enlisted men.

The Island Empire's seven army and navy air schools cannot turn out more than about 600 pilots a year. All of which, again, is small potatoes compared to the other major powers, where training commanders are accustomed to counting their yearly output in thousands instead of the hundreds.

In one respect Tokyo can claim to lead the world — namely, complexity of its governmental organizations. Even our own War and Navy Departments are put to shame in this. The organization of the Island Empire's air services is no exception to the general rule.

The basic unit, as in other countries, is the squadron, but the Japanese squadron is

smaller than ordinary. Pursuit, interceptor and heavy bomber squadrons contain only 10 planes and observation and light bomber, only nine. (The usual bomber squadron in other countries contains a dozen ships plus a spare; the fighter squadron, 18 warcraft.)

Japan has 106 combat squadrons altogether of which some 35 are pursuit and the rest are divided equally among light and heavy bombardment and observation. Total combat machines: about 1,000. About one-fourth of the Japanese air corps is based on Manchuria, part of the huge garrison (300,000 men, the crack Kwantung army, best of the Island Empire's forces) so far immobilized north of China by Tokyo-Moscow mistrust. Another quarter is in Central China, a sixth in North China and a quarter – mostly pursuit and scouting – is in Japan itself.

Here is where the organization begins to get dizzy. In the first place, a squadron is not necessarily made up of the same type of planes. It is not unusual to find observation and bombing craft in the same squadron.

Squadrons are grouped into "air regiments." An air regiment is supposed to contain four squadrons, but in practice the number ranges from two to five. It is most unusual to find all the squadrons in a regiment – which corresponds roughly, very roughly indeed, to the American group and the British wing – made up of the same type of plane.

Air units stationed in China are under the army commanders in charge in the particular area in which they operate; Manchuria-based ships are directed by the Kwantung army staff from its headquarters at Dairen, the big Japanese port wrested from Czarist Russia 35 years ago. Squadrons in Japan proper, Corea (first Japanese mainland colony, "annexed" in 1910) and the island of Formosa make up a G.H.Q. air force. This is divided into three wings. The biggest, of four regiments, is in Japan *itself*; two-regiment wings are in Corea and Formosa.

The inadequacy of the Island Empire's air corps in numbers by western standards is even more striking in the case of the naval air service, although only when the latter is contrasted with its only possible naval opponent: the United States. Naval aviation, in general, is limited by the capacity of a navy's ships to carry warplanes. At first sight, the Japanese seem to be well off: seven aircraft carriers – more than either the United States or Great Britain has – are in commission. But here the equality ends. Japanese carriers, surface ship for surface ship, are inferior to the British. And the British are far inferior to the American.

The six American carriers can handle about 600 planes under wartime conditions; their peacetime complement is 450. British carriers have a total capacity of 250. The Japanese capacity is even smaller. The fact is that American naval designers build better carriers than the British – and the British, better than the Japanese.

Three of the Japanese carriers are brand new 10,050-ton sister ships: the *Soryu*, *Hiryu* and *Syokaku*. The *Syokaku* was placed in commission only late this summer.

These three can each carry about 30 planes. For purposes of comparison, Uncle Sam's newest are the *Enterprise*, *Yorktown* and *Hornet*, of which the *Hornet* is still building. The American vessels are 20,000-tonners with a peacetime complement of four squadrons (72 planes) and a wartime capacity of about 100. The greater American capacity is due not only to their larger size, but to better utilization of space and the ability of American manufacturers to turn out smaller planes still able to meet the rigorous requirements of sea duty.

The biggest Japanese carriers are the *Kaga*, a 27,000-tonner originally laid down as a 39,000-ton battleship and altered following the 1921 naval limitation treaty among Great Britain, France, the United States, Japan and Italy; and the *Akagi*, also a 27,000-tonner. The *Akagi* started life as a 42,000-ton battle cruiser.

