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JOINT WAR PLANS COMMITTEE

DETAILS OF THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST JAPAN

References: a. J.P.S. 697/D.
b. J.P.S. Memo Directive
of 14 June 1945.

Note by the Secretaries

1. The Joint War Plans Committee recommends that the enclosed memorandum be presented to the President at his conference with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

2. The Joint War Plans Committee has assumed that the questions brought up by the President will be answered and discussed orally at the conference, and that the purpose of the memorandum is for the President to have available an aide memoire which he could examine at his convenience and possibly use at the forthcoming tripartite conferences.

3. Representatives of the Joint Intelligence Staff have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

J. T. HILLIS,
C. C. GOODE,
JOINT SECRETARIES.

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E N C L O S U R E

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: Campaign against Japan.

1. Strategy. Throughout the series of staff conferences with the British, we have agreed that the over-all concept for the prosecution of the war included provision "to bring about at the earliest possible date the unconditional surrender of Japan." We believe that the only sure way, and certainly the quickest way to force the surrender of Japan is to defeat her armies on the main Japanese islands. Hence, at recent staff conferences we have proposed-- and the British have agreed--that the over-all objective of the Japanese war is "to force the unconditional surrender of Japan by (1) lowering Japanese ability and will to resist by establishing sea and air blockades, conducting intensive air bombardment and destroying Japanese air and naval strength; (2) invading and seizing objectives in the industrial heart of Japan."

Since "unconditional surrender" is foreign to the Japanese nature, it is by no means certain that a formal acknowledgment thereof by a Japanese government will be recognized by Japanese armies everywhere. If, following such an acknowledgment, her armies elsewhere do not surrender, their position will be so seriously weakened as to facilitate their defeat in detail. However, the possibility must be faced that the Japanese armies everywhere must be defeated.

2. Presently planned campaign. Our agreed concept of operations for the main effort in the Pacific war is:

"Following the Okinawa operation to seize additional positions to intensify the blockade and air bombardment of Japan in order to create a situation favorable to:

"An assault on Kyushu for the purpose of further reducing Japanese capabilities by containing and destroying major enemy forces and further intensifying the blockade and air bombardment in order to establish a tactical condition favorable to:

"The decisive invasion of the industrial heart of Japan through the Tokyo Plain."

Our campaign plans have therefore been designed to seize positions progressively closer to the Tokyo Plain--the political, industrial and communication center of Japan--with a view to isolating the Japanese islands and providing sufficient bases from which, by sea and air bombardment, conditions will be created which will make ultimate invasion of the Tokyo Plain acceptable and feasible. We have also endeavored so to design the campaign that the Japanese cannot fail to see and feel the results of its rapidly increasing tempo and magnitude, with the thought that at some stage of the campaign they will admit defeat in order to avoid further destruction.

Thus far in this campaign we have seized and developed air and naval bases in the Marianas, Iwo Jima, the Philippines and Okinawa. No further operations in the Ryukyus after completion of the Okinawa campaign are now contemplated; all available resources are being utilized to develop air and naval bases in Okinawa to maximum capacity by November 1945. By then it is expected to have about 2700 land-based aircraft operating from this area and to have completed an advanced fleet base and anchorage. The map, Tab "A", shows the land-based aircraft expected to be based within range of Japan by that time and the areas they can reach. Meanwhile every effort is also being made to transport to the Pacific from Europe the added means estimated to be required for a rapid and decisive campaign. In general the units needed to build the required bases are being moved first, followed by the required additional combat units, air and ground.

Already we have eliminated practically all Japanese sea traffic between their main islands and points to the southward of Shanghai, and severely restricted her traffic to Shanghai and Yellow Sea ports. By November 1945, when air operations from Okinawa are in full swing, there should remain to the Japanese only those sea routes across Tsushima Strait to Korea and across the Sea of Japan. It should be noted that our air and submarines are already operating in these areas on a limited scale. By November 1945 the Japanese situation is expected to be critical; their fleet units in home waters have already been so reduced as to no longer constitute a strategic factor; their air arm is already committing training planes to combat and will probably continue to concentrate

on maximum suicide tactics; their ability to move ground forces to Japan from Asia or vice versa is already strictly reduced. The map, Tab "D", shows the estimated Japanese dispositions of ground and air forces about 1 November 1945.

