

BLINDED BY THE RISING SUN

JAPANESE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE FROM THE
FIRST SINO-JAPANESE WAR TO THE END OF
WORLD WAR II

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Glossary

<i>Bōchō</i>	Counterintelligence/counterespionage
BIA	Burmese Independence Army
BNA	Burmese National Army
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CEF	China Expeditionary Force(s)
CO	Commanding officer
<i>Chōsa Han</i>	Counterespionage organ
<i>Dai Tōa Shō</i> /GEAM	Greater East Asia Department/Ministry
<i>Dai Honei</i>	Imperial General Headquarters
<i>Dai Ikka</i>	1 st Department/Bureau (Operations), IJA
<i>Dai Nikka</i>	2 nd Department/Bureau (Intelligence), IJA
<i>Gaimushō</i>	Foreign Office/Ministry
<i>Genyōsha</i>	Dark Ocean Society
<i>Gi Butai</i>	18 th Area Army
<i>Gunzoku</i>	Civilians in military employ
HQ	Headquarters
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IIL	Indian Independence League
IJA/ <i>Rikugun</i>	Imperial Japanese Army
IJN/ <i>Kaigun</i>	Imperial Japanese Navy
KAIG	Kwantung Army Intelligence Group
<i>Kantōgun</i>	Kwantung Army
<i>Kokuryūkai</i>	Black Dragon Society
<i>Kuomintang</i> /KMT	Chinese Nationalist Party
MA	Military Attaché
<i>Manshū Seinen Renmei</i>	Manchurian Youth League/MYL
<i>Manshūtetsudō</i> / <i>Mantetsu</i> / <i>Tetsudō</i>	South Manchurian Railway
<i>Naikaku Jōhōkyoku</i>	Cabinet Information Bureau
<i>Nampōsōgun</i> /SAA	Southern Area Army/Expeditionary Force

NCO	Non-commissioned officer
OC	Operational Commander
Ōkawa <i>Juku</i>	Ōkawa School
<i>Rakuzendō</i>	House of Pleasurable (or Unearthly) Delights
<i>Rikugunshō</i>	War Office/Ministry
<i>Sakurakai</i>	Cherry Blossom Association
<i>Sampō</i>	General Staff
<i>Senji Dai Honei/Dai Honei</i>	Imperial General Headquarters
<i>Shin Butai</i>	38 th Army HQ Saigon
<i>Taisei Yokusankai</i>	Imperial Rule Assistance Association
<i>Tōa Dōbunkai</i>	East Asia Common Culture Society
<i>Toa Dōbun Shoin Daigaku</i>	East Asia Common Culture University
<i>Toa Keizai Chōsa Kyoku/EAEIB</i>	East Asia Economic Investigation Bureau
<i>Tokumu Kikan/SSD/SSO/SSA</i>	Special Service Department/Organ/Agency
<i>Tsuyaku</i>	Interpreter/Translator
UK	The United Kingdom
US	The United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
<i>Zaibatsu</i>	Corporate cooperative/financial clique

Short Abstract

This thesis examines the evolution of Japanese Intelligence following the Meiji Restoration to the end of World War II. In an area of increasing strategic importance, especially so given the influence Japanese Intelligence has had on the region and its own governance throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the thesis examines the danger of politicisation, both in terms of intelligence officers and the intelligence products they produce, and how this can have a detrimental effect on decision-making at the highest echelon. Utilising primary sources from the US and UK, predominantly interrogation reports, as well as translated accounts of key Japanese intelligence figures and US military assessments, the thesis further explores how such a prolific intelligence system spread throughout mainland Asia, yet remained ultimately inefficient and ineffectual. In an area not explored in great depth, and across a period clearly definable as Japan's period of modernisation, the thesis sheds light on the area in an objective fashion at a time that Japan seeks once more to develop its human intelligence apparatus and structure, of key import to its contemporary strategic partners.

Extended Abstract

Following the Meiji Restoration, Japan followed a policy of rapid modernisation, and increasingly deemed its national interest, in terms of economic and conventional security, lay in the Asian mainland; in particular, Manchuria, but later, in Southeast Asia. This would place it at odds, at least initially, with both China and an emergent Russia in East Asia, and later, the Allied powers. Beasley, Drea and others¹, against this backdrop, have focussed primarily on the orthodox political and military dimension of the interplay between these powers. Although integral to scholarly research, this leaves a dearth of understanding in just how Japan was able to instigate and exercise political control over occupied areas, through its intelligence services, and how this intelligence apparatus developed over time. Decidedly fewer authors address this area, and those sources that do exist tend to focus on a select time period, such as the Russo-Japanese War, or the Second World War. Nevertheless, primarily these works operate solely as an identification of Japanese intelligence operations.

Seth, Chapman, and a small number of others², identify key elements of the Japanese intelligence system, including the existence of informal intelligence networks established by Japan's patriotic societies³, the politicisation of intelligence⁴, politicisation of the intelligence corps⁵ and the

¹ Nish, I., *Collected Writings of Ian Nish, Part 2: Japan, Russia and East Asia* (Tokyo: Japan Library & Edition Synapse, 2001), Beasley, W.G., *Japanese Imperialism: 1894-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), Drea, E.J., *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), Crowley, J.B., *Japan's Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy 1930-1938* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1966), Jansen, M.B., *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000)

² Allen, L., "Intelligence Services during the Second World War: Part 2", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Oct., 1987), Barnhart, M. A., "Japanese Intelligence before the Second World War: 'Best Case' Analysis", in May, E., *Knowing One's Enemy: Intelligence Assessment before the Two World Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), Deacon, R., *Kempei Tai: The Japanese Secret Service Then and Now* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1990), Seth, R., *Secret Servants* (London: Victor Gallancz Ltd, 1957)

³ Norman, E.H., "The Genyōsha: A Study in the Origins of Japanese Imperialism" in *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Sept. 1944)

⁴ Nish, I., "Japanese Intelligence, 1894-1922" in Andrew, C., & Noakes, J., Eds., *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1987)

⁵ Weland, J., "Misguided Intelligence: Japanese Military Intelligence Officers in the Manchurian Incident, September 1931", *The Journal of Military History* 58 (July 1994),

development of a culture of insubordination⁶, but again do so within somewhat narrowly defined time parameters, and without analysis of the intelligence system as a whole over a period encompassing the majority of Japan's modernisation and recent wartime history. The thesis argues that these elements were in fact major flaws, and draws these remote sources into a larger assessment of the evolution of Japanese Intelligence, placing each key element into an overarching analysis of the system as a whole.

There remain several important gaps in our understanding of Japanese Intelligence from the First Sino-Japanese War (Japan's first international conflict), through the Russo-Japanese War (arguably the first modern war), the First World War (wherein total war principles were first ascribed), to the end of World War II (known to the Japanese as the Pacific War). First, how did Japan first seek to modernise its intelligence system? Second, how did politicisation, both in terms of intelligence products and personnel, become a part of Japan's intelligence culture? Third, to what extent was Japanese intelligence involved in the political machinations of Japan, both at home and abroad? Fourth, why did such a prolific intelligence system ultimately lack efficiency and efficacy? In order to address these questions, research and analysis has been conducted using primary documents from Japanese, UK and US sources. Sources include, from the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University, the United States Strategic Bombing Survey Reports of Interrogations 1945, the Bonner F. Feller Papers, 1904-1907, the Japan Subject Collection, the Transcripts of the International Military Tribunal of the Far East, and the Vladimir D. Pastuhov Papers. From the Cecil H. Green Library, Stanford University, the Wartime Translations of Seized Japanese Documents. From the Library of Congress, Washington DC, the US Army's "Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria" and reports of The United States Strategic Bombing Survey. From the National Archives at College Park (US), substantial information has been drawn from the Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (Record Group 38), the Records of the Central

Kitaoka, S., "China Experts in the Army" in Duus, Myers and Peattie, Eds., *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989)

⁶ Tohmatsu, H. & Willmott, H. P., *A Gathering Darkness: The Coming of War to the Far East and the Pacific, 1921-1942* (Lanham: SR Books, 2004), Toland, J., *The Rising Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Empire 1936-1945* (London: Cassell & Company, 1970)

Intelligence Agency (Record Group 263) and the Records of the Office of Strategic Services, 1940- 1947 (Record Group 226). From the National Archives at Kew (UK), information has been obtained from the Records of the Security Service (KV Series), the Records of the War Office: Directorate of Military Operations and Military Intelligence (WO 106 Series), the Records of the War Office: Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence, and Directorate of Military Intelligence; Ministry of Defence (WO 208 Series), and the Records of the War Cabinet (CAB 24 Series). Japanese sources include several memoirs of those deeply involved in Japanese Intelligence at the time. Interrogations of key Japanese Intelligence figures and Allied military and diplomatic reports, found within the sources above, has allowed a comprehensive analysis not formerly undertaken in such depth, in an area of contemporary strategic importance and integral to Japan's modern strategic partnerships, at a time that Japan's seeks once more to develop its human intelligence system.

In Chapter One, the thesis argues that a disenfranchised samurai class, among other Japanese "adventurers", would in the final years of the 19th century and into the 20th century be integral to Japanese intelligence as a whole. Despite apparent political radicalisation, the informal networks developed by these men would be fundamental in Japan's early political and military machinations on the Asian mainland, including the First Sino-Japanese War. Chapter Two examines how the Japanese conventional military intelligence system was sufficient for what would amount to, essentially, a theatre-level operation (and thus limited in scope) - the Russo-Japanese War. Conventional military intelligence, however, relied on Japan's informal networks. As interoperability increased between informal and formal Japanese intelligence networks, so too did interchange occur between staffs, and early successes would develop within Japanese intelligence a complacency, and ultimately an inability to recognise, weaknesses in the system, including a reliance on talent rather than formal training. Politicisation of intelligence products would occur, information delivered in a subjective manner to meet the needs of a particular political agenda. Chapter Three looks at the use of the South Manchurian Railway, primarily an economic concern, as another informal intelligence network, identifying a

lack of an intelligence cycle in Japanese intelligence as a whole, and further misunderstanding as to what constituted a modern intelligence product. The chapter further explores the growing importance to Japan of political intelligence operations on the Asian mainland, particularly through the Siberian Intervention. Finally, Japan's *tokumu kikan*, or Special Service Agencies, are examined, an original development and integral to these operations and those undertaken later in China, Manchuria, and Southeast Asia. Chapter Four examines how politicisation of the intelligence corps as a whole would occur, and how a culture of insubordination would evolve. As key intelligence figures rose within the ranks of Japanese intelligence, a willingness of Japanese intelligence to become involved with, even drive, political intelligence operations in opposition to policy emanating from Tokyo would eventuate. As factionalism arose, a clearly defined policy as pertained to China would be increasingly hard to come by, and changing circumstances in China and Russia would increasingly wrong-foot Japanese intelligence, and Japan itself. Chapter Five investigates Japanese machinations in Manchuria, these leading to Japan's greatest success, the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo. Against a backdrop of political insubordination, these actions would be undertaken (at least initially) in opposition to Tokyo by Japan's premier field formation, the Kwantung Army, through the use of what would amount to a prolific, but ultimately flawed, system of political intelligence operations and control. Chapter Six provides an examination of Japan's system of puppet-governance in Manchukuo. Chapter Seven explores Japan's early attempts to export its intelligence-driven system of puppet-governance to other regions. The chapter further provides an examination of later manifestations of Japanese patriotic societies and insubordination in Tokyo, demonstrating a closing of ranks and greater homogenisation of military thought at this time, the military now better able to present a united front, yet willing to continue its reliance on intrigue and political intelligence operations. Credible improvements in intelligence training and the intelligence system as a whole would come too late to influence what would later occur in China and Southeast Asia, where somewhat redundant intelligence systems would remain in place. Chapter Eight argues that as Japan became increasingly bogged down in China post-1937, Japan would

seek to transpose its formerly successful, if flawed, system of political intelligence (and control) to China, attempting to develop puppet regimes in what had hitherto been a political vacuum. Further weakness in Japanese intelligence is identified in the lack of communication and delineation of roles between intelligence organs, and further the dissolution of political intelligence units, diluting Japan's limited pool of experienced intelligence officers. Chapter Nine draws attention to Japan's lack of preparation in relation to its advance into Southeast Asia, leading to a reversion to information-gathering by the Foreign Ministry and other non-military intelligence organs. Chapter Ten examines belated attempts by Japan to engage with indigenous and separatist groups, under the guise of cooperation and liberation under Japan's proposed Co-Prosperity Sphere. These activities would lack a cohesive policy, and in time would prove cynical, given Japan's imperial aims, leading to minimal success. Finally, Chapter Eleven assesses Japan's final attempts to circumvent and overcome weakness in its intelligence apparatus, through the establishment of counter-intelligence units and attempts at better communication and cohesion between intelligence organs, and how these efforts would in the end be ineffectual, and too little, too late.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or any other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Introduction

The aim of this study is to provide comprehensive politico-historical analysis of the role of human intelligence (HUMINT) in the modernisation of Japan from the first Sino-Japanese War to the end of World War II. As an area of research not explored in detail before, it is expected that this thesis will fill a gap in existing scholarly knowledge, one perhaps most pertinent in relation to Japan's shifting political stances and evolving defence relationships (with nations including the US and Australia), in which Japan's intelligence capabilities are of key significance, given that they shape in fundamental ways a country's foreign policy. It is timely to revisit this long over-looked area, as with the rise of a professional and scholarly literature in the area of Intelligence Studies, much insight can be gained by using this in testing the early paucity of such in the conduct of Intelligence during the period covered by this thesis. Subsidiary questions addressed in the thesis include: How were methodologies adopted/developed by earlier models of Imperial Japanese intelligence? To what extent did foreign relations aid in Japan's earlier intelligence establishment and operation? To what extent did political support of earlier intelligence models aid in their successes? At what level of co-operation did earlier Japanese models operate in cohesion with Japanese government/policy? In what manner was there an erosion of the relationship between intelligence apparatus' and the government? To what level did this affect their ability to operate effectively over time? Why, despite massive resources being made available, were Japan's intelligence assets so ineffectual?

As post-war Japan has relied heavily upon US intelligence assets, with only relatively recent moves being made to improve Japan's national intelligence capabilities, such analysis is especially pertinent to both Japan and its allies (and in particular Australia, in light of recent discussions and agreements regarding more in-depth security cooperation). Many within the Japanese political sphere now seek greater autonomy for the Japanese Self-Defense Force, both from constitutional constraints imposed after World War II, and from reliance on the US military. To this end, Japan has only recently

(in 1997) created its centralised Defence Intelligence Headquarters, representing the first time that this has been undertaken since the end of World War II. The research undertaken for this thesis elaborates on an area of knowledge lacking in contemporary literature (due not in small part to much of the pertinent information being destroyed following the end of World War II), in an area of key importance to global strategic affairs. In the identification and analysis of Japan's intelligence apparatus' past, and, most importantly, analysis of the relationship between Japanese politics and its intelligence apparatus' over the period isolated for the purpose of this thesis, the work provides a foundation from which contemporary political and intelligence policy-makers might learn so that past failures might not be repeated.