The *Kaga* and *Akagi* carry 30 planes apiece normally, but can handle as many as 50. The *Akagi* would be able to handle more if the Japanese had run the flight deck the length of the ship and used the space beneath it for hangars. But so far, only American designers seem willing to go in for overhangs and the like.

The other Japanese carriers are small and slow (speed is essential to a carrier because it is such a vulnerable ship; it takes only a couple of bomb or shell hits to wreck the flight deck). They are the *Ryuzo* and *Hosyo*, about 7,000 tons and 20 planes each. Speed: 25 knots. Carriers should do 30 knots or more. Three new carriers are under construction but will not be ready for at least two years.

Including shore-based seaplanes and flying boats, the naval air service had in commission, just before the outbreak of war in Europe about 100 fighters, 150 torpedo bombers and 75 heavy bombers (which are not comparable to our own patrol flying boats, but which are not ship-based craft). It has been only in the last year that the Japanese navy has completed installation of catapults on its battleships and cruisers to launch spotting planes.

If relatively little is known about the numbers and distribution of Tokyo's air arms, even less is known of the ships they employ – except that they are not big league in quality or performance. Fortunately, however, the Japanese have a curious numbering system which enables the outsider to make a pretty good guess at the caliber of Japanese warcraft.

Models produced originally in Japan in 1935 are known as Type 95: for example, Type 95 pursuit and Type 95-1, 95-2 and 95-3 trainers. Ships produced in 1936 are Type 96; in 1937, Type 97. There are Type 97 observation, pursuit, light and heavy bombardment planes. Now it happens that Type 97 models, produced in 1937, are no better than 1935 models developed in Europe and the United States. Japan was thus at least two years behind the parade two years ago (the 97 series of models did not go into service until 1938, of course). Despite Herculean efforts to catch up, the

motored job whose top speed is about 260 m.p.h. The maximum bomb load, however, is only 3,000 pounds; maximum range (maximum bomb load cannot be carried at maximum range) is 2,200 miles. Type 97 pursuit and observation ships approach 300 m.p.h. These planes still are standard.

A later twin-engined bomber, Type 98, is the Fiat BR-20M, built under license. The Japanese air force also has 80 Italian-built Fiats purchased in 1938. The Italian-built BR-20M is a pretty good bomber for a 1938 model: 256 m.p.h. top speed on two 1,000 h.p. Fiat radials. Gross weight of the plane is just over 11 tons. It is not believed, however, that the Japanese version is quite so fast or efficient, partly because Japanese-built engines do not deliver the same power as the Italian.

Japan's aircraft factories, following several years of intensive effort on the part of the government to encourage their development, now are in a position to produce about 2,500 planes a year of all types – if they can get the materials. Raw materials are a difficult problem. Neither Japan nor China, for example, produces much bauxite, the ore from which aluminum is extracted. In the past, Tokyo has met a considerable part of its aluminum requirements by purchases in the United States, but the urgent need for aluminum in this country and the possibility of an embargo make the U. S. an unreliable source for Japan.

The Japanese engine industry has yet to pass the thousand-horsepower stage of development. The 2,500 planes a year is somewhat more than is necessary to maintain the air force at its present strength.

Another indication of the poor quality of Nippon's planes is the fact that about one-third of the planes in China wear out each year and one-fourth in Japan. This does *not* include losses inflicted by the small Chinese air force.

It may well be asked why Japanese military planes are so few and so poor in comparison with other powers. An important reason is the fact that civil aviation is in an extraordinarily low state of development. In other countries, notably our own, when military air appropriations were at an ebb, an aircraft industry based on transport and charter services and private flying was able to lay the groundwork for much of the later expansion in the military field.

Japan operates a considerable number of airlines now, but they are a recent growth and are not heavily traveled. When I was in the Far East five years ago there was only one Japanese line operating within the mainland of Asia – the Japan Air Transport Company, which flew a couple of services in Manchuria. I trusted my life to its moth-eaten planes more than once; now that I look back on it, it gives me the shivers. When I look back, I recall that the American-operated outfit in China, the China National Aviation Company, didn't have any too modern equipment at that time, except for a few Douglas Dolphins. But CNAC's planes were positively 25th century compared with those flown by Japan Air Transport.

Civilian flying did not develop in Japan largely, I think, because of the poverty of the

country's people and because Japan is small. Another factor is that for years civil aviation has been under the thumb of the Ministry of Communications. The Communications Ministry runs the railroads along with the wire services and has never been particularly interested in the air. In Manchuria the giant South Manchuria Railway Company, which runs everything from half a dozen railroads to the dope traffic and red light districts, doesn't care about airplanes either.

But there is an even more compelling series of reasons for the current state of affairs. It must be remembered that Japan arrived late on the modern industrial scene. The experience of the Japanese people with mechanical gadgets is definitely limited. They have not yet gotten much beyond merely imitating what others have done. At that they are the world's finest, but imitativeness is little help in aeronautics. In the first place, aeronautical developments are more closely guarded by the major powers than are any others. Anything the Japanese obtain via the imitation route is bound to be three years old. Which is not extremely satisfactory at a time when every fighter plane designed is between 10 to 50 m.p.h. faster than its predecessor.

In the second place, planes being the most complicated and highly developed type of machinery in existence, a certain amount of native ingenuity is needed to make them work, even after you have been presented with the blueprints. And third, the Japanese system of small factories employing only a few semi-skilled workers — which system dominates Japanese industry — is not well adapted to the high degree of precision required in planes.

Some day, perhaps, the Japanese will have accumulated enough experience in a mechanical way to catch up, but that day will not come soon. One of the factors holding up its arrival is the educational system in Japan, which turns out a nation of blind patriots but gives only limited schooling in the mechanical arts. The general level of education in Japan is low. It takes a good educational system to turn out a nation of mechanics — and a nation of mechanics to run an air industry and air force. The Japanese' blind patriotism is undoubtedly pleasing to Japan's rulers. But it doesn't cut any ice with a 1,000 h.p. motor. Motors just don't understand noble sentiments.

It is no surprise, therefore, to learn that Japan's five aeronautical research institutes — the institute at Tokyo University, the Army's institute, the Navy's aeronautical arsenal, the experimental laboratory of the Communications Ministry and the Central Aeronautical Research Institute — are not making effective progress in research. They are not in the same class as America's NACA Langley Memorial Laboratory, or England's Farnborough. Their equipment is deficient. Such modern apparatus as supersonic speed tunnels, refrigerated tunnels and variable density tunnels is unknown.

There remains one question: what of the Japanese ability to fly? Is it any greater than the Japanese ability to build planes? The answer is probably yes, although five years ago Japanese airman-ship was extremely poor. I wasn't there at the time, but old

with CNAC, and an encounter he had with the Japanese.

It seems he was nominated by the German embassy in Tokyo as a special observer for some special piece of business that was to be shown. The night he arrived in Tokyo he drank himself too deep of Japanese beer, which happens to be quite strong. Somewhat in his cups, he boasted that he could knock down the 10 best Japanese pilots one after the other in a single afternoon of dogfights – with cameras, not guns, of course. He had not laid a hand to a fighting plane since the World War, but he was quite sure he could do it. He did – in less than two hours. He didn't need the whole afternoon.

The Japanese have come a long way since then, particularly in bombardment and observation operations, through their practice in the China war. They now are quite proficient in these operations – although how they would perform against real opposition is not known. The relatively high toll taken by the few Chinese planes indicates, not too well. In loyalty, courage and readiness to follow orders, the Japanese pilot is second to no one, however. So far, the Japanese have shown no understanding of the tactics of massed aerial warfare on the World War II model.

In summary, the Japanese air force can be described as the sixth in the world in numbers and quality, as adequate to the job it has so far had to do. But it would not be adequate in the event of an encounter with either possible major opponent, the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R., unless-in the case of the U. S. S. R. – simultaneous war in the west drained too many planes from Siberia.