In order to obtain bases still closer to the Tokyo Plain from which to augment sea and air bombardment, complete the isolation of the main Japanese islands and to provide direct air cover and support for the invasion of the Tokyo Plain, should that prove necessary, we have directed General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz to invade southern Kyushu about 1 November 1945.

We have not yet directed the execution of any operations after the invasion of southern Kyushu, feeling that decision would better await further developments. However, plans and preparations are being made to invade the Tokyo Plain--the political, industrial and communication center of Japan--about 4 months after the southern Kyushu operation, or about 1 March 1946. We consider that this operation should be decisive. By planning and preparing for a supreme operation of this magnitude, we shall be in a position to undertake any lesser operation should developments warrant.

In the period prior to the planned invasion of the Tokyo Plain, every effort will be made to exploit the blockade and bombardment of Japan. In this period, from bases presently and prospectively available, more bombs will be dropped on Japan than were delivered against Germany during the entire European war. If the blockade and bombardment concept is capable of achieving decisive results, these will, in all probability, be brought about by this scale of effort prior to the planned date for the invasion of the Tokyo Plain. However, in the event this invasion is not considered feasible and acceptable on the planned date, a course of action to extend bombardment and blockade is open to us.

3. Examination of the map, Tab "A", shows that bases on the Asiatic mainland other than in Korea are too distant to be of value in augmenting the sea and air bombardment of Japan and in cutting the remaining Japanese sea routes across Tsushima Strait and the Sea of Japan. Furthermore, the blockade of the Yellow Sea and the sea areas to the southward is now virtually effective. There is

also the likelihood that any operation in China, with its vast area and numbers of Japanese ground forces, will develop into a vacuum requiring ever more and more U.S. forces. We therefore discarded, as unnecessary and diversionary, operations to seize additional bases on the China coast. The best areas from which to complete the isolation of Japan are obviously either in Korea or in the southwestern part of the Japanese Archipelago. We considered three possibilities: Korea, the northwestern part of Kyushu, and southern Kyushu. Tabs "F" and "G" show the salient facts and estimates for campaigns in Korea and northwestern Kyushu.

We discarded Korea as a possible operation to follow Okinawa because of its longer sea approach, the paucity of good beaches and exits therefrom, the rugged terrain back of the beaches, the few airfield sites available for development after seizure, and the greater reinforcement capabilities of the Japanese from their fine and as yet untouched army in northern China; further, we would have difficulty both in interfering by air action with the arrival of these reinforcements and in providing adequate air cover and support to the assault because of the distance to Okinawa bases. The campaign is estimated to require about the same commitment of forces as for the invasion of southern Kyushu (14 divisions, 766,700 men).

Similarly we discarded northwestern Kyushu as a possible objective area following Okinawa because the sea approaches to the best landing area are restricted, well fortified and heavily mined; and because of Japanese capability to reinforce the area from two directions--from southern Kyushu and from Honshu. The forces required for such an operation are estimated to be in excess of those for southern Kyushu. The operation may, however, prove desirable as a development and exploitation of the landing in southern Kyushu, when it is estimated that it could be done with 12 divisions (510,000 men).

The seizure of southern Kyushu has been directed because:

- a. Its occupation is essential to, and will materially further, the isolation of Japan from Korea and the mainland of Asia;
- b. It is the most logical extension of our operations in the Ryukyus, since shore-based tactical air support can be furnished.

from Okinawa and lines of communication are shorter than for any other practicable objective;

c. Airfields on which to base approximately 40 groups (over 2,000 aircraft) can be developed, from which the air bombardment of the remainder of Japan can be greatly intensified in preparation for the invasion of Honshu, should this prove to be necessary;

d. It will contribute toward the defeat of Japanese armies in the Japanese homeland;

e. It may well prove to be the decisive operation which will terminate the war.

4. As to other areas, Admiral Mountbatten in the Southeast Asia Command plans to seize a position in the Port Swettenham-Port Dixon area on the Malay Peninsula in the latter half of August 1945 and to follow this up with a campaign to recapture Singapore beginning probably in December-January. General Wedemeyer has advised that, in China, the Generalissimo plans to launch an overland advance with Chinese forces on the Canton-Hong Kong area beginning about 1 September 1945 and to follow up any Japanese withdrawals northward along the railroad route in central China.

5. Plans for the period after the invasion of the Tokyo Plain cannot be made with firmness at this time. If the Japanese continue to resist, plans must provide for further operations in the main islands and for possible operations on the mainland of Asia. We hope that U.S. commitments on the mainland can be kept to a minimum, with maximum effort by the Chinese, and by the Russians if they should enter the war. Hence, plans provide for continued U.S. aid to Chinese forces, the scale of which can probably be materially increased later in the campaign. Should the Japanese unconditionally surrender or concede defeat during the campaign in Japan proper, there will still remain the sizable task of disarming their forces everywhere, assembling them at ports, and returning them to their home islands.

6. Forces required for presently planned campaign. Estimates of the forces required to execute the invasion of southern Kyushu

and of the Tokyo Plain are shown on the map, Tab "E". The maps, Tabs "B" and "C", show the deployment of land-based aircraft planned upon the completion of each of these two operations. The ultimately expected coverage of the Asiatic mainland and sea routes thereto is of note.

For the campaign as planned through the invasion of the Tokyo Plain, it is expected there will be in the Pacific ^{Theater, India-Burma and China} by the spring of 194⁶ a total of 39 Army divisions and ¹²⁷ ~~116~~ Army Air groups (⁸⁵¹² ~~7570~~ land-based aircraft) or a grand total in Army forces of about ^{3,000,000} ~~2,600,000~~ men. General MacArthur has indicated that if operations are necessary after the invasion of the Tokyo Plain, plans should provide for the movement of additional divisions from the U.S. to the Pacific at a rate of about 4 additional divisions per month, up to the limit of a planned strategic reserve of 17 divisions.

By 1 March 1946 the following number of major combat ships are scheduled to be fully operational in the Pacific Fleet:

10 BB	26 CA
13 OBB	33 CL
2 CB	8 CL (AA)
22 CV	364 DD
2 CVB	326 DE
9 CVL	189 SS
74 CVE (43 combat)	

The above figures make no allowance for attrition. Three months after the Kyushu operation it is estimated that approximately 10% will either have been lost or still undergoing repairs to damage received in this operation. Of the operational ships in service 75% will normally be constantly available for any single operation. Others will be either undergoing operational repairs or be otherwise employed.

It is estimated that approximately 3,818 carrier-based aircraft will be available on 1 March 1946.

7. Casualties. The cost in casualties of the main operations against Japan are not subject to accurate estimate. The scale of Japanese resistance in the past has not been predictable. Casualty expectancy rates based on experience in the Pacific vary greatly

from the short bloody battle of Tarawa to the unopposed landing at Lingayen. It would be difficult to predict whether Jap resistance on Kyushu would more closely resemble the fighting on Okinawa or whether it would parallel the battle of Leyte.

Certain general conclusions can, however, be reached. The highest casualty rate occurs during the assault phase of an amphibious operation; casualties in land warfare are a function of the length of campaign and of the scale of opposition encountered. Naval casualties can be expected to vary directly with the number of amphibious operations involved and with the length of the campaign. Casualties can be kept to a minimum, then, by terminating the war at the earliest possible time by means of the fewest possible assault operations and by conducting land campaigns only in decisive areas. The presently planned campaign, which involves two assaults followed by land campaigns in the Japanese homeland, is in conformity with this principle. Further, the extent of the objective area gives us an opportunity to effect surprise as to the points of landing and, once ashore, to profit by our superiority in mobility and mechanized power through maneuver. Should it be decided to follow the southern Kyushu operation by another operation such as against northern Kyushu in order to exploit bombardment and blockade, and should this bring about capitulation of the Japanese, the casualties should be less than for the presently planned campaign. We consider that at this time it would be a pure gamble that the Japanese would admit defeat under such conditions. If they do not, invasion of the Tokyo Plain might still be required with resultant increased total casualties.

The best estimate of casualties for these possible sequences of operations follows. For the reasons stated above, it is admittedly only an "educated guess".

	<u>Killed in Action</u>	<u>Wounded in Action</u>	<u>Missing in Action</u>	<u>Total</u>
Southern Kyushu, followed by Tokyo Plain, to mid-1946	40,000	150,000	3,500	193,500
Southern Kyushu - Northwestern Kyushu	25,000	105,000	2,500	132,500
Southern Kyushu - Northwestern Kyushu - Tokyo Plain	46,000	170,000	4,000	220,000

8. Time. Under the campaign as planned, it is estimated that the defeat of the Japanese in the Tokyo Plain area and the seizure of ports on Tokyo Bay would be completed by mid-1946. Should it prove necessary to execute other operations prior to invading the Tokyo Plain, the earliest date by which the latter operation could take place is estimated to be October 1946, because of adverse weather and ground conditions and the necessity of further mobilizing resources. In either case, the war should be over not later than the end of 1946. On the other hand, we are unable to estimate the time required or the losses that will result in an effort to defeat Japan by isolation, blockade and bombardment without invasion, because of our inability to predict at what stage thereof the Japanese might concede defeat, and because of the possibility that invasion of the Tokyo area would ultimately be necessary. We feel that at best, this strategy will lead to a long war, which would have an adverse effect upon the U.S. position vis-a-vis other nations who will, in the meantime, be rebuilding their peacetime economy.

9. In summary, our planned course of action is:

a. To proceed with an operation against southern Kyushu on 1 November 1945, as presently directed.

b. To plan an invasion of the Tokyo area with a target date of 1 March 1946.

c. To exploit to the utmost in the interim periods the possibilities of blockade and air bombardment of Japan from positions in the Marianas, Iwo Jima, the Ryukyus and Kyushu.

d. To make preparations during the period following the assault on southern Kyushu for the invasion of the Tokyo area about 1 March 1946, or the extension of blockading positions to northwestern Kyushu on the same date.

e. To base the decision as to operations following southern Kyushu on developments.

10. Russian participation in the war. In previous discussions and correspondence with the Russians they have indicated generally their plan of campaign should they enter the war; that they would probably require about three months for concentration of troops and

supplies on their eastern front; that maintenance of the Pacific supply route would be necessary; and that it might be possible for the United States to base limited forces in Kamchatka and air forces in the Komsomolsk-Nikolaevsk area. In these discussions we were guided by the following basic principles:

Russia's entry at as early a date as possible consistent with her ability to engage in offensive operations is necessary to provide maximum assistance to our Pacific operations. The U.S. will provide maximum support possible without interfering with our main effort against Japan.

The objective of Russia's military effort against Japan in the Far East should be the defeat of the Japanese forces in Manchuria, air operations against Japan proper in collaboration with U.S. air forces based in eastern Siberia, and maximum interference with Japanese sea traffic between Japan and the mainland of Asia.

Nothing that has happened since is believed to require any change to these principles, except to note that we believe that we can defeat the Japanese in the main islands regardless of Russian entry, because of our own estimated ability to restrict movement of Japanese reinforcements from Asia. However, the defeat of the Japanese army in north China is still considered to be the best contribution that the Russians can make. We should insist that the appropriate U.S. command direct and control any Russian part in operations against Japanese sea traffic to Japan and in the air bombardment of Japan.

As to basing U.S. forces in Russian territory, this is no longer considered absolutely necessary, and we therefore propose to bring this subject up only if necessary in connection with Russian discussion of opening a sea route to other Pacific ports.

Opening a sea route to Russian ports may well be a result requirement of Russian entry into the war. We estimate that it might be satisfactorily accomplished by U.S. convoy of cargo ships in small groups without the necessity for our seizure of Japanese

territory or of basing forces in Russian territory other than an advanced anchorage at Petropavlovsk and minor base facilities at the Russian termini. However, it should be noted that a more desirable plan would be to route the convoys through Tsushima Strait once it is under our control, thus avoiding the ice conditions of the northern straits. We should avoid by all possible means U.S. commitment to costly operations in the Kuriles-Karafuto area for this sole purpose.

In general, we believe that the best policy is not to press the Russians for further information or for any commitment, but merely to declare our readiness to receive and fully consider any proposals which they may wish to make.

11. Participation by other nations.

a. China. By the fall of 1945, the Chinese National Army will consist of about 2,500,000 men, of which only 36 divisions, now being trained under U.S. supervision, can be considered reasonably effective. There are approximately 500,000 unarmed recruits in training under the Chinese, and an estimated provincial and local militia totaling about 1,000,000. In addition, guerrillas under nominal control of the Central Government total about 300,000. The regular forces of the Chinese Communist Armies amount to about 500,000.

It is estimated that Japanese strength in China in the fall, excluding Manchuria, will be about 900,000 men. Therefore, it is considered that the major share of the task of defeating the enemy in China south of Manchuria should fall to China.

b. British Empire forces.

Army: 1 Canadian, 1 New Zealand, and 3 Australian Imperial Divisions will be deployed in the Pacific; approximately 23 divisions will be deployed in Southeast Asia, including English, Indian and African units.

Air Forces: Negotiations are in progress to make use of 10 squadrons of British bombers in the Pacific, with a possible ultimate employment of 20 squadrons. The RAF will provide the air units found necessary for operations in Southeast Asia.

Naval Forces: Elements of the British Fleet will support operations in Southeast Asia; 3 naval assault forces, comprising amphibious lift for about 3 divisions, will be available to the Southeast Asia Command. The British Pacific Fleet, consisting of 4 battleships, 5 carriers, accompanying light naval forces and train, is currently operating under Admiral Nimitz.

Estimated Japanese strength in Southeast Asia and Malaysia, excluding the Philippines, in the fall of 1945, is about 600,000 men. The British should be assigned the primary responsibility for the defeat of these forces. The British Pacific Fleet and elements of the RAF mentioned above will participate in the invasion of Japan.

c. France. Certain French naval vessels are now under operational control of the Southeast Asia Command. It does not appear practicable to support French naval vessels in Pacific operations. The French have offered a corps composed of two Colonial Divisions for operations in the Pacific. The question of where these divisions can be best employed is now being examined. The Southeast Asia Command includes minor French forces for clandestine operations in Indo-China.

d. Italy. From a military point of view Italian participation in the war against Japan is of negligible, if any, advantage to over-all conduct of the war.

e. Mexico. The 201st Mexican Fighter Squadron is now operating in the Southwest Pacific area.

f. Portugal. If so desired by the Allies, Portugal stands ready to provide minor forces for occupation of Portuguese Timor.

g. The Netherlands. Dutch forces may fulfill a minor role in recapture of areas in the Netherlands East Indies.

We believe that offers from any nation of military and naval assistance in the Pacific war should be considered on their military merits, and should be accepted only in case the forces offered are trained and equipped to meet U.S. standards of combat efficiency, can be effectively employed in planned operations against Japan, are reasonably self-supporting, and operate under U.S. control.

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12. In conclusion we desire to point out that throughout previous staff discussions with the British we have emphasized that control and direction of the war against Japan lies with the U.S. We believe that we should continue to follow that policy and that effort to bring the direction of the Pacific war under the laborious, argumentative and time-consuming system of combined control should be vigorously opposed.