The thesis argues that a reliance on informal networks, inherently politicised, combined with elementary methodologies and an untrained, if talented, pool of formal intelligence officers (predominantly military attachés [MA]) would initially be sufficient in meeting Imperial Japan's intelligence needs on the Asian mainland. This would, however, lull Japan's establishment into believing this sufficient throughout the first-half of the 20th century. Japan's formal intelligence apparatus' would become increasingly politicised, both in terms of political agenda and the way intelligence products were used to influence, even create, policy. Intelligence cliques would form, increasingly concerned with the creation of puppet regimes on the Asian mainland, and capable of undertaking their own political intelligence operations in opposition to formal Japanese policy emanating from Tokyo. The military would increasingly seek political dominance, and despite factionalism, insubordination and subsequent coups, would ultimately be successful. As factionalism within the military ceased and the Imperial Japanese Army came to dominate Japanese politics, key politicised intelligence figures would rise to positions of power, while those sidelined following factional conflicts would nevertheless find themselves in key intelligence positions as new fronts were opened in Japan's conflicts in Asia.

Following the Meiji Restoration, Imperial Japan would seek rapid modernisation, including within its intelligence apparatus. On the Asian mainland, where its formal intelligence system initially relied heavily on

diplomatic missions and military attachés, Imperial Japan would be aided by extensive informal intelligence networks established by “patriotic societies” including the *Genyōsha* (Dark Ocean Society) and the *Kokuryūkai* (Black Dragon Society). These organisations were led by such charismatic leaders as Tōyama Mitsuru and Uchida Ryōhei, each with their own political and military connections, and considerable influence over the same. The blurred lines between formal and informal intelligence networks at the turn of the 19th century, and the use of elementary intelligence methodologies, would do little to lessen the effect of Japanese intelligence as a whole. Although without formal training, Japanese intelligence was undertaken by enthusiastic and talented individuals, across a widespread and well-funded intelligence network. Combined with the formal intelligence apparatus, this prolific intelligence network would serve Japan well through what would ultimately be limited and theatre level operations of the First Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.

Unfortunately for Japan, during these early years of intelligence modernisation an element of “politicisation” would occur, both in terms of information sought and the manner in which this information⁷ was presented to policy-makers. Key intelligence figures during this early period, including Kawakami Sōroku and Tanaka Giichi, both rising to high station, would create an intelligence culture willing and able to provide information aimed at driving a particular political agenda. Intelligence, meant to provide an objective basis to inform policy-makers, would rather be subjective in order to manipulate the decision-making process toward a particular political agenda or outcome.

As the military itself became increasingly politicised, Japanese intelligence would become involved in political intelligence operations. Cliques within intelligence would form, and as Japan became increasingly involved on the Asian mainland through the annexation of Korea, the revolution of Sun Yat-sen, the subsequent period of Chinese warlordism and the Siberian Intervention, these intelligence officers would come to drive

⁷ Notably, information at this time was deemed a final intelligence product, despite lacking an intelligence cycle with a dedicated analytical element critical to “modern” intelligence products.

Japan's "China Policy" and seek to install puppet regimes through the region. "Bottom-up" decision-making from Japanese intelligence officers, seeking to influence policy emanating from Tokyo, would create friction between the military and the Japanese government, the former increasingly willing and able to act of its own accord in the political realm.

Post-World War I Japan, unlike the United Kingdom, would maintain no departmental nor governmental apparatus aimed at overall strategy, and, likewise, strategic intelligence collection and appraisal. Systematically, within traditional military intelligence, tactical information would remain of primary importance, and the establishment of Special Service Organs, an original Japanese initiative, would lack a formalised training regime in the intelligence field. These organs would become increasingly overburdened, in terms of range of duties, and would be constantly raised and disbanded according to circumstances on the ground, diluting the already limited number of experienced intelligence officers in the field. Finally, these organs would become instruments of political control and administration, including liaison with puppet governments and propaganda, more so than intelligence organisations proper.

As military insubordination rose, and as numbers of politicised intelligence officers increased, so too would they rise through the ranks. Japan's premier field formation, the Kwantung Army, would come to be staffed increasingly by these politically-driven intelligence officers; while in Tokyo empathy, even sympathy, with subsequent political intelligence operations taken in Manchuria by the Kwantung Army would lead to the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo. This success would be detrimental to Imperial Japanese ambitions elsewhere; the relative ease with which success had been attained, irrespective of the political insubordination under which it had occurred, lulling the now unified, military-supported government into believing the same realisation could be gained elsewhere in Asia.

Deficiencies discovered in the Japanese intelligence apparatus following border conflicts with Soviet Russia would not be sufficiently assuaged to significantly alter the quagmire Japan would find herself in in China, nor timely enough to alter later intelligence difficulties following

Japan's advance into Southeast Asia. In the former, continued attempts at puppet governance could not overcome the power-vacuum that had existed there for some time; in the latter, insufficient time to undertake groundwork (given the rushed nature of Japanese operations in southeast Asia), and belated efforts at cooperation with independence movements, confounded by differing and inconsistent policy between Special Service Organs in the field and Tokyo, would lead to a breakdown of relations with those Imperial Japan *prima facie* sought to assist, but ultimately sought to control.

1 Japan's Post-Meiji Restoration Intelligence System

Patriotic Societies

Following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Imperial Japan would be aided in its overseas ambitions by volunteer nationalist/imperialist organisations, and especially so in the field of Intelligence. The informal intelligence networks and methodologies developed by these “patriotic societies” would be integral to Japan’s human intelligence (HUMINT) network. These societies, with such characteristic names such as the *Kyōshisha* (Purpose Rectifying Society), the *Kyōninsha* (Stubbornly Enduring Society) and the *Kenshisha* (Purpose Hardening Society) sought to advance Japan’s imperial ambitions from their inception, covering a political spectrum variously described as “extreme nationalist” or “reactionary”⁸, ‘right-wing’, “pan-Asian”, “expansionist”, or even “liberationist”.⁹ Irrespective of their initial political aims at home, these societies sought over time to serve Imperial Japan’s expansion overseas, serving to “observe, assist, finance, and report about, nationalist movements in China and elsewhere, while at the same time making things difficult for the imperialists, especially Russia, but also Britain and the United States (US).”¹⁰

The rapid expansion of Japan’s patriotic societies was aided by post-Meiji Restoration social strife, exacerbated by the disenfranchisement of the samurai class (including the defeat of the *Seikanron*; advocacy of a campaign against Korea following its refusal to recognise the Meiji Emperor in 1874, and further the failure of the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877). Most of those who joined these patriotic societies were of the *shizoku* class (descendants of samurai), a designation manufactured following the dissolution of the traditional Confucian classes with the Meiji Restoration. Most, however, referred to themselves as *shishi* (loyalist samurai).¹¹ Imperial Japan’s

⁸ Norman, E.H., “The Genyōsha: A Study in the Origins of Japanese Imperialism” in *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Sept. 1944) pp. 261-267

⁹ Nish, I., “Japanese Intelligence, 1894-1922” in Andrew, C., & Noakes, J., Eds., *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1987) p. 141

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-2

¹¹ Sabey, J.W., *The Genyōsha, the Kokuryūkai, and Japanese Expansionism* (University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1973) p. 10

expansionist policy may be attributed to the economic problem created by the increasing number of these *rōnin*, or masterless samurai. Nationalist reaction against proposed modernisation, which included rapid social change and industrialisation, found an outlet in Imperial Japan's proposed foreign expansion, providing both a focus and purpose for these men.¹²

In February 1881, many of these societies, based predominantly in Fukuoka, Kyushu (Japan's southernmost main island), banded together and formed the most notable organisation during this early period, the *Genyōsha* (Dark Ocean Society).¹³ Imperial Japan's expansionist ambition was at this time now inextricably linked with Japanese secret societies, and Japan, through various politically-motivated personalities, including Tōyama Mitsuru (founding father of the *Genyōsha*), now sought to organise "underground machinery for the total penetration of those countries which she desired to conquer".¹⁴ Pan-Asiatic sentiment (from a Japanese perspective encompassing all of Asia, with Japan in a leadership role) was now allied with nationalist ambition to see Imperial Japan the equal of any of the great Western powers. Politically-minded Japanese, both liberal and nationalist, found common ground in groups such as the *Tōhō Kyōkai* (Oriental Cooperation Society) founded in 1890, and the *Tōa Dōbunkai* (East Asia Common Culture Society) which would later aid Japan's expansion of its industrial, commercial and even military presence in Asia.¹⁵

Japanese economic interests in Manchuria would expand rapidly from 1889, principally focused on the port of Newchwang (present-day Yingkou); so much so that the *Nippon Yūsen Kaisha*, a Japanese shipping concern, had established a monthly service there in 1891. Trade with Manchuria had increasingly grown in importance over the preceding years, but was

¹² Everest-Phillips, M., "Colin Davidson's British Indian Intelligence Operations in Japan 1915-23 and the Demise of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance", *Intelligence and National Security*, 24:5 (Oct. 2009) p. 686

¹³ Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 267

¹⁴ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) KV 3/253, Straits Settlements Police Special Branch, Report Upon Current Japanese Affairs, Survey of Japanese Espionage in Malaya, pp. 1-2

¹⁵ Everest-Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 686

predominantly a one-sided affair, with Japan importing from Manchuria.¹⁶ Only by 1893 were Japanese traders in Manchuria in any number, this being considerably small despite their relative success.¹⁷ Thus Manchuria was of increasing importance to Japan's economic interests even prior to the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95.

Japan's informal intelligence networks

Japanese patriotic societies would be secret only in regard to their actual methods and results; their stated goals were known to all, and appealed to many.¹⁸ Recruitment to these societies rested and relied on zeal, and if this were found lacking, irrespective of other talents, the recruit would be excluded.¹⁹ With the rise of ultra-nationalism in Japan this did little to reduce numbers, and recruits would come from all walks of life:

The rank and file, who were assigned the role of collecting information, included shopkeepers, tourists, salesmen of literature and pornographic drawings and medicine, wrestling instructors, fishermen, businessmen, students of Islam and of the English language, professors, priests and archaeologists.²⁰

Agents of Japan's "secret" societies were rarely rewarded. This was not necessary; agents were driven by their patriotism. Information gathered by these societies' agents and passed to their leaders would, in turn, be delivered to the Japanese government. The delineation between Japan's informal intelligence networks, provided by the patriotic societies, and Japan's formal intelligence apparatus' was thus rarely distinct; activities of both in the majority of instances were complementary. This went further in the makeup of their respective memberships; many members of military intelligence were

¹⁶ Spinks, C.N., "Origin of Japanese Interests in Manchuria", *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (May, 1943) p. 261

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 261

¹⁸ Seth, R., *Secret Servants* (London: Victor Gallancz Ltd, 1957) p. 57

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 66

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67

already members of patriotic societies and or later switched from a formal to an informal role. Likewise, many agents of military intelligence were initially servants or trainees of patriotic societies.²¹ Japanese secret societies tended to recruit from members of related professional organisations, for example reserve officers of the military establishment or sailors and merchants.²² Within Manchuria, particularly well-organised secret societies would later be camouflaged within various youth movements.²³

Methods of Japan's early modern intelligence apparatus, both formal and informal, mirrored if not directly emulated the earlier efforts of Wilhelm Stieber, lawyer and loyalist Prussian during the 19th century. Stieber had created an extensive information network for the Prussians and led intelligence efforts against Austria. Stieber's methods, including travelling throughout Austria for two years under the guise of a pedlar, would serve as forerunner of the great intelligence journeys made by Japanese in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.²⁴

Furthermore, in the months of preparation before Prussia's invasion of Austria in 1866, Stieber organised a new section of the secret police, the forerunner of the modern Intelligence Corps, integrated into the German military as the *Geheime Feldpolizei* (Secret Field Police) up to the end of World War II. This service, effectively a counterintelligence organ, appealed greatly to Imperial Japan.²⁵ Toward the end of the 19th century Japan was receiving Prussian assistance in the reorganisation and training of their military, and on recommendation sought Stieber's aid in the establishment of a new, modern espionage system. Students would be sent to Stieber from the 1870s onward.²⁶

As Minister of Police, Stieber would establish "The Green House" in Berlin. The Green House, a brothel, provided services able to satisfy any and

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67

²² Memorandum "Japanese Secret Societies", 16 January 1946 – Japanese Intel. Organs & Counter-Intel. Organs - 1946, Box No. 8, Japanese Activities in the Far East; Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-36; Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38; National Archives at College Park, MD.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Secret Servants*, pp. 22-29

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43

all whims of its clientele, “customers” being carefully selected. No one entered the Green House without introduction by Stieber, or by proxy. Individual proclivities were known by their arrival, and over time such particular predilections were used to pressure and coerce. Although the information thus gained was admittedly accessible through “normal” means of intelligence gathering, these methods would not have been so efficient, nor would the capacity to control the individual have been so thoroughly obtained. According to Ronald Seth, Stieber would share all he had learnt and practiced, including the Green House, and by the time of his death in 1892 had seen his teachings adopted by the Japanese with “...modifications and even some innovations....”²⁷

Hiraoka Kōtarō was first official head of the *Genyōsha* (Tōyama was only ever chief ideologue and unofficial figurehead); a man of not insubstantial means, made available to the *Genyōsha*, Hiraoka was owner of some of Kyushu’s richest coalmines.²⁸ The *Genyōsha* and *Kokuryūkai* (Black Dragon Society) also received considerable financial support from firms including the *Ōkura Gumi Shōkai* and *Yasuda Zaibatsu*, and from businessmen and politicians Kuhara Fusanosuke and Yamamoto Jōtarō.²⁹ The *Ōkura Gumi Shōkai* would be official purveyor of weapons to the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) throughout the Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War, and would later import steel-making machinery for steel producers in Japan and locomotives for the Japan National Railway and South Manchurian Railway.³⁰ Kuhara Fusanosuke was founder of the Kuhara Trading Co., precursor to the later *Nippon Sangyō* Corporation (present-day Nissan).³¹ Yamamoto was at one time a director of the *Mitsui Bussan*, having worked

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-43

²⁸ Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 275

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 270

³⁰ Kunio, Y., *Sōgō Shōsha: The Vanguard of the Japanese Economy* (Tokyo: Oxford University Press, 1982) p. 75

³¹ Morck, R. & Nakamura, M., “A Frog in a Well Knows Nothing of the Ocean: A History of Corporate Ownership in Japan” in Morck, R., *Ed.*, *A History of Corporate Governance around the World: Family Business Groups to Professional Managers* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005) pp. 394-398

previously in the firm's China headquarters in Shanghai.³² Another known member of the *Genyōsha* was Sugiyama Shigemaru. Sugiyama had once been a police official, and during the upcoming Russo-Japanese War would be sent to the United States at the request of Premier Katsura Tarō to both secure a loan from JP Morgan and Co. and purchase war materials. Sugiyama would later be involved in both the Bank of Taiwan and South Manchurian Railway, and maintained relationships of his own with other military and political leaders.³³

With their substantial funding, the *Genyōsha* and *Kokuryūkai* were able to establish an extensive infrastructure to aid in their intelligence activities. Along with a training establishment in Sapporo for the training of agents, the *Genyōsha* would also found a Chinese headquarters (HQ) at Hankou, with a branch in Vladivostok operating under the pretence of a martial arts school.³⁴ Uchida Ryōhei had established the *Genyōsha*'s martial arts school in Vladivostok, while Sugiyama acted as director of the *Rakuzendō*.³⁵ The school in Sapporo would provide courses in language, including particular dialects, deception and security before an agent's leaving for the Asian mainland.³⁶ The *Kokuryūkai* would establish their own "Nationalists' Training Academy" in Tokyo and the Osaka Foreign Language School. Both provided a curriculum covering all elements related to espionage.³⁷

The *Rakuzendō*, or House of Pleasurable Delights, was connected to the Hankou headquarters and served several purposes. As a mirror image of Stieber's Green House, the *Rakuzendō* enticed and then ensnared important personages, but also served as a clearing-house for agents whose reports would be delivered to prostitutes behind closed doors and then forwarded on. The *Rakuzendō* would also serve as a school of seduction and debauchery,

³² Cochran, S., "Three Roads into Shanghai's market: Japanese, Western, and Chinese companies in match trade, 1895-1937" in Ampalavanar Brown, R., *Ed., Chinese Business Enterprise: Critical Perspectives on Business and Management* (New York: Routledge, 1996) p. 201

³³ Jansen, M., *The Japanese and Sun Yat-Sen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) p. 40

³⁴ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Secret Servants*, p. 60

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-65

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65

better to help agents entice and acquire the services of those who would be in a position to provide information. The jiu-jitsu school in Vladivostok acted as a base for agents within eastern and central Siberia. Agents could from here be spread along the Trans-Siberian railway. The school was also able to attract Russians of interest with promises of time in the *Rakuzendō gratis*.³⁸

Although extensive, these operations remained informal and essentially *ad hoc*, operating alone rather than as the basis for an expanding network. Curriculae of training establishments was developed by, if talented, nevertheless untrained (in the formal sense) intelligence officers. Two smaller patriotic societies would, however, amalgamate in 1898, forming a greater presence in the *Tōa Dōbunkai* (East Asia Common Culture Society).³⁹ Founded by Prince Konoye Atsumaro (father of Prince Konoye Fumimaro, who would later be Prime Minister of Japan), the *Tōa Dōbunkai* was established ostensibly to seek improvement in relations between Japan and other Far East nations.⁴⁰ Japanese political liberals and nationalists would find common cause in groups such as this, which “harnessed the lure of patriotic adventure abroad to Japan’s needs to expand industry, commerce and military strength in Asia.”⁴¹ A notable personage within the *Toa Dōbunkai* membership was another future premier of Japan, Inukai Tsuyoshi, who had previously led the East Asia Society, a predecessor of the *Tōa Dōbunkai*.⁴²

Work of societies such as these had a more refined aspect in the educational and cultural spheres. Konoye Atsumaro, president of the House of Peers between 1895 and 1904, had been a firm proponent of greater contact with China and critical of swollen military budgets.⁴³ The *Tōa Dōbunkai* maintained colleges (known as *Tung Wen*) in Shanghai, Tientsin and Hankou, subsidised by the Japanese Government. Ostensibly, Chinese could here gain a middle school education, for Japanese, training in order to do business in

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 61-62

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63

⁴⁰ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 208/1223, “Japanese – Intelligence Methods”

⁴¹ Everest-Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 686

⁴² Hotta, E., *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War 1931-1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) p. 41

⁴³ Jansen, M.B., *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000) p. 437

China.⁴⁴ Colleges of the *Tōa Dōbunkai* were also thought to have been in Amoy and in Tokyo, where the society was based.⁴⁵ The *Tōa Dōbunkai* is thought to have received funding from the Foreign Office.⁴⁶

The *Tōa Dōbun Shoin Daigaku* (East Asia Common Culture University) in Shanghai was connected with Japanese espionage and subversive activity in China. According to US sources the “university” had been founded by *shishi* (here translated as “persons with an objective”) to aid in the revolution of Sun Yat-sen.⁴⁷ Hirayama Shū and Kaji Chōichi, founding members of the *Kokuryūkai*, both served as organisers and advisors to the East Asian Common Culture Society.⁴⁸ Many associates of the *Kokuryūkai* were graduates of the *Tōa Dōbun Shoin Daigaku* or were members of its parent *Tōa Dōbunkai* in Tokyo.⁴⁹

The school also had an association with the Japanese military, which had been eager to use its graduates in intelligence and translation work, and copies of student field research reports were forwarded to the IJA General Staff.⁵⁰ Students of the university were required to travel to different parts of China for a six-month period, and before graduating presented theses on their observations. These theses provided considerable information to the IJA and Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN).⁵¹ Students also undertook topographical research as part of their curriculum.⁵² In a history of the *Tōa Dōbun Shoin* published 1982, the military connection is not disputed. Although reinforcing its purported philanthropic purpose, that of an improvement in relations with China, the history neither disputes nor even attempts to obfuscate its

⁴⁴ TNA: WO 208/1223, “Japanese – Intelligence Methods”, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ TNA: KV 3/253, Straits Settlements Police Special Branch, *op. cit.*, p. 5

⁴⁶ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Secret Servants*, p. 68

⁴⁷ Memorandum for Lt. Comdr. W.A. Carr “Okino, Matao Captain IJN – Interview with”, 6 October 1945, Folder Okino, Mateo Capt. I.J.N., Box No. 4, Individuals (A to Z) and Capt. Matao Okino (I.J.N.), Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 4

⁴⁸ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Secret Servants*, p. 66

⁴⁹ Memorandum for Lt. Comdr. W.A. Carr “Okino, Matao Captain IJN – Interview with”, 6 October 1945, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 4

⁵⁰ Reynolds, D. R., “Chinese Area Studies in Prewar China: Japan's Tōa Dōbun Shoin in Shanghai, 1900-1945”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 5 (Nov., 1986) p. 948

⁵¹ Memorandum for Lt. Comdr. W.A. Carr “Okino, Matao Captain IJN – Interview with”, 6 October 1945, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 4

⁵² TNA: WO 208/1223, “Japanese – Intelligence Methods”, *op. cit.*

graduates' involvement in intelligence work on behalf of Japan.⁵³

The *Tōa Dōbun Shoin* in Shanghai had by 1908 no less than 272 graduates operating throughout Mongolia, China, India, Burma, Annam and the Philippines.⁵⁴ In time, it would become so associated with Japanese influence that Chinese students avoided enrolment from the 1930s onward.⁵⁵ Originally operating under the pretence of a joint educational facility for Japanese and Chinese, the *Tōa Dōbun Shoin* would eventually be shunned by the Chinese as solely a training establishment for Japanese agents, and would thereafter be attended only by Japanese.⁵⁶

Despite lacking formal training, the strength of patriotic societies' charismatic leadership, and the relationships formed between these men and Japan's political and economic leadership (along with nationalist and dissident leaders throughout Asia), would aid in the formation of an expansive if informal network across the breadth of territory over which Japan held imperial ambition. Infrastructure developed by these patriotic societies would provide essential training for information-gathering; talent and zeal would compensate for the lack of formal intelligence training. Recruits would be plentiful, and the extent to which information of importance was furnished to Japan's political and military establishment cannot be underestimated. Up to the Second Sino-Japanese conflict these, if elementary, methods of human intelligence information-gathering operations would be of consequence, even integral, to Japan's future successes in mainland Asia. The influence of these societies would persist throughout the period, and in 1943 the Japanese broadcast to Churchill and Roosevelt threatening severe consequences should Allied forces not surrender unconditionally to Japan was made not by a governmental official, but rather Kurusu Yoshihisa, a director of the *Taisei Yokusankai* (Imperial Rule Assistance Association) and last president of the *Kokuryūkai*.⁵⁷

⁵³ Reynolds, *op. cit.*, p. 948

⁵⁴ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Secret Servants*, p. 63

⁵⁵ TNA: WO 208/1223, "Japanese – Intelligence Methods", *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ TNA: KV 3/253, Straits Settlements Police Special Branch, *op. cit.*, p. 5

⁵⁷ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Secret Servants*, pp. 64-65

Political ties of Japan's "Secret" Societies

John Wayne Sabey, in his thesis *The Genyōsha, the Kokuryūkai, and Japanese Expansionism*, seeks initially to argue that these key patriotic societies (the *Kokuryūkai* will be addressed later) were not able to decisively affect the course that Imperial Japan was to take from the late 19th century onward. Rather it is Sabey's suggestion that "...although they were able to affect, to some degree, the direction and development of Japanese policy, it was not within their power to initiate major changes. Moreover, their influence was by no means as important as that of either the nation's established political leaders or the armed forces."⁵⁸ Sabey does, however, allow for their performing "the function of a clearing-house for pooling the resources and talents of expansionists from the political, military, bureaucratic and industrial communities of Meiji Japan."⁵⁹

Sabey's assertion that the *Genyōsha* and *Kokuryūkai* did not, as they themselves claim, have a decisive influence in Japan's decision to go to war with China in 1894 and Russia in 1904 relies on their decisions being absent from military and non-partisan histories.⁶⁰ This seems to overlook that clandestine actions undertaken by patriotic societies would likely have been kept secret, and furthermore, that influence is not something necessarily tangible, able to be authenticated in historical records.

It is important, rather, to examine the extent of political, economic and military ties held by key members of these secret societies. From these societies' inception, key leaders, including Tōyama Mitsuru and Uchida Ryōhei, had maintained relationships with key figures within the Japanese economy and political fields. These ideologues, in particular Tōyama, also held considerable sway over influential figures. Saigō Takamori, from whom both had taken their lead, had, following his resignation from the newly-formed Meiji government, organised his own *Shi-gakko* (Private School) in the mid-1870s, an early prototype for political conditioning. The *Shi-gakko* anticipated the use of force in governmental change, but with Takamori's fall

⁵⁸ Sabey, *op. cit.*, p. 3

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7

following the Satsuma Rebellion, lessons were learnt by Takamori's self-declared successors; that armed revolt against the prevailing authorities would fail. As Norman states: "It was not unlike the lesson learned by Hitler from the Munich Putsch of 1923, after which he chose a policy of winning over the key leaders of army, bureaucracy and big business to his program."⁶¹

As such, the *Genyōsha*, and later the *Kokuryūkai*, would operate within Imperial Japan's constitutional framework; not as limiting as it might seem as political intrigue, blackmail and the use *inter alia* of terror were still available as workable devices, and later utilised as expansionist expedients. These patriotic societies and their leaders were already aided in their overseas endeavours by the already existent reactionary character of many within Imperial Japan's bureaucracy, in particular the General Staff. With innumerable sympathisers within government, the *Genyōsha* (and later the *Kokuryūkai*) were able to transmit threats or cajoleries to key authorities in need, were kept abreast of policy and manoeuvring, and were even able to utilise intermediaries to facilitate introductions to this general or that Cabinet minister.⁶²

Japan's patriotic societies, led by charismatic ideologues, were thus able to develop an informal intelligence network across Asia in the absence of any deep-seated formal network. Their political and military ties would allow a degree of influence unseen in other nations, and these would be integral to Japan's later aspirations in mainland Asia. Despite their proliferation, alongside their open political bias, Japan's patriotic societies would in time negatively influence later formal models of Japanese Intelligence, in terms of methodology and politicisation. This will be examined in the following chapters.

Japanese Intelligence through the First Sino-Japanese War 1894-1895

Saigō Takamori, who had fought against the Meiji Restoration despite earlier support for the movement, to this day is seen as the quintessential patriot in Japan. Tōyama Mitsuru (founder of the *Genyōsha*) and Uchida Ryōhei

⁶¹ Norman, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-268

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 268

(disciple of Tōyama and founder of the *Kokuryūkai*) both developed their tactics and emulated the character of Takamori.⁶³ Saigō is said to have received encouragement from the Emperor regarding a Korean expedition, and “thus the impression was created and... [later] strengthened that the Emperor, though separated from such faithful subjects as Saigō by the machinations of self-seeking courtiers or councillors, yet understands and blesses the aspirations of true patriot [*sic*] – the intransigent expansionist.”⁶⁴ Patriotic service overseas in the name of the Emperor was thus to be admired, and Imperial Japan would be aided by an increasing volunteer, if informal, intelligence network as Japanese “patriots” spread throughout East Asia.

The *Genyōsha* sent young men throughout China, Central and Southeast Asia to collect information on a number of subjects. Agents were sent to Sinkiang and Russian Central Asia under the pretence that the peoples of these lands were being oppressed through taxation by the local authorities, and to help them turn against their overlords.⁶⁵ Others were sent to develop these lands, and particularly their agricultural systems, to show what the Japanese were able to provide. Agents were sent to India, Burma, Russia and Tibet to determine their defences and provide accurate maps of their road systems. While there, relationships with nomadic groups, together with Buddhist and Muslim priests, as well as other important figures, were to be fostered in order to gain support for Japan.⁶⁶

Information of commercial or economic value would be made available to the Foreign Office and other Japanese commercial interests, while information of military value would be offered to the Japanese armed forces. Tōyama, with the aid of yet another patriotic society, the *Sōaisha* (Mutual Love Society), sent over one hundred men to China in 1882 in order to gather information. Others were sent to make contact with nationalist elements in colonial-held territories, anti-Manchu groups and religious dissidents, primarily Muslims.⁶⁷ Also around this time, the *Genyōsha*, under Uchida Ryōhei, Toyama Mitsuru’s foremost protégé, formed the *Tenyūkyō* (Society

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 265

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Secret Servants*, p. 57

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58

⁶⁷ Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 278

of the Celestial [Heavenly] Salvation of the Oppressed), a group of fifteen men who were specifically tasked with making contact with and supporting the *Tonghaks*, a religious dissident group in Korea acting against the then Korean government.⁶⁸ Machinations of the *Tonghaks* were used, if indirectly, by the *Genyōsha* and its subsidiary the *Tenyukyō* to agitate and weaken the Korean Government, eventually leading to protests to the Japanese Government.⁶⁹ The Japanese assured the Koreans an investigation would be undertaken, yet the Imperial Japanese Army would intervene, incorporating the *Tenyukyō* into its own organisation as a “volunteer corps”; any plans for an investigation being abandoned. The *Tenyukyō* would later be actively trusted and utilised by the IJA establishment as both scouts and intelligence operatives.⁷⁰

Genyōsha records appear to demonstrate how during the period the society also established and maintained associations with key political figures and even the Army General Staff, operating with the latter’s tacit approval against China during the lead-up to the conflict of 1894-1895. The *Genyōsha* maintained many agents in Korea at this time, and the society was not lacking in sympathisers, including in the business and religious establishment (the latter predominantly from within the Buddhist Temple, *Honganji*, which maintained a branch in Busan, Korea). From these sources, a vast quantity of information was accumulated regarding the Korean Peninsula. The assassination in 1894 of the Korean revolutionary Kim Ok-kyun in Shanghai by an agent of the Chinese Government (for which he was officially rewarded), who was a close associate of the *Genyōsha*, only exacerbated anti-Chinese sentiment within Japan’s patriotic societies and the Japanese establishment itself.⁷¹

Following the death of Kim, one of the *Genyōsha*’s key figures, Matano Hansuke, made contact with the then Foreign Minister of Japan, Mutsu Munemitsu, encouraging the immediate launching of war with China. According to Norman, Mutsu was evasive, suggesting, rather, that Matano

⁶⁸ Deacon, R., *Kempei Tai: The Japanese Secret Service Then and Now* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1990) p. 40

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41

⁷⁰ Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 282

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 280-1

make contact with General Kawakami Sōroku regarding his aim, from whom he purportedly received the following response:

What you say is full of good sense, but with a Prime Minister such as Itō we cannot entertain the hope of opening hostilities. According to reports, I have heard of some distinguished men of the Fukuoka *Genyōsha*, which is the heart and soul of the movement in favour of a military expedition. If there were only some who would cross to Korea and start a conflagration, it would then be my duty, which I would not hesitate for a moment to fulfil, to go and extinguish the fire.⁷²

With such unambiguous support from the military establishment, Uchida Ryōhei would lead his newly-formed *Tenyukyō* to Korea.

Adachi Kenzō was the owner of two Japanese newspapers in Korea (the *Chōsen Jihō* and *Kanjō Shinpō*), and was later implicated in the 1895 assassination of Queen Min of Korea. The assassination, allegedly by *Genyōsha* members, occurred with the tacit approval, if not involvement, of Lieutenant-General Miura, the Japanese Minister in Seoul.⁷³ Both men and their accomplices were acquitted.⁷⁴ Despite the controversy, Adachi was later elected to government in 1902, holding the positions of Minister of Communications (1925-1927) and Minister of the Interior (1929-1931). Adachi would later lead the ultranationalist *Kokumin Dōmei* party between 1932 and 1939, and hold a position in the second Cabinet of Prince Konoye Fumimaro in 1940.⁷⁵ Tōyama Mitsuru would himself be offered a position in the joint Cabinet of Ōkuma Shigenobu and Itagaki Taisuke, but would refuse.⁷⁶ Thus would leading figures of Japan's patriotic societies and their informal intelligence networks come to positions of power within the Japanese government, bringing with them, to the policy-maker level, their particular bias.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 281

⁷³ Deacon, *op. cit.*, p. 41

⁷⁴ McKenzie, F., *The Tragedy of Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1975) pp. 263-68

⁷⁵ Frederic, L., *Japan Encyclopedia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002) p. 6

⁷⁶ Jansen, M., *op cit.*, p. 40

These episodes illustrate three main points: i) the apparent ease in which *Genyōsha* members were able to access key figures in Japan's political establishment at the time, ii) the apparent inability or unwillingness of the Foreign Office to intervene in efforts of the patriotic societies (and perhaps even providing unspoken support, given Mutsu's willingness to direct Matano to a key military figure; later a key military strategist in the oncoming conflict), and iii) support for the actions of Japan's patriotic societies in the highest echelons of Imperial Japan's military establishment.

Military Intelligence through the First Sino-Japanese War

Japanese territorial interests in Manchuria had arisen during a time of political discontent, exacerbated by rapid modernisation following the Meiji Restoration and public interest in the affairs of Korea. Two arguments exist for the onset of the First Sino-Japanese conflict, namely: i) the troubles of the Itō Cabinet (in relation to budgetary measures, foreign policy and treaty revision), which subsequently came to see a war with China as a unifying tactic; and ii) internal Japanese politics aside, the conflict was rather a result of Chinese moves to reassert sovereignty over Korea, and how this would affect Japanese interests there. As Spinks states, the conflict's beginnings were likely a conjunction of both, but, importantly, both Japan's economic and political interests on the peninsula were at the time threatened.⁷⁷

Immediately before the First Sino-Japanese War, there was no call within Japan to occupy Chinese territory. However, General Yamagata Aritomo, nationalist military leader integral to the modernisation of the Imperial Japanese Army, foreshadowed around this time that if Japan did not act decisively, other powers may have benefited, stating: "Granted that complications are destined to arise in the Orient at no distant date, Japan's wisest plan is to take some decisive action before other Powers become provided with wings of mischief."⁷⁸ Yamagata Aritomo would later allude to the importance of intelligence during the first Sino-Japanese War:

⁷⁷ Spinks, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-264

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 265-266

It was owing to the accurate knowledge which I had obtained as to the conditions of affairs in North China that it was possible to lay the plans of the campaign as to surely and safely bring about the complete victory of our forces.... The Chinese army was divided into *yees*, or battalions, which were supposed to consist of 500 men. In reality, however, they rarely ever consisted of more than 300 or 350 men. The commander of the *yee*, or camp, was in this way enabled to pocket the pay of 200 or 150 of his soldiers from the government grants.⁷⁹

As the First Sino-Japanese conflict developed, Japan's intention was initially to drive Chinese forces from Korea. Following completion of this objective, however, nationalist sentiment, undoubtedly aggravated by ultranationalist groups in Japan itself, put pressure on the Japanese government to expand its war aims in the name of Japanese expansion. Over time, rather than seeking solely punitive indemnity from China, came a call for China to cede territory (including Formosa, the Liaotung peninsula and China's Three Northeastern Provinces), the influential publication *Jiji Shinpō* at the time stating:

Japan will take her own ultimate course, which is to get her share of the most important portions of China's territory, both from a commercial and a strategical point of view, and leave the remainder as morsels for other foreign Powers. There may be concern felt lest some other countries may object as to the amount of Japan's share, but it is only reasonable that Japan should acquire what she wishes, as she has opened the way for such a chance.⁸⁰

Few saw the political ramifications of such action by the Japanese. Count Ōkuma Shigenobu, however, foresaw the political dangers such a path contained, stating: "It must not be forgotten that whenever Japan's influence in the East is extended, as will be the natural result of the victories by land and sea, every foreign Power will be excited. This envy can be easily

⁷⁹ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 132

⁸⁰ Spinks, *op. cit.*, p. 269

transformed into hatred, and the next step is active interference in Japan's affairs.”⁸¹

During the final years of the 19th century, and into the early years of the 20th century, Japan's primary formal intelligence structure revolved around its Foreign Service and Military Attachés (MA) posted abroad, the offices of the latter having attached “language officers” engaged in intelligence work, a system engaged in by Japan since the Meiji Restoration.⁸² The normal duties of these language officers included: i) language study ii) a period of service with the Navy or Army, and iii) the study of political, economic and religious matters. Language officers known to have been in the US during the early 1940s, for example, included Colonel Yamamoto Arata (who would later become Chief of No. 6 Section GHQ Tokyo), Colonel Sugita (who would become secretary to War Minister Shimomura), Colonel Matsushita (who would later hold an appointment in the War Office), Colonel Yamamoto Ringo (later posted to the Air Training School in Japan), and Major General Nishi who died during the war years.⁸³

One of Japan's earliest and most important figures in the realm of intelligence was Fukushima Yasumasa. Fukushima was employed by the IJA from 1878 and was subsequently posted as Military Attaché to the Japanese legation in Beijing; later serving as Military Attaché in Berlin during the period 1887-92. Fukushima was responsible for Japan's earliest “intelligence rides”, information-gathering undertaken of a geographical region by what amounted to mounted intelligence officers, a method already employed by both Russia and Britain throughout Asia. Fukushima's sojourns took him to India, and included a fifteen-month journey across Siberia collecting information on Russia which would later aid in the upcoming Russo-Japanese conflict. Fukushima's reports had come into the hands of General Yamagata Aritomo, “for three decades the most influential elder statesman in military matters”, and in Aritomo's memorandum of October 1893 he admits “...the

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 268-269

⁸² Nish, I., “Japanese Intelligence and the Approach of the Russo-Japanese War”, in Andrew, C., & Dilks, D., Eds., *The Missing Dimension* (London: Macmillan, 1984) p. 18

⁸³ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6313, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 233, 24 May 1946, Item 2150, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, p. 18

weight they carried in his strategic thinking.”⁸⁴ Studies undertaken by travelling agents of Japan’s informal intelligence networks, although more localised, can thus be said to imitate these initial intelligence rides pioneered by Fukushima for Japan. Fukushima would later serve as Chief of Staff of the 1st Army during the conflict with China, and after the conflict would undertake further travel, with subsequent reports made on Europe and Asia, including Turkey, Poland, Central Asia, Arabia the Caucasus and India. During the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, Fukushima would be commander of the Japanese expeditionary force.⁸⁵ The similarity in methods employed by Japan’s formal and informal intelligence networks do not end here.

Arao Kiyoshi is thought to have been one of those sent to China by Tōyama Mitsuru in 1882. Arao would later graduate from the Japanese Military Academy and be attached to the General Staff as a specialist in Chinese affairs. Norman states it was at Arao’s insistence that a specialist bureau was set up by the General Staff, and that from here came later subsequent divisions into geographically specific intelligence departments covering the Far East and Central Asia.⁸⁶

Arao was posted to Shanghai in 1886, where he established a branch of the *Rakuzendō*, the following year establishing another branch in Hankou.⁸⁷ Norman places responsibility for the creation of the *Rakuzendō* in the hands of Kishida Ginkō, joint founder of Japan’s first newspaper, the *Shinbunshi*, but refers to this establishment as one primarily concerned with the sale of pharmaceuticals and perfumes.⁸⁸ Why Seth and Norman differ in their assessment of this establishments workings, if they were separate entities or rather a conglomerate of complementary establishments, is immaterial. Kishida himself was associated with the *Genyōsha* and other patriotic societies, employing those interested in commerce in the Asian mainland, but also Japan’s pioneer informal intelligence officers who would be aided by a viable commercial front.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, pp. 19-20

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20

⁸⁶ Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 278

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 278

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 279

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Arao thus bridged the gap between Japan's informal intelligence network and the formal military intelligence structure of Japan. He employed men who made their own "rides" throughout China and Central Asia, disguised as Chinese, and proficient in the Chinese language. These men returned with "the first detailed information available to the Japanese intelligence services on those parts of the world".⁹⁰ The sheer scope of information gathered by these men was staggering. The areas they investigated included economic and financial conditions, road and communications networks, governmental defences throughout Asia, including those of Russia, China, India and Burma, and further the "... the prospects of utilising Moslem and Buddhist clergy for Japanese intrigue."⁹¹

Arao's efforts epitomise what would become Japan's integrated intelligence network, covering not only the political and military sphere, but also the economic. After his work in Hankou, Arao, resigning his captain's commission in 1889, was urged by Premier Kuroda and Finance Minister Matsukata to speak before chambers of commerce in Japan's larger cities to persuade Japan's business leaders to enter into trade with China.⁹² By 1891 Arao had chosen one hundred and fifty prospective teachers who were to go to Shanghai to study the Chinese language, geography, commerce, finance and related subjects in a school established for this purpose, the *Nisshin Bōeki Kenkyūjo* (Sino-Japanese Commercial Research Office). Financial support for this establishment would be obtained from interested business enterprises and also from Tōyama Mitsuru. Graduates of the school would later journey as part of a team throughout East and South Asia and the Pacific.⁹³ Japanese trading firms would employ these men in their area of enterprise, while others would enter the Foreign Service as economic specialists. Importantly, others became scouts and interpreters through the First Sino-Japanese War.⁹⁴

Preceding, and during, the First Sino-Japanese War, the simultaneous use of elementary (if contemporary) methods by both formal and informal intelligence operatives was effective, but the select group of politically-

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 279-80

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 280

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

mind men involved allowed for an element of politicisation of intelligence. Fukushima, who had been military attaché in China just before the First Sino-Japanese War, was by 1894 a member of General Yamagata Aritomo's General Staff, and had come to the conclusion that it was beyond Russia's powers to intervene militarily, but also that China was in such a weakened state that it would easily succumb to outside pressures.⁹⁵

In intelligence, there is a difference between one who informs policy process toward, and hence influences, a certain end, and one that seeks to manipulate intelligence and consequent policy decisions.⁹⁶ Policy makers may be influenced by the intelligence that they receive, and where intelligence provides a particularly sought after assessment, or is presented from one particular perspective, a specific course of action may be manipulated. This appears to have been the case regarding General Kawakami Sōroku, who had travelled throughout the Korean peninsula in 1893 to garner intelligence over what would be the near future theatre of conflict between China and Japan. Kawakami returned to Japan convinced of the need for war, and in his position as Deputy Chief of the General Staff was able to present this view (bolstered by the reports of Major Kamio Mitsuomi, military attaché in Beijing, and others, who believed China sought to increase its presence in the Korean Peninsula even if this were to provoke hostilities with Japan) to the Emperor himself. Over time information and reports were kept from Cabinet:

It appears...that he withheld all these materials from the prime minister and foreign minister and showed them only materials which indicated the necessity for war. The result was that the members of Cabinet formed an appreciation of the situation on the basis of information (*jōhō*) supplied by the general staff which was slanted, if not positively in error. The emperor was in possession of more comprehensive and accurate intelligence in his capacity as commander-in-chief than his ministers.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 130

⁹⁶ Lowenthal, M.M., *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 2nd Ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2003) p. 4

⁹⁷ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, pp. 130-1

Even in Tokyo, dissemination of intelligence was done in such a way as to guarantee support from either the pro-war faction or the foreign policy faction (*taigaikōha*).⁹⁸

Kawakami Sōroku, then preeminent in the General Staff, was heavily involved in information-gathering efforts in China, and was a key figure in both formal military intelligence activities as well as those informal operations undertaken by Japan's patriotic societies. It is thought Kawakami was instrumental in helping Munemitsu Mutsu, then Foreign Minister, "trick" Itō Hirofumi, then Prime Minister, into sending an effective military force at the onset of the conflict, this meant to draw in sufficient Chinese forces as to justify a much stronger Japanese force of occupation over Korea.⁹⁹

Japanese Intelligence had thus modernised somewhat belatedly, taking on what essentially amounted to 19th century methodologies. Tellingly, during this early modernisation, key figures within Japanese Intelligence had developed a predilection for politicisation. However, given the early Meiji period's joint strategic focus across its military, diplomatic and political arms, initially this would not be as detrimental as it would be later in the century; especially so as Japanese Intelligence as a whole became increasingly politicised (to be examined from Chapter 4).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 131

⁹⁹ Harries, M. & S., *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army 1868-1945* (London: Heinemann, 1991) pp. 46-47

2 Japanese Intelligence and the Russo-Japanese War

The *Kokuryūkai* prior to the Russo-Japanese War

Preceding the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, Uchida Ryōhei (the *Genyōsha*'s youngest member) and his colleagues had formed in 1901 the *Kokuryūkai* (Black Dragon Society). The name *Kokuryūkai* indicated its anti-Russian stance, the two Chinese characters for Black Dragon (*Hei Lung*) in both Japanese and Chinese representing the name for the Amur River that formed a natural border between Manchuria and Siberia.¹⁰⁰

The *Kokuryūkai* was formed around the nucleus of Uchida's *Tenyūkyō*, its membership increased through the induction of other *shizoku* who had formerly only been associated. Tōyama Mitsuru, Uchida's mentor, assumed a role as advisor (*komon*), but did not hold official membership.¹⁰¹ Uchida's closest associates at this time were Kuzū Yoshihisa, Ozaki Yukimasa, Juzū Gentaku and Miyazaki Torazō [Tōten].¹⁰² Miyazaki had been active in Asia since the early 1880s, developing relationships with disaffected groups and involved in information-gathering.¹⁰³

The establishment of the *Kokuryūkai* by Uchida Ryōhei is thought by Norman to have brought greater liaison between Japan's patriotic societies and the General Staff, the society's aims arguably mirroring at the time the military establishment's, differing perhaps only in scale. Hiraoka Kōtarō, the *Genyōsha*'s first official director, already served as one of the most important liaisons between the *Genyōsha* (and by extension the *Kokuryūkai*) and Japan's political and military establishments, and thus any plans of the *Kokuryūkai* would surely have been known to key political figures of the time. During the months before the Russo-Japanese War, Hiraoka had visited important Chinese officials in North China, attempting to persuade them to the Japanese point of view, whilst at the same time intimidating those with pro-Russian

¹⁰⁰ Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 266

¹⁰¹ Sabey, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-188

¹⁰² The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 208/3886, "Organisations in Japan", British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee, Interrogation of Toyama Hidozo (Shuzo), p. 2

¹⁰³ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 130

sympathies. In this role he and an associate came to be known as “unofficial ambassadors” of Japan in Korea and China. Norman further attributes all preparatory intelligence work in Siberia and Russia for the oncoming conflict to the *Kokuryūkai*.¹⁰⁴ Although likely exaggerated, the *Kokuryūkai* nevertheless made a substantial contribution to pre-Russo-Japanese War intelligence.

In the years before the Russo-Japanese war, the *Kokuryūkai* were instrumental in making available to the Japanese military the most modern map then available of Manchuria (developed by the *Tairiku Rōnin*, yet another patriotic society with ties to the *Genyōsha* and *Kokuryūkai*), which included details of Russian administrative and military positions.¹⁰⁵ From *Kokuryūkai* sources, this map purportedly contained information previously unknown to either IJA or IJN cartographic departments, and made apparent to the Japanese authorities at the time the extent of Russian influence, and thus threat, to Japanese interests in the region.¹⁰⁶

The *Kokuryūkai* provided further assistance to the Japanese military in 1903 when *Kokuryūkai* agents assisted in infiltrating plain-clothes Japanese officers into Manchuria to meet with Manchurian banditry to gather information and to organise joint sabotage operations once hostilities began with Russia.¹⁰⁷ Of note is the assistance at this time of the Chinese Marshal Chang Tso-lin (Zang Zuolin), a warlord integral to Japanese machinations later in Manchuria and North China.¹⁰⁸

Military Intelligence in the lead up to the Russo-Japanese War

Japan at the time maintained no departmental nor governmental apparatus aimed at overall strategy.¹⁰⁹ The *genrō*, Japan’s “elder statesmen” and veteran

¹⁰⁴ Norman, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-282

¹⁰⁵ Sabey, *op. cit.*, p. 192

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193

¹⁰⁷ Deacon, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57

¹⁰⁸ Deacon identifies Chang as a bandit leader. This was not the case. Chang’s assistance would have been solely in putting Japanese intelligence officers in contact with known bandit leaders – *Ibid.*, p. 57

¹⁰⁹ Kotani, K., *Japanese Intelligence in World War II* (Oxford: Osprey, 2009) p. 138

advisors to the Emperor, undertook this role, yet their position was not substantiated in the Japanese Constitution.¹¹⁰ The *genrō*'s position was:

...extra-constitutional and informal, but their prestige was immense, and their power was reinforced by the intricate network of contacts which bound them tightly together – bonds of clan (all were either Chōshū or Satsuma); bonds of marriage and adoption; shared links with business and the bureaucracy.¹¹¹

The Emperor's right of supreme command contained two separate military powers, namely *gunrei* (military command) and *gunsei* (military administration). Implicitly, the Emperor was to seek advice regarding administration through the War Minister, in so far as administration was concerned, and from the Chief of Staff in relation to planning and strategy, taken to include all matters related to foreign military relations. This could be done without referring to the Prime Minister or Cabinet. Although not specifically mentioned in the Constitution, this arrangement came to be accepted in practice.¹¹²

The *genrō* were inextricably tied to the military, with Yamagata Aritomo himself part of this élite. Three of the seven held senior military ranks, and almost all were suspicious of political parties. Furthermore, two preeminent clans, the Satsuma and Chōshū, held a monopoly on power throughout the upper echelons of the military forces.¹¹³ At the highest level, then, Japan relied heavily upon a powerful and informal clique, exemplifying an acceptance of the opinion of select individuals within Japan, rather than ministerial and bureaucratic analysis. Additionally, the *genrō*'s number, coming from those clans instrumental in securing the Meiji Restoration, did nothing to dissuade cliquism. Finally, with direct military access to the Emperor, and thus direct information transfer, selective transmission of intelligence was possible.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 138-139

¹¹¹ Harries, M. & S., *op cit.*, p. 48

¹¹² *Ibid.* p. 40

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 48

In the Japanese government, the Cabinet led by Yamagata in 1900 instituted legislation in May of that year constraining the portfolio of the War Minister to generals on active duty. This was meant to stymie growing efforts of political parties to use retired general officers for political ends, both in Cabinet or as War Ministers, as retired officers so employed might ostensibly countermand the military leadership. Political parties themselves had been held suspect by the IJA leadership since their inception in the 1880s, being seen as a danger to national unity. Different incarnations of Cabinet in themselves would be seen as non-party entities until 1918, having their membership and organisation hitherto decided by Japan's oligarchs.¹¹⁴

As tensions arose regarding the growing Russian presence and dominance in East Asia following the First Sino-Japanese War, Japan's intelligence structure had much to gain from the existence of cliques within the military and government. Much like Japan's patriotic societies, these politically-minded cliques held substantial power. Tanaka Giichi, later to be Japan's Prime Minister through the period 1927-29, was instrumental in the formation of one such organisation, the *Kōgetsukai*. This group served as a well-connected group of lobbyists against further Russian advances into East Asia.¹¹⁵ The *Kōgetsukai* contained a number of the Army General Staff (which formed the majority), the Navy General Staff, and also the Foreign Ministry, and within its ranks the common ground appears to have been an understanding that as war with Russia was inevitable, the sooner hostilities began, the better Japan's military situation would be. The *Kōgetsukai* forwarded their thoughts to both the Japanese Cabinet and *genrō*, from whom they initially had varied support. The *genrō*, in particular, had reservations in the face of a younger generation hastening Japanese policy.¹¹⁶ Despite initial resistance from Prime Minister Katsura, the *Kōgetsukai* received support from the middle bureaucracy, and also from Foreign Minister Komura and War Minister Terauchi.¹¹⁷ Further support came from the Home Minister, Kodama

¹¹⁴ Drea, E.J., *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009) p. 129

¹¹⁵ Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, p. 24

¹¹⁶ Nish, I., *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (London and New York: Longman, 1985) p. 154

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Gentarō, formerly Vice-Minister of the Army during the First Sino-Japanese War and Governor-General of Formosa.¹¹⁸

Only two months before the First Sino-Japanese War had the Japanese military forces established the first Imperial General Headquarters (*Senji Dai Honei*, alternatively known simply as *Dai Honei*). Nish attributes this to the persistent rivalry between the Imperial Japanese Army (historically Chōshū) and the Imperial Japanese Navy (historically Satsuma). Established by the Army Minister, and in operation from 5 June (just two months before the beginning of conflict on 1 August), the intention was for it to serve as the centre of coordination in intelligence and operations for both army and navy.¹¹⁹ Harries and Meirion see an entirely different purpose for the *Dai Honei*'s establishment, however; namely an attempt on behalf of the military forces to sideline civilian government policy-making from military concerns.¹²⁰ Although both arguments doubtless contain some truth, the latter would prove most damaging in later years as the military sought greater political decision-making capacity.

Military attachés (MA) abroad were of great consequence to Japan's intelligence efforts. IJA officers had traditionally been sent to Germany for their training, yet following the First Sino-Japanese War a growing trend of sending officers to Russia began, presumably to gain a better understanding of their then perceived primary threat. Interestingly, younger officers saw a posting to Russia as detrimental to their careers; those sent to Germany were thought earmarked for prominent roles later.¹²¹ With the coming of the future conflict with Russia, the opposite would, of course, eventuate: the experience of those once posted to Russia now central to Japan's national interest.¹²²

The position of Military Attaché differed from that of other intelligence agents in that they were answerable also to the ambassador to the

¹¹⁸ Harries, M. & S., *op cit.*, p. 62

¹¹⁹ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 131

¹²⁰ Harries, M. & S., *op cit.*, p. 48

¹²¹ Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, pp. 18-9

¹²² *Ibid.*

country in which they were posted.¹²³ Isoda Saburō, a key Japanese intelligence officer through the Pacific War, during his time as Military Attaché in the US before the conflict had little communication with the Embassy. Only just before the onset of hostilities did any meaningful liaison occur.¹²⁴ This to some extent covers the apparent disparity in terms of what constitutes an intelligence network versus the open source research undertaken (primarily) by Foreign Office establishments, with Military Attachés being principally responsible for clandestine information-gathering, utilising diplomatic and consular support as cover for their operations. Military Attaché reports to Tokyo, for example, went via Embassy mail and diplomatic bag, but only when the material involved was “not of immediate or vital importance”. The Japanese remained wary of such methods, and when possible “safe hand” was used (particularly in regard to the transport of codebooks), using predominantly military officers, couriers never being regularly utilised.¹²⁵ Furthermore, communication was often through telegraph, using the services of either the Postal Telegraph Office or Western Union. These messages were always in code. The Japanese Embassy in Washington, according to Isoda, maintained no private wireless telegraphic link with Tokyo.¹²⁶

Attaché reports were initially addressed to the Foreign Office, then forwarded unopened to the General Affairs Section of the General Staff, then to the head of the American Section or, if required, to the Chief of Staff. Only Chiefs of Staff were authorised to decide further dissemination, and to forward extracts of these reports to the Foreign Office or IJN. If the information contained related to training, the report usually went straight to the Military Inspector General, if related to technical matters, to Air Force HQ. Reports were often forwarded to other MA for comparison or supplementation.¹²⁷

¹²³ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6313, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 233, 24 May 1946, Item 2148, Interrogation of Lieutenant-General Isoda Saburō, pp. 1-2

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

Barnhart states the IJA had formed its intelligence arm, called the *Kanseikyoku*, in 1878, this receiving its modern designation of Second (Intelligence) Department in 1896.¹²⁸ Major reorganisation and enlargement of the IJA General Staff occurred in May of that year. The General Staff now contained six departments; the First dedicated to operations, the Second to formation and mobilisation, the Third to foreign intelligence, and the Fourth to communications and transportation. Within two years, however, further change was undertaken, with the First, Second and Third Departments being integrated and divided along geographical lines. The First Department was now responsible for operations, formation and mobilisation, and also intelligence in relation to eastern Japan, Korea and Manchuria. The Second Department was now responsible for western Japan, Taiwan and China (but not for Manchuria). The change appears to have been related to the foreseen impending conflict with Russia.¹²⁹

Following further military reform in 1899, the IJA had established an independent intelligence department, including a First Bureau with jurisdiction over Russia, Manchuria, the Balkan Peninsula and all of Central and Northern Europe (a second bureau was charged with the UK and the Netherlands (and their colonial holdings abroad), China (not including Manchuria), the US and South-East Asia. The First Bureau's *Roshiya Han* (Russia Section), predominant amongst the various sub-sections, was responsible for gathering information on Russia, and importantly, analysis of the same, all in preparation for operations against Russia were these required.¹³⁰

The *Roshiya Han* was at this time led by then Major Tanaka Giichi, formerly an assistant military attaché in Russia. Tanaka had undertaken his own "intelligence ride" through Siberia, utilising Russia's transportation network, including the Trans-Siberian Railway and Chinese Eastern Railway

¹²⁸ Barnhart, M. A., "Japanese Intelligence before the Second World War: 'Best Case' Analysis", in May, E., *Knowing One's Enemy: Intelligence Assessment before the Two World Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) pp. 428-9

¹²⁹ Kitaoka, S., "China Experts in the Army" in Duus, Myers and Peattie, Eds., *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) p. 331

¹³⁰ Inaba, C. & Kowner, R., "The Secret Factor: Japanese Network of Intelligence-gathering on Russia during the War" in Kowner, R., Ed., *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5, Volume 1: Centennial Perspectives* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2007) p. 81

(these being of great concern to Japan, particularly in relation to their military transportation capabilities), and further travelled down the Sungari and Amur Rivers, visiting Khabarovsk, Port Arthur, and the surrounding area of Vladivostok.¹³¹ Upon his return, Tanaka was posted to the IJA General Staff, and as head of the *Roshiya Han* was responsible in 1903 for formulating the operational plan against Russia.¹³²

Tanaka thus exemplifies the link between Japan's early intelligence structure, maintained through its attachés abroad, and its military and political élite. Although this early intelligence structure appeared to cover a massive geographical region, it was nevertheless staffed by competent and experienced staff, if few in number, knowledgeable in "the lay of the land". Furthermore, Tanaka's role at this time in operational planning demonstrates a then understood practice of the interconnectedness between intelligence and operational planning, a once symbiotic relationship that would come undone within the Japanese military over time.

Following the First Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese had intensified their information-gathering activities in relation to both Russia and Manchuria. Details of Russian armed forces were sought in minute detail, including psychological aspects such as morale.¹³³ Political intelligence was also sought.¹³⁴ The General Staff had undertaken some strategic intelligence activities in relation to the theatre of operations prior to the conflict. Then holding the rank of Major, Fukushima had undergone an "intelligence ride" earlier along the Trans-Siberian railroad east of Lake Baikal, studying its logistics capability, yet at the same time instituting an intelligence network.¹³⁵ It was from this system that Japan would principally later draw information. Staff research was undertaken on the training and organisation of the Russian Army, Russian troop numbers and expected reinforcement rates, and

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82

¹³² Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, p. 23

¹³³ Newgarden, G.J., "Japanese Military Intelligence Activities prior to the Battle of Liaoyang" (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff School, 1932) p. 1

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Harmon, E.N., *A Study of the Japanese Intelligence Service during the Russo-Japanese War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff School, 1933) p. 2

geographical studies.¹³⁶ As had occurred in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, however, information provided by agents to the Japanese was deviously used to serve particular political objectives. Notably, Tanaka, now a General and on the General Staff, purposely distorted the number of trains available to the Russians, and consequently the number of troops that could be transported to the front.¹³⁷ Hence, a culture of intelligence politicisation continued, first through Kawakami Sōroku, and now Tanaka Giichi; Tanaka later becoming Prime Minister of Japan.

Japan would be further aided in China (considered at the time under Russian influence) by the appointment, in 1903, of Aoki Nobuzumi as attaché to Beijing. A China “specialist”, Aoki would serve for a total of twelve years in this role (not consecutively) during which time he liaised with China’s military leadership, including Yuan Shih-kai, and is further thought to have organised Chinese resistance against Russia, having organised spying (*chōhō*) and sabotage (*hakai*) units in Manchuria.¹³⁸

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance before the Russo-Japanese War

Britain’s greatest perceived threats from continental Europe as early as 1900 were France and Russia, and it was the latter’s expansion into the Asiatic region (a direct threat to Britain’s interests there), that could no longer be countered solely by the British Navy (at the time the principal recipient of British funding, both militarily and for intelligence purposes). The signing of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902 therefore had great influence over world affairs. Britain’s need for accurate intelligence in the Pacific region had placed Japan in an excellent position to form a fruitful alliance with one of the globe’s great powers, just as it sought entry to this select club. At the same time, Japan shared with Britain a real or perceived threat in Russia.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2

¹³⁷ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 135

¹³⁸ Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, p. 29

¹³⁹ Chapman, J.W.M., “Issues of Strategic Intelligence: Anglo-German Relations and the Russo-Japanese War” in, Chapman, J., & Inaba, C., Eds., *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5, Volume 2: The Nichinan Papers* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2007) p. 137

In 1902, following the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, British heads of intelligence and the Japanese head of military intelligence signed an agreement, demonstrating the importance of intelligence to the alliance.¹⁴⁰ Despite their alliance, however, military cooperation between the two nations on the Asian mainland was not as Japan might have hoped for. A request in 1902 by General Fukushima for British reinforcement in Manchuria was evaded by the British, citing their existing needs in India.¹⁴¹

Britain's positive impression of the efficiency of Japanese intelligence services was bolstered by the experience of Indian intelligence officers (under Major Alfred Wingate) at Tientsin during joint operations with General Fukushima's 5th Division through the Boxer Rebellion.¹⁴² This, in turn, led to support for greater collaboration from both sides of the equation: Curzon and Kitchener on behalf of the British, and Colonel (later General) Utsunomiya Tarō for the Japanese. Taro presented in May 1903 a proposal for a "joint system of secret service", but this was dismissed by the War Office.¹⁴³

Despite a proposal of the Japanese Military Attaché in May 1903 for cooperative intelligence-gathering, Britain's response remained mild at best:

...we can only work with the Japanese by giving them some of our information in exchange for theirs, measuring the importance of the news we give to them by that of their communications to us...giving to the Japanese Military Attaché confidential, not secret, details.¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless, Fukushima's proposal for the appointment of a Japanese intelligence liaison to Shimla, the base of British-Indian intelligence, was implemented from February 1904, and further cooperation may be inferred in Field-Marshal Yamagata's thanking of Commander-in-Chief Kitchener

¹⁴⁰ Chapman, J.W.M., "Britain, Japan and the 'Higher Realms of Intelligence', 1900-1918" in Gow, I., Hiram, Y. & Chapman, J., Eds., *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000: Volume III: The Military Dimension* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) p. 71

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75

¹⁴² Chapman, *op. cit.*, *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5, Volume 2*, pp. 137-8

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 138

¹⁴⁴ Chapman, *op. cit.*, *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000: Volume III*, pp. 74-75

following regular contact with the British intelligence forces.¹⁴⁵ A security lapse in 1905 however, in which a Japanese intelligence report was found to be in the possession of the Russian Navy Ministry (leading to Russian accusations that the Japanese were employing spies in India), did little to disperse British distrust of continuing intelligence cooperation with Japan (and particularly so on the part of General Creagh, Kitchener's successor). Despite the non-continuance of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1921, exchanges between Indian and Japanese officers would however continue until 1941.¹⁴⁶

As Chapman states, but for counterintelligence, it is difficult to determine any concerted intelligence collaboration between the Japanese and British Armies. From the available evidence, it appears both countries collected information on Russia, exchanging this separately through attachés.¹⁴⁷ However, the military attaché in London, Colonel Utsunomiya Tarō, did receive a large amount of information on the Russian military from the British War Office, provided under the Anglo-Japanese Alliance signed in 1902.¹⁴⁸

The extent to which such limited collaboration ultimately aided Japan's endeavours in Manchuria is debatable, although it should be noted that further cooperation was to be had in naval intelligence matters (outside the scope of this paper), and, overall, the alliance with Britain would serve Japan in strategic terms, and be able to allay supply concerns through continuing trade and commerce throughout the conflict with Russia.

Foreign Ministry Intelligence

Important information on the intelligence activities of the Japanese Foreign Ministry can be derived from the 1941 interrogation in Saigon of Minoda

¹⁴⁵ Chapman, *op. cit.*, *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5, Volume 2*, p. 138

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Chapman, *op. cit.*, *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000: Volume III*, pp. 74-75

¹⁴⁸ Inaba & Kowner, *op cit.*, p. 85

Fujio.¹⁴⁹ Minoda emphatically denied during interrogation that the Japanese Foreign Office had ever taken part in espionage activities, and attempted to convince his interrogators that the Japanese Foreign Office had always been opposed to the militarist clique.¹⁵⁰ The latter proposition holds some weight, but the first does not. *Prima facie*, Minoda's assertion and assessment that legations and consulates were not in fact *spying* may be attributed to the theoretical difference between research and investigation versus surreptitious information-gathering, particularly when one takes into account the open source nature of information generally sought by the Foreign Office, and its focus on political and economic information rather than that normally deemed, at least during the period in question, top secret (for example, military dispositions).

Minoda would not, however, state the same in regard to Japanese Military Attachés. When his interrogators suggested that no compunction would have existed in regard to the using of diplomatic channels to forward secret information, Minoda denied this. Minoda did allow for an interpretation of Japanese diplomats being regarded as spies in the sense that they reported to Tokyo on the situation and events of the country in which they were situated, but believed this to be simply research; not a source of intelligence in the military sense.¹⁵¹

Following the Meiji Restoration, Japan's formal intelligence apparatus would be predominantly military. However, although Foreign Office legations and consulates overseas operated in normal diplomatic fashion, each First Secretary was also notionally deemed the local head of "intelligence". Despite this role, however, no section was established in Kasumigaseki, Tokyo, where the Foreign Ministry was located, to coordinate such efforts, nor to analyse information collected.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Japanese Consul-General, later Director, Economic Service of the Japanese Missions (equivalent to an Embassy) in Saigon and Hanoi, and, finally, Governor of Cochin China until the end of the Pacific conflict - The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6319, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 239, 29 June 1946, Item 2200, Interrogation of Consul-General Minoda Fujio, p. 19

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28

¹⁵² Barnhart, *op. cit.*, p. 426

The Foreign Ministry's main intelligence organisation was its *Seimukyoku* (Political Department), staffed by only ten personnel at the beginning of the 20th century (the Foreign Ministry itself maintained only seventy-four staff members at the time). Geographic sections were non-existent, and but for matters related to economics, all political concerns were dealt with by these few officers.¹⁵³

Such limited numbers of staff would inevitably create difficulties in the timely assessment of information that passed through the department's hands, especially so in times of conflict. Japan's attention at the turn of the century was firmly on Russia, whose presence in Asia throughout Korea, Manchuria and China's northernmost provinces, where Japan sought to increase its influence, presented the greatest obstacle to Imperial Japanese ambitions. The head of the *Seimukyoku* at this time was Yamaza Enjirō, a supporter of Sun Yat-sen and involved in the formation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Information forwarded to the department in regard to Russia, Japan's primary concern, would first be read by departmental officials, but ultimately would find its way to the hands of Yamaza who, following his own appraisal, would forward the information to the relevant authority (for example, the Office of the General Staff).¹⁵⁴ But for a summary published "once every few months" (the *Nichiro Jiken Yōhō* (Report on Russo-Japanese Affairs), distributed widely, including to each Ministry, the armed forces' respective General Staff and the Emperor himself, no further reporting emanated from the *Seimukyoku*.¹⁵⁵

Of importance here is the structural reliance on the personal, and experienced, final examination and opinion of just one officer in relation to information analysis. This was despite the great magnitude of information furnished to the department. Yamaza operated essentially as the sole "gatekeeper" of information reaching other departments, being responsible for deciding particular information's importance and to whom it should be forwarded. This limitation further allows opportunity for the "politicisation"

¹⁵³ Inaba & Kowner, *op cit.*, p. 80

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-1

of intelligence, whereby one's subjectivity becomes part of intelligence reporting.

The *Seimukyoku* was meant only to serve Japan's diplomatic interests. Even so, as Japan's primary political intelligence service overseas, much of what it was concerned with would serve Japan's later imperial ambitions. Of particular importance to the Political Department, and Japan as a whole, was Russia's ability to prolong an armed conflict, and toward determining this capacity the Department "...kept an eye on Russian internal affairs: political parties, movements of the court, economics, society, public opinion, and activities of revolutionary and other opposition movements."¹⁵⁶

In January 1904 the Foreign Ministry ordered all of its offices abroad, be they diplomatic or commercial in nature, to gather information pertaining to Russia.¹⁵⁷ Due to the small number of personnel available in these branches the demands of this request were difficult to meet: "The legation in Paris, for example, consisted of only seven staff members, apart from their military attaché and naval attachés, their assistants, and local personnel. Of the seven diplomats, only two or three were able to collect the information requested from Tokyo."¹⁵⁸

Open source information collection, through the examination of local publications, was part of the normal duties of legations.¹⁵⁹ Further information was gathered through diplomatic exchanges, both formal and informal, and through agents of Japanese commercial enterprises and journalists¹⁶⁰ Some information was sought from foreign nationals, although this was found over time to be unreliable, and diplomats were further hampered by a requirement to ask Tokyo for permission prior to its purchase. The Japanese found false information had often been purchased at high cost.¹⁶¹

The employment of agents by foreign legations was also widely undertaken following the First Sino-Japanese War. Diplomats were likely

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

somewhat naïve in relation to military matters, yet were required to maintain an intelligence role that included military information. The Japanese Ministers in Stockholm and Vienna are known to have employed agents utilising diplomatic funds, as expressed by Foreign Minister Mutsu writing to the Minister to Russia, Kurino Shinichirō, during the First Sino-Japanese conflict: “If use of money can facilitate your work, I will supply you with reasonable funds.”¹⁶² Outside theatres of war, both the IJA and IJN were reliant on the Foreign Ministry to gather information pertinent to their respective needs, as neither organisation had sufficiently trained intelligence officers available.¹⁶³

Outside what would become the immediate war zone, only on 12 January 1904 did the then Foreign Minister, Komura Jutarō, direct that agents be employed in St Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, and Vladivostok. Given the lateness of this order, only in Odessa and Vladivostok was this directive accomplished.¹⁶⁴ The establishment of an intelligence network was again called for following the battle of Liaoyang (28 August – 4 September 1904), the surrender of Port Arthur (2 January 1905), and the battle of Tsushima (27-8 May 1905), and eventually intelligence activities against Russia in Asia would be undertaken in Shanghai, Beijing, Singapore and Hong Kong, as well as in other locations where Japan maintained a diplomatic presence.¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Foreign Office intelligence activities against Russia occurred only just before the start of, and during, hostilities. Little to no preparatory intelligence had been undertaken, this despite the long expected conflict.

Russian activities in Siberia were linked with the Trans-Siberian railway, while activities in Manchuria were linked to the Chinese Eastern Railway, extending from the Russian frontier to Harbin and on to Port Arthur. The Japanese perceived this railway in particular as not commercial, but rather military.¹⁶⁶ The Japanese consul at Newchwang (Yingkou) would play a vital role in assessing Russian troop movements, both from Europe, and those moving southward to Harbin, Mukden and Port Arthur. Although

¹⁶² Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, p. 19

¹⁶³ Inaba & Kowner, *op. cit.*, p. 84

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, p. 18

Japanese resident there were likely to be of assistance, the Japanese held no formal presence in many cities in Manchuria, including Port Arthur. It is likely the consul coordinated information received from others, but names were never disclosed.¹⁶⁷

Prior to the conflict with Russia, Japan maintained only one consulate in Manchuria in Yingkou. Segawa, the consul there, provided information to the Foreign Minister, Komura Jutarō, on matters including Russian troop movements, customs, postal services, local governance, foreign consulates and the general state of affairs; political intelligence of undoubted importance to later control of the region. With the beginning of the conflict, staffing levels were increased, outnumbering the consulate in Shanghai, making it second only to the consulate in Seoul, which had eleven officials employed.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, with the Japanese military's capture of the city and subsequent push northward, ultimately activities of the Yingkou consulate would be to assist the military administration of the territory, feeling out anti-Japanese sentiment and placating local concerns.¹⁶⁹

Japanese legations and consulates were required to seek funding from Tokyo when they sought to employ agents; this, if sanctioned, was provided through telegraphic transfer. Interestingly, agents so employed were required to provide signed, detailed receipts, these being forwarded to Tokyo.¹⁷⁰ Such bureaucracy undoubtedly hampered the efficiency of the intelligence system.

Military Intelligence through the Russo-Japanese War

Japan's initial invasion of Manchuria was a move motivated more by expansionist ambition rather than economic merit. Only following the acquisition of the Liaotung Peninsula at the close of the First Sino-Japanese War had Manchuria's economic benefit to Japan come to the fore of Japanese thinking: Ōkuma Shigenobu, Japan's then Foreign Minister, calling for

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29

¹⁶⁸ Cao, D., "The Japanese Consular System in China" in Chapman, J. & Inaba, C., Eds., *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5, Volume 2: The Nichinan Papers* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2007) p. 181

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 181-183

¹⁷⁰ Inaba & Kowner, *op cit.*, p. 84

greater economic development; the Japanese Press, on its part, calling for Japanese emigration to the newly-acquired territory. Importantly, the Japanese did not foresee the Tri-Partite Intervention. Despite calls from within Japan's powerful ultranationalist, expansionist lobby to ignore the retrocession of the Liaotung Peninsula required by France, Russia and Germany; in the face of these powers' combined and overwhelming military superiority the Itō government was later forced to relinquish its claims in Manchuria.¹⁷¹ Following the Treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895, both Russia and Japan had vied for influence in Manchuria, and by 1903 negotiations were underway as to how spheres of influence might be defined in the area. These negotiations would end with the onset of the Russo-Japanese War.

In Europe, Colonel Motojirō Akashi, appointed military attaché in Sweden, Switzerland, France and Russia by the Japanese War Office in the autumn of 1900, was allegedly a prominent member of the *Kokuryūkai*.¹⁷² Seth states that initially Akashi's appointment was opposed by the War Office, but following the insistence of Ryōhei Uchida, who had threatened to withhold intelligence reports of its agents from the military, this opposition was circumvented.¹⁷³

Akashi would be tasked with the manipulation of Russian dissident groups in an effort to tie down Tsarist forces in Europe, for fear of an uprising there, during what would be the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.¹⁷⁴ Toward this goal, Akashi would be in contact with such high-ranking figures as Fukushima Yasumasa, now Chief of No. 2 Department (Intelligence) of the General Staff, and Kodama Gentarō, Vice-Chief of the General Staff.¹⁷⁵

Interestingly, as with the Foreign Office, only on 12 January 1904 (following Japan's decision to go to war) did the General Staff order Akashi

¹⁷¹ Spinks, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-271

¹⁷² Ian Nish provides a more specific timeline of Akashi's postings, stating Akashi had been Military Attaché in Paris in 1901, later becoming Military Attaché to Russia in 1902. See Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, p. 24

¹⁷³ Seth, *Encyclopedia of Espionage: The Spy's Who's Who* (London: New English Library, 1975) p. 16

¹⁷⁴ For a detailed description of Akashi's efforts in Europe during the Russo-Japanese War, see Inaba, C., "Polish-Japanese military collaboration during the Russo-Japanese War", *Japan Forum*, 1992, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 229-241, and Motojirō, A., *Rakka Ryūsui: Colonel Akashi's Report on His Secret Cooperation with the Russian Revolutionary Parties during the Russo-Japanese War* (Helsinki: SHS, 1988).

¹⁷⁵ Inaba, *op. cit.*, pp. 231

to develop an intelligence network within Russia. By this time Akashi was under surveillance, and although able to subvert a Russian General Staff officer, he was unable to organise an effective network.¹⁷⁶ Following the onset of hostilities, Akashi moved to Stockholm to continue his activities.¹⁷⁷ Akashi, of course, was not alone in these endeavours, and other military attachés, assistant attachés and Foreign Ministry staff throughout Europe were also involved in trying to establish an intelligence network in order to observe Russia's military activities. For example, Colonel Ōi Kikutarō (Shigemoto), military attaché in Berlin, analysed public information in German newspapers and journals.¹⁷⁸ This would appear one of the earliest uses during the modern era of open source intelligence.

Akashi's task would receive considerable financial support, the General Staff granting permission to spend ¥450,000 (present value approximately ¥3.2 billion) on preparation for uprisings.¹⁷⁹ One estimate of Akashi's expenditures, between April and September 1905, lay at ¥730,000 alone.¹⁸⁰ Akashi, with such significant financial support from the General Staff, was allegedly aided by the knowledge of the *Kokuryūkai* leadership who had from the outset directed him to make contact with revolutionary societies, formed in direct opposition to the Tsar, in order to gather information but also to create difficulties for the present Russian government. In Sugiyama's words: "If we made contact with some of these revolutionaries, I think that, in return for offers of money and materials which would help them to carry on their activities, we could obtain from them information regarding policies and military strength in east and central Asia, for these revolutionaries have their agents in places."¹⁸¹

Akashi's efforts and strategy would however not be as fruitful as had been hoped for. In spring 1905, at the height of his efforts, Russia was still able to send its best troops to the front in Manchuria.¹⁸² Japan would achieve

¹⁷⁶ Inaba & Kowner, *op. cit.*, p. 85

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Inaba, *op. cit.*, p. 240

¹⁸⁰ Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, pp. 26

¹⁸¹ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Encyclopedia of Espionage*, p. 17

¹⁸² Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, pp. 27

victory in the limited conflict, and Akashi's activities during this period would become legendary in military circles, particularly within the IJA, and his efforts and methods would be emulated later by his successors.¹⁸³

In 1904 the Manchurian Garrison was established, with the majority of *Roshiya Han* staff being posted to its General Headquarters. Tanaka Giichi was amongst these. From hereon information was no longer delivered to Tokyo, but rather GHQ, Manchurian Army, where it underwent analysis. Only once per month was a list of Russian formations and their position updated. With the key intelligence organisation of Japan being transferred to Manchuria, remaining intelligence officers of the General Staff in Tokyo were left to deal with only the information forwarded to them by military attachés abroad. Only once every few months were hand-written reports produced (*Rogun no Kinkyō*, or The Recent Russian Military Situation in the Far East), as well as some publications entitled *Saikin no Rogun* (The Present Russian Army). Tactical intelligence was paramount. The size and position of Russian military formations, as well as the transportation capacity of Russia's rail networks in the Far East, remained of primary importance.¹⁸⁴

Japanese intelligence during the Russo-Japanese War had been efficient, with expansive amounts of raw information transferred to dedicated analytical units who provided a workable product taken seriously by operations.¹⁸⁵ In the months before the conflict, and continuing throughout the hostilities, each military unit at the front, and, further, each military attaché posted overseas, gathered all available information on Russian forces, this was, in turn, delivered to the *Roshiya Han*. Information deemed of importance was then disseminated to the applicable organisation(s).¹⁸⁶

Japan's military intelligence structure would, by the onset of the Russo-Japanese War, be well established. Colonel J.A.L. Haldane, attached as British Military Attaché to Japanese forces during the Russo-Japanese War, noted that key to Japan's success in the field of intelligence was this careful

¹⁸³ Chapman, J.W.M., "Japanese Intelligence 1918-1945: A Suitable Case for Treatment" in Andrew, C., & Noakes, J., Eds., *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1987) pp. 147-8

¹⁸⁴ Inaba & Kowner, *op cit.*, p. 82

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82

preparation undertaken before the conflict. Information was collected from all available sources, and to aid in this endeavour Japanese officers occupied menial positions throughout Manchuria.¹⁸⁷ From under these lowly guises, troop movements and enemy supplies could be scrutinised. Such officers included a Major who had maintained a barber shop in Harbin, and a Lieutenant Colonel of the General Staff, concurrently a fluent Russian scholar and head of the Intelligence Section of the General Staff of the 2nd Japanese Army who had spent some months in Vladivostok examining the city's defences (of note, this officer escaped Vladivostok just prior to the conflict with the aid of the British Consul there).¹⁸⁸

Japanese officers were for the most part proficient in one foreign language, and familiar with another. Intelligence officers, however, kept this knowledge to themselves.¹⁸⁹ Lessons in Korean were undertaken in Tokyo long before the Russo-Japanese War, with officer graduates of these classes being posted throughout Manchuria and Mongolia to live as Koreans, during their tenure coming to know the local transport network and geography. Military topographers supplemented these efforts, as did the employment of agents from the Korean, Manchurian and Siberian local populace, as well as native Japanese, especially those involved in commercial enterprise.¹⁹⁰ Japanese prostitutes are further thought to have acted as vanguard of Japanese intelligence at the time, extracting information from Russian officer clientele.¹⁹¹

The Japanese Army in the years before the Russo-Japanese conflict maintained a well-organised, efficient and importantly, a well-paid intelligence network throughout Korea and Manchuria. Organised several years before the conflict, the Japanese had foreseen its need and, presumably, recognised the near impossibility of its establishment after the onset of hostilities with any hope of satisfactory result. So effective was the system

¹⁸⁷ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems" lecture by Colonel J.A.L. Haldane, C.B., D.S.O., March 1909, p. 4

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5

¹⁹⁰ Newgarden, *op. cit.*, p. 1

¹⁹¹ TNA: WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems", *op. cit.*, p. 5

established by the Japanese that the contents of a 1903 report, authored by Major-General Flug of the Staff of the Russian Viceroyalty in Manchuria titled “The Strategical Distribution of the Manchurian Army”, recommending Liaoyang and its vicinity as the centre of Russian concentration in the event of war with Japan, are thought to have been known by the Japanese Imperial General Staff.¹⁹² At the crossing of the Yalu River, the Japanese intelligence network was able to provide such accurate information to the General Staff as to estimate to within two guns Russian artillery pieces stationed there.¹⁹³

During the conflict, each army and division had a designated Intelligence Section within its General Staff. The Japanese 3rd Army employed two officers, the most senior a major, charged with military intelligence, foreign attachés, press agents and records keeping; a structure likely followed by the other Japanese armies involved.¹⁹⁴ During the conflict Japanese Divisional Staff contained an Intelligence Section composed of two officers charged with:

- i) Collection and evaluation of information
- ii) Topographic and traffic surveys and ensuring contact between adjacent units
- iii) Writing of reports and records of operations
- iv) Up-to-date operations maps posting
- v) Provision of counter-espionage
- vi) Custody of intelligence records and operations maps¹⁹⁵

In Brigade and smaller formations, however, no intelligence section existed, nor were there specified intelligence officers.¹⁹⁶ Intelligence operations undertaken by the Japanese military within the theatre of war were partly centralised and partly decentralised. Each army and division utilised its own intelligence officers and agents, but, due to a lack of pre-conflict specialised

¹⁹² Harmon, *op cit.*, pp. 2-3

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 4

¹⁹⁴ Newgarden, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2

¹⁹⁵ Harmon, *op cit.*, p. 2

¹⁹⁶ Newgarden, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2

training in scouting, General Headquarters was often unable to obtain accurate information.¹⁹⁷

But for the commanding authority, the staff of successively lower echelons were controlled by the staff of correspondingly higher echelons. Thus was coordination and cohesion maintained. Japanese commanders for the most part were not present at the front, but rather directed using information provided from the battlefield by staff officers. As such, staff were entirely trusted with frontline information, and these officers thus held substantial influence over the decisions of commanding officers.¹⁹⁸

Information gathering and sources

Japanese cavalry performed the roles of security and information-gathering, including reconnaissance with forces up to brigade in size. However, due to their being sizeably outnumbered in Manchuria (the Russians held seven to one superiority), Japanese cavalry were largely restricted to infantry support, limiting their reconnaissance usefulness (although cooperation between cavalry and infantry proved successful in counter-reconnaissance). Nevertheless, small units of Japanese cavalry were highly successful in their information gathering activities when and where these operations were undertaken.¹⁹⁹

Importantly, the Japanese at the turn of the century recognised that untrained scouts and spies, those unfamiliar with foreign languages or the organisation and make-up of forces on whom they were to report, were ineffectual and even a risk.²⁰⁰ The Japanese thus, in order to allay deficiencies in cavalry in Manchuria, trained a number of cavalymen in Korea. Predominantly Japanese, these men were fluent in the Chinese language and were able to disguise themselves as Chinese. Initially very effective against

¹⁹⁷ Inaba & Kowner, *op cit.*, pp. 84-85

¹⁹⁸ Harmon, *op cit.*, p. 2

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4

²⁰⁰ TNA: WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems", *op. cit.*, p. 9

the Russians, over time they came to be identified by Chinese employed by the Russians through cultural traits only known to the local populace.²⁰¹

Native agents were utilised at the front to search villages and their surrounding environs. These were followed by small cavalry patrols, and, in turn, followed by infantry reconnaissance. Signals of these groups were pre-organised and included flags, rifle fire and arm and mirror signals. Artillery fire and its effectiveness was often signalled by local Chinese in the field through the use of flags.²⁰² All Japanese cavalry were taught map reading, and undertook training in reconnaissance. Reporting was accurate, and these reports were often accompanied by correspondingly precise drawings. Effective Chinese mounted scouts were also utilised. Information acquired from local agents however required confirmation. Due to the effectiveness of the Japanese agent network, reconnaissance in force was only required when such information required corroboration. Finally, staff officer reconnaissance was often utilised to substantiate information.²⁰³

Both the Japanese and the Russians employed large numbers of Chinese agents. Aided by Japanese familiarity with the Chinese language and their ability to pose as local inhabitants, this system perhaps best served Japan. So efficacious was the system utilised by the Japanese that, according to one report, orders issued at Liaoyang by General Alexei Kuropatkin, commander of Russian forces in Manchuria, had to be at one time countermanded not an hour after their issue, when it was discovered a Japanese agent resident in Mukden was aware of the plan in entirety.²⁰⁴ The Japanese were even able to bribe a Chinese translator employed in the Russian General Headquarters in Manchuria, acquiring information of importance.²⁰⁵ Chinese agents taught by the Japanese to read the Russian alphabet also greatly aided the Japanese. Russian forces tended to use signage to mark units and other groups of military. Information thus gleaned was rather accurate, this being confirmed by a Japanese staff officer who accompanied General

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10

²⁰² Harmon, *op cit.*, p. 3

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3

²⁰⁵ Inaba & Kowner, *op cit.*, p. 85

Fukushima to the Russian headquarters in order to sign the eventual armistice.²⁰⁶

Before the Russo-Japanese War, Chinese and Koreans employed by the Russians were registered by the Japanese and were considered suspect and carefully observed, given their ability to identify Japanese seeking to infiltrate Russian lines.²⁰⁷ Were their lands and homes to come within Japanese zones of control, these agents often sought refuge with the Russians. The Japanese, however, found that if these agents were offered the opportunity to act as double agents, with their names subsequently struck off the list of suspects, the Chinese (and Koreans) were surprisingly ready to do so, and for unexpectedly little compensation. However, these men would remain shadowed at all times, and if found to serve both the Japanese and Russia were then despatched.²⁰⁸

Due to the success of Japanese land operations, alongside the often-dubious information garnered through agents of questionable loyalty, intelligence could be gathered from Russian deserters and prisoners of war. These men were routinely questioned, including as they were met during an advance. Russian unit identification was regularly noted in intelligence reports, this information derived from questioning soldiers, or by searching war dead, and on one occasion written orders were found on a Russian officer detailing the complete disposition of the Russian outpost on the Yalu River.²⁰⁹

The General Staff at this time oversaw information-gathering activities, and due to the Russian propensity to defend an area with the same troops for up to months at a time, a great deal of accurate information was thus garnered, often through a simple collection of information left behind by departing Russian troops.²¹⁰ Prisoners were also often treated cordially, and information was thus more forthcoming.²¹¹ Through these sources, order of battle could be determined, and furthermore a fairly accurate appraisal of Russian military morale and discipline in the area could be made. To

²⁰⁶ TNA: WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems", *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12

²⁰⁸ TNA: WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems", *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12

²⁰⁹ Harmon, *op cit.*, p. 5

²¹⁰ TNA: WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems", *op. cit.*, p. 16

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15

demonstrate the amount of material that fell into Japanese hands over the course of the war, it is thought that after the battle at Mukden, the entire correspondence of the Russian Army Headquarters came into Japanese hands, including a massive number of maps. Earlier during the campaign, a map drawn by the Russians as far north as Liaoyang captured by the Japanese was replicated for their own use.²¹² Raids by the Japanese, solely with the intention of capturing prisoners for the sourcing of information, were rarely undertaken.²¹³

Staff officers also observed Russian positions and movements utilising powerful telescopes from elevated positions. Outposts of the Japanese were not only on guard, but also served as observation posts. In their operations, they were aided by Russian laxity in obscuring their own activities, and Japanese successes included a cavalry assessment before the battle of Liaoyang. This covered defences, troop numbers and their locations. Furthermore, Japanese observation of Russian cavalry movements aided in the identification of fords across the Tai-tzu Ho river; important information that would later enable General Kuroki to assault the Russian left.²¹⁴

Trained Japanese agents operated not only around the Russian army, but also behind Japanese lines to counteract agents employed by the Russians. Japanese agents were predominantly stationed in one locale, or worked as Russian labourers in fieldworks. Delivery of information was the greatest weakness in this network, often requiring travel over some distance, leading to obsolete information being delivered. Disclosure following capture also proved a problem, but over time surreptitious disguise of information and improved experience led to higher efficiency.²¹⁵

In time, as the opposing forces came into closer proximity, stations were established in both lines and regular communications between these, and around the Russian flanks, was expedited. This system, with the assistance of roaming Chinese workers and musicians, allowed Japanese HQ to become acquainted with a great deal of information on the Russians, including

²¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16

²¹³ Newgarden, *op. cit.*, p. 6

²¹⁴ TNA: WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems", *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17

General Gripenburg's willingness to depart from the army, were his proposed attack not supported by General Kuropatkin, and, further, the makeup of General Mishchenko's forces before his expected attack on Yingkou.²¹⁶ Testimonials signed by Russian troops, including their unit name and number, delivered by Chinese, allowed the Japanese to determine Russian troop dispositions.²¹⁷

In communications, the Japanese had investigated the use of telephonic and signal equipment through their Japanese School Telegraph battalion before the war, and on mobilisation telegraph companies were instituted. Such research and preparation served the Japanese well through the conflict. The Japanese at this time used both telegraph (all messages sent in code numbers) and telephone, the former predominantly between army and division, the latter between division and brigade and lower echelons who also used visual signalling. When the army was on the move, the telephone alone was used. The Japanese were fortunate, however, in that neither the Russian nor Chinese forces made any great effort to disrupt the Japanese communications network.²¹⁸ Adjacent units kept each other apprised of information acquired.²¹⁹

The media

The Japanese benefited greatly from the lack of press censorship by the Russians. Useful information acquired from the Russian Press could be telegraphed from Berlin to Japanese field headquarters, this reaching the Japanese commander within six days of the events occurring.²²⁰ The Russians paid little heed to the prevention of information leakage, particularly in relation to the media. Despite exhortations to be guarded, even the *Russkii Invalid*, a Russian military newspaper, published War Office orders referring to the formation of new units and call-ups of reserve forces.²²¹ Furthermore,

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19

²¹⁷ TNA: WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems", *op. cit.*, p. 19

²¹⁸ Harmon, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7

²¹⁹ Newgarden, *op. cit.*, p. 6

²²⁰ Harmon, *op. cit.*, p. 4

²²¹ TNA: WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems", *op. cit.*, p. 34

troop movements and dispositions could be ascertained by the Japanese through other publications and the existence of an officers' club in Mukden. A restaurant frequented by foreign attachés and press correspondents was also of great use to the Japanese. Through such sources, the Japanese knew beforehand of Russian attacks, including Kuropatkin's plan for an attack on the Japanese in February in 1905.²²² Another example comes from August 1904, when a Japanese agent in Paris was able to forward a message stating that Russian plans of battle had been deliberated over in Moscow around i) a general retirement, and ii) decisive action around Liaoyang.²²³ Just before the battle of Liaoyang, a telegraphed message from Berlin, comprising the contents of a message to the Tsar from the Russian commander-in-chief, dated 13 August, stated that the Russians envisaged a decisive battle against the Japanese in the very near future. From both of these communications, Japanese headquarters were able to foresee Russian plans to fight a decisive contest at Liaoyang.²²⁴

All newspapers in Japan, both local and foreign-owned, were subject to strictly enforced stringent censorship, and all foreign military attachés and press agents were kept together under the close supervision of an officer and interpreter especially detailed for this duty.²²⁵ The Japanese press were particularly controlled and kept unpublished information of military importance.²²⁶ The Japanese capacity to control information leakage no doubt aided in their plans remaining secret, at least for as long as required for them to be acted upon.²²⁷ Although the Japanese Press was so controlled, the Russians were able to obtain information regarding Japanese forces in Manchuria from rather obvious "code" names utilised by the media.²²⁸

²²² *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35

²²³ Newgarden, *op. cit.*, p. 5

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ Harmon, *op. cit.*, p. 6

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Newgarden, *op. cit.*, p. 6

²²⁸ TNA: WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems", *op. cit.*, p. 33

Counterintelligence

In regard to counterintelligence measures, agents were aided by very particular cultural traits. For example, the Japanese language at the turn of the century was not well known outside the Empire. Russia was thus forced to rely heavily on interpreters, a great number of whom were no doubt provided, either directly or indirectly, by the Japanese themselves.²²⁹ Furthermore, as the Japanese utilise Chinese characters, to avoid the passing on of information regarding troop dispositions, the Japanese utilised *katakana*, a monosyllabic written form unknown to those Chinese who might be employed by the Russians. Even symbols were substituted for numbers to maintain this obfuscation.²³⁰

Furthermore, the Japanese limited the issue of written orders to allay concerns were they captured.²³¹ In regard to personal correspondence, letters from the front written by ranks of Captain and above were not examined, but the same cannot be said of lower ranks, whose company officer examined their contents before despatch.²³² Letters and publications were meant to be securely discarded in the field, but often this did not occur, and the Russians were able to obtain substantial information in this manner.²³³ On the front, Japanese troops were ordered to remove identifying marks, including insignia, in order to frustrate Russian attempts to determine Japanese unit positions. The Russians were further hampered in their intelligence-gathering by the reluctance of Japanese prisoners of war to part with information.²³⁴

Japan's patriotic societies and the Russo-Japanese War

Assistance through the conflict would be provided by *Kokuryūkai* members, who would act as translators for military units during the hostilities, having been taught at the *Kokuryū Gogakkō*, an establishment founded in 1901 by a

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 22

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ Harmon, *op cit.*, p. 6

Kokuryūkai subsidiary, the *Nichiro Kyōkai*, to teach both Russian and Chinese languages to its members in order to gather more comprehensive and accurate information on areas controlled by Russia.²³⁵ Others would operate as scouts and intelligence agents, these men being of immeasurable help to Japan's military having had significant experience within Korea, Manchuria and Siberia.²³⁶ Japan would also be aided by *Genyōsha* reinforcements, a number of whom would form the *Manshū Gigen* (Volunteer Army of Manchuria), cleared to operate as "key officers" after Tōyama Mitsuru's approach to his acquaintance, Yamaza Enjirō, then serving as head of the Political Affairs Bureau of the Foreign Ministry.²³⁷ Yamaza had subsequently referred Tōyama to Major General Fukushima Yasumasa of the IJA General Staff, who not only approved of their use, but also appointed their commander, Hanada Nakanosuke, a Major in the IJA Reserve. Following the conflict, Major General Fukushima and General Kawamura Kageaki, Commander-in-Chief of the Yalu River Army, would commend these men for their efforts.²³⁸

The Japanese Army also had other contingencies in Manchuria. Japanese intelligence officers were often able to operate behind Russian lines, disguised as locals, including Ishimitsu Makiyo, who collected information on Russian activities in Manchuria prior to the war while resident in Harbin under the guise of a laundryman, photographer, barber, and trader.²³⁹ Ishimitsu, first sent to Russia as a student in 1899, would later become a captain in the Japanese military and had first visited Vladivostok with Colonel Tamura Iyozō, who would later become Army Assistant Chief of Staff (further exemplifying the higher ranks that intelligence officers would come to hold in the early part of the twentieth century following their respective tours of duty). While there, the two visited a Major Hanada, already stationed in the city under the guise of a Buddhist priest.²⁴⁰ Hanada, it should be noted, was somewhat derelict in his intelligence duties, not reporting often, and was

²³⁵ Sabey, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-221

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 221-222

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 222

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 222-224

²³⁹ Inaba & Kowner, *op cit.*, p. 85}

²⁴⁰ Warner, D. & Warner, P., *The Tide at Sunrise: A History of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905* (New York: Charterhouse, 1974) p. 168

ordered to return to Japan by Tamura, whereupon he resigned his commission, staying on in Vladivostok as a religious man. Nevertheless, when war began, the holy man formed an intelligence/guerrilla formation on the orders of Kodama, operating behind enemy lines.²⁴¹

Russian lack of preparation

A brief examination of the unpreparedness of the Russians during the Russo-Japanese conflict is warranted, if only to put Russian later efforts in perspective. Early in the 20th century, accurate assessment of Japanese ground forces by Russian military attachés was hampered by lack of continuity in reporting, and the difficulties faced by assessing returning Japanese forces from China and rapid reforms then being undertaken. Despite admiring the fighting capability of the Japanese, structurally the Japanese were underestimated, thought to be only providing a shadowy emulation of European military norms, this exacerbated by an apparent lack of formal military education within Japan's upper military echelon. Reports of Colonel Vannovskii (containing the above assessment of the Japanese ground forces) who had only been in Tokyo from late 1900 to early 1903, would lead over time to serious underestimation of the Japanese by the Russians. Subsequent Russian military planning against the Japanese thus operated on out-dated assumptions regarding troop strength and probable disposition were forces landed in mainland Asia. Pre-war Russian estimates of available Japanese fighting strength would be inaccurate by a factor of one to seven. Poor military intelligence in the field would only exacerbate the lack of accurate strategic intelligence, and General Kuropatkin would find it difficult to trust assessment of Japanese troop numbers in the future.²⁴²

Kuropatkin himself gave mixed messages in his appraisal of the Japanese military. During a meeting with Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich, following a military inspection in the Far East in 1903, Kuropatkin stated: "everything is going well" (this appraisal differed to that of

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169

²⁴² Menning, Bruce W. "Miscalculating One's Enemies: Russian Military Intelligence before the Russo-Japanese War", *War In History* 13, No. 2 (April 2006) pp. 148-155

the Grand Duke, whose protest to the Tsar fell on deaf ears). Despite this, Kuropatkin had in fact ordered the strengthening of defences in the east following his tour.²⁴³ Further, during a visit to Japan between 29 May and 16 June, Kuropatkin was able to observe Japanese troops and limited tactical exercises. During a conversation over dinner with the Japanese War Minister, Kuropatkin asserted that in the case of war Japanese forces would crumble before the Russians.²⁴⁴ Nevertheless, subsequent reporting by Kuropatkin on Japanese' fighting capacity was far more subdued. Of note, as Menning states, Kuropatkin does not appear to have passed on his misgivings to the Tsar and his ministers.²⁴⁵

The Japanese were, of course, greatly aided by Russia's lack of preparation before the conflict. Further to Russian laxity in relation to information security as regards the press, orders of the Russian Commander-in-Chief regarding the supervision of the Chinese population were largely ignored.²⁴⁶ Although Chinese were not allowed to enter Russian positions, over time they were nonetheless employed as labourers in the construction of fieldworks, plans coming into the hands of Chinese supervisors, and watch duties being delegated to Chinese.²⁴⁷

The Russians blamed a great deal of leakage on foreign military attachés, yet, if this were true, it seems a great deal of the information available to these officers was made available by the Russians themselves, including Japanese troop strength and positions, their intentions, as well as their own as developed by their General Staff.²⁴⁸ Reports provided by the Russians included enough detail for an attaché to discern much about the Russian intelligence system then in place, including methods and even names of agents and their coded nomenclature.²⁴⁹

The Russians had also come to underestimate the Japanese, believing their armed forces to be in a state of transition and not up to modern

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 164

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 165

²⁴⁶ TNA: WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems", *op. cit.*, p. 35

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36

standards.²⁵⁰ Furthermore, Japanese intentions, dictated by the relevant political authority, were unattainable by the Russians, and as such Russian threat assessments focused on capability.²⁵¹ No roaming agents received training before the conflict, nor had any definite plan been put in place in relation to field army's intelligence sections. Russian lack of preparation in intelligence in Manchuria meant little information was garnered until well into the hostilities.²⁵² Only a few agents were initially employed, but over time a training school was established in Mukden where the organisation of the Japanese army and intelligence activities were taught.²⁵³ After three months, however, this school was closed, its efforts having come to nothing. Training was thereafter undertaken under the department of the Commissioner of Police. By this time the Russians had learnt the merit of leaving agents behind in instances of retreat to advise on the advancing enemy.²⁵⁴ Although a great deal of information was subsequently gained, duplication created problems, as did a lack of coordination between Russian Army Headquarters and the headquarters' of field armies. Each field army would employ their own agents, yet these would often be simultaneously employed by other formations.²⁵⁵ In time, one field army would take photographs of employed agents, but this was more to avoid their being perceived as enemies by other Russian formations than to avoid duplication in employment. Information acquired was of the same kind as that delivered to the Japanese, although including planted information.²⁵⁶

A precursor of Japan's Special Service Organs

Of importance, before and throughout the Russo-Japanese conflict, special military officers would serve under direct command of General Headquarters. Located in important centres in China and Manchuria, these intelligence staff

²⁵⁰ Menning, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 162

²⁵² TNA: WO 106/6150, "Japanese and Russian Intelligence Systems", *op. cit.*, pp. 29-31

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 31

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-31

operated seemingly outside the normal intelligence structure. These men were charged with the collection of information of importance to the Japanese military authorities. This system was also employed by Imperial General Headquarters who posted intelligence staff across the globe, particularly in capitals of countries surrounding Russia.²⁵⁷ According to one report the Japanese organised these “special service” officers as early as 1903-1905, with twenty-one active service Japanese non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and officers being sent throughout Manchuria to gather information to use against the Russians, and further to bribe bandit leaders from whose ranks agents and fifth columnists were recruited.²⁵⁸ Rather than a special service organ as such, at this early stage it seems rather that these were either individuals (or perhaps very small groups), specially tasked. This intelligence system, operating outside the conventional system, would be of increasing importance during the Siberian Intervention of 1918-1922, as Japan and the western powers entered Russia’s Maritime Provinces to support White Russian forces during the Russian Civil War. These intelligence officers would act as a precursor for what would become Japan’s Special Service Agencies/Organs, or *tokumu kikan*, integral to Japan’s imperial expansion later in the century.

Assessment of Japanese intelligence efforts

The Japanese military intelligence system, aided by its informal allies, was not without fault. Despite their extensive intelligence network, the Japanese underestimated both the transport capacity of the Trans-Siberian railroad and the size of Russian forces in the Far East prior to the conflict. Overestimation of the transportation capacity of the Trans-Siberian railway also occurred, importantly, as a result of inaccurate analysis. Inaba states that an intelligence officer of the General Staff (name not stated) based his calculation on assessable Russian data. Such theoretical calculation was, however,

²⁵⁷ Newgarden, *op. cit.*, p. 2

²⁵⁸ “Training”, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

insufficient, not taking into account the Russian climate and territorial distances amongst other factors.²⁵⁹ During the battle at Liaoyang, a report from the cavalry, which was not adequately corroborated or evaluated, meant the 4th Division at one time prepared to meet a counterattack that did not eventuate.²⁶⁰ On another occasion, information available to the Japanese would have allowed them to attack with three divisions the weakest point of the Russian lines at Liaoyang, held by only one Russian division. Nevertheless, General Kuroki would be misled, thinking the Russians were retreating, when in fact they were preparing to counterattack.²⁶¹

Despite its failures, the Japanese demonstrably appreciated the importance of information-gathering both before and during the Russo-Japanese War. If predominantly of a military nature (primarily operational/tactical), this was entirely justifiable in relation to the conflict's limited, ultimately single-theatre, nature. Importantly, the modern Japanese system contained all of the major elements required of a successful intelligence system, containing both positive and negative intelligence elements, and arguably could not have been so successful without such an intricate and elaborate intelligence system in place. Despite poor communications, effective (if through talent rather than through formal training) officers in the field delivered reliable information.²⁶² Furthermore, this information was examined by the General Staff in Tokyo, who put their knowledge and assessments to good use.²⁶³ Japanese intelligence officers undertook intelligence analysis with requisite objectivity, and overestimations of Russian capacities were minimal.²⁶⁴ In regard to operational outcomes of Japanese intelligence activities during the Russo-Japanese War, intelligence information and analyses were transferred in timely manner to relevant military authorities.²⁶⁵ Information-gathering, subsequent analysis, and delivery to operational units, themselves recognising the importance of what

²⁵⁹ Inaba & Kowner, *op cit.*, pp. 87-8

²⁶⁰ Harmon, *op cit.*, p. 7

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8

²⁶² Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, p. 31

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ Inaba & Kowner, *op cit.*, p. 88

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

lay within and acting on the same, was integral to Japan's success during the conflict.²⁶⁶

Taking nothing from the overall success of Japanese military intelligence activities in the course of the conflict, Japan's intelligence network continued its reliance on a highly personalised and individual form of information-gathering by officers, including Tanaka, Akashi, Ishimitsu and Aoki.²⁶⁷ With substantial preliminary intelligence work in the field, in combination with a united front of Japanese policy-makers and conventional military intelligence, Japan had again attained victory. Nevertheless, Japan's intelligence apparatus continued in the vein of its informal networks, aided by the limited scope of Japan's conflicts to date, their nature being primarily military. Furthermore, to the end of the Russo-Japanese War, chinks in the armour of Japanese intelligence had developed, namely the *ad hoc* nature of preparatory intelligence, and the willingness of key intelligence figures to politicise intelligence to serve particular aims. These propensities would combine and widen over time, lessening the efficacy of Japanese intelligence later in the century.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ Nish, *op. cit.*, *The Missing Dimension*, pp. 30-1

3 Japan's