



## Turning the Tide in the Pacific, 1941-1943

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Japanese Strategy in the Pacific, 1941-1942

Read the following documents and answer the questions that follow.

#### **Military History Section, Army Forces Far East, "The Japanese Monographs,"**

#### **Chapter I: Estimate of the Situation Prior to Outbreak of War:**

<http://ibiblio.org/pha/monos/152/152chap1.html>

Japanese Navy Minister Shimada:

"In the event of war, the Naval High Command believes that the Navy stands a very good chance of victory in both the early stage operations and the interception operations against the enemy fleet, with the present power ratio. However, should the war continue into its third year and become a long term war, according to comprehensive research by the various Navy departments, shortages of war materials and the inadequacy of Japan's industrial potential will then begin to have their effect on the Navy's strength. Under the latter conditions, it would be difficult for us to have any measure of confidence that we could bring the war to a victorious conclusion.

"On the other hand, if we decide to continue diplomatic negotiations and later fail to bring them to a successful conclusion, we will be forced to open hostilities at a great operational disadvantage, caused by the delay. Consequently, although there is a great risk in beginning the war now we must realize that there is also a great risk in depending upon negotiations unless we can be certain of the final outcome. It would seem, therefore, that whether we continue diplomatic negotiations or open hostilities, great risks and difficulties are involved. The risks involved in each case have to be weighed in order to arrive at an estimate of the general situation. The risks attendant upon the opening of hostilities are enormous and it must be realized that once committed we cannot turn back; therefore, if at all possible, we should use diplomacy. However, if we are not confident of the success of the diplomatic negotiations, then we have no alternative but to take up arms..."

Chief of Navy General Staff Nagano:

"Should Japan's negotiations with the United States fail and war begin between Japan and the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands, I believe that, on the basis of the present strength of the operating forces in the Pacific, we have a good chance of defeating the enemy both in the first phase operations and in the interception operations against the enemy fleet, provided hostilities begin in early December. If we are successful in the first phase operations, we should be able to secure strategic key points in the southwest Pacific and thus be in a position to wage a long war of attrition. In a war against the United States and Great Britain, we have no sure way of bringing the enemy to his knees, so in all probability the war would be a protracted one. We must, therefore, be prepared for a long war both spiritually and materially. The outcome of a long war depends on various physical and metaphysical

factors, on our total war potential and on the development of the world situation. It is difficult, under the circumstances, to foretell now whether we have a chance of winning the war several years hence.”

Chief of Army General Staff Sugiyama:

“The armies in the southern territories are steadily being reinforced.... Compared with the forces in these territories before the outbreak of war in Europe, the Army in Malaya has increased about eight times, that in the Philippines about four times, that in the Dutch East Indies about two and a half times and that in Burma about five times. The total strength of the armies these territories amounts to a little more than 200,000; we must expect their rate of increase to become greater with time.

“The ground forces in these territories as essentially native armies formed around a nucleus of white troops, which constitute about 30 per cent of the forces. They are not well trained and their combat ability is generally below standard. However, they are inured to tropical weather and climate. We must also remember that their planes perform well and their pilots are quite good.

“From the operational standpoint, each day of delay in the commencement of military operations will place us at a greater disadvantage so that finally it will become impossible to conduct operations for the following reasons:

“1. Japan will not be able to keep pace with the United States in an armament race, especially in aircraft production.

“2. American defenses in the Philippines, as well as other American military preparations, will make rapid headway.

“3. Defensive coordination of the United States, Great Britain, the Netherlands and China will be further stepped-up and their combined defensive power in the southern area will be increased vastly.

“4. If the war is delayed until spring, operational action the northern Pacific and Siberia would become possible. Japan then might be committed to fight on the northern and southern fronts at the same time.

“In addition to the above, weather conditions in the anticipated theater of operations, which are a very important factor in the present operations plan, will not allow indefinite postponement of war. Therefore, in order to initiate our military operations immediately upon the completion of present operational preparations, I should like to set the time as early December.

“The major part of the Army's initial operations in the southern areas will consist of landings against strongly defended distant enemy bases. These operations will have to be conducted in scorching heat, while repelling hostile submarines and airplane attacks. We must, therefore, expect to have to surmount considerable difficulties. However, from the over-all standpoint, whereas the enemy forces will be scattered over wide areas separated from each other by sea, rendering it difficult for them to coordinate movements, we will be able to consolidate our forces in surprise attacks to destroy the enemy piecemeal. I am confident, therefore, that close coordination between the Army and the Navy will insure the success of our landing operations. In regard to the operations after the landing, comparing organization, equipment, the quality and the number of men of our forces and the enemy, I am confident that victory will be ours.

“After the conclusion of these operations, even if we did our best to terminate the war as early as possible by diplomatic and military means, especially through the exploitation of our naval successes, we probably would still have to be prepared for a long war. However, since we could capture enemy military and air bases and make our position invulnerable, I believe we could use various means to frustrate the enemy's intentions.

“As to our defense against the Soviet Union and our China operations after we embark on the Southern Operations, we intend to hold generally our present military power which will enable us to strengthen our defenses against the Soviet Union and to continue our operations in China. I think we can exploit our successes in the Southern Operations so that they would help conclude the China Incident.

“The Soviet field armies have suffered severe losses at the hands of the German Army, and the Soviet's munitions industries productive capacity, too, has decreased enormously. The Far Eastern Red Army, furthermore, has sent, since last spring, about 13 divisions of infantry, about 1,300 tanks and no less than 1,300 planes eastward to European Russia, and its fighting strength, I believe, is declining materially and spiritually. Therefore, as long as our Kwantung Army maintains a strong position there is little likelihood that the Soviet Union, on its own initiative, will attack us.”

**United States Strategic Bombing Survey, Naval Analysis Division, “The Campaigns of the Pacific War,” Chapter 1: Japanese Naval Planning: <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/AAF/USSBS/PTO-Campaigns/USSBS-PTO-1.html>**

The Basic Plan for the Greater East Asia War

“The Basic Plan as formulated by the Japanese and placed into effect in December 1941, consisted of the following three phases:

- I. The seizure of the Southern Areas which are rich in resources; the attack on the United States Fleet in Hawaii, and the seizure of strategic areas and positions for the establishment of a perimeter for the defense of the Southern Resources Area and the Japanese Mainland. The area to be seized was that within the line which joins the Kuriles, Marshalls (including Wake), Bismarcks, Timor, Java, Sumatra, Malaya and Burma.
- II. Consolidation and strengthening of the defensive perimeter.
- III. The interception and destruction of any attacking strength which might threaten the defensive perimeter or the vital areas within the perimeter. Concurrently with intercept operations the activation of plans to destroy the United States will to fight.

“By the successful accomplishment of the three phases of this plan the Japanese hoped to attain the goal of this war, making Japan self-sufficient.

“Upon the successful completion of the first phase, and influenced by the unexpected ease with which their initial operations were carried out, the activation of the second phase was delayed and plans were formulated for further expansion.

“These expansion plans were for the purpose of extending Japanese control of the Pacific and provided for the following:

1. The capture of Port Moresby in order to strengthen the defenses of New Guinea and the Bismarcks.
2. The capture of Midway in order to strengthen the defenses of the Central Pacific and to force a decisive engagement with the United States Fleet.
3. The invasion of the Western Aleutians in order to reinforce the defenses of the Northern Area.

4. The seizure of New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa in order to cut lines of communication between the United States and Australia. This latter step was contingent on the successful completion of the others and was scheduled to be activated subsequent to the capture of Midway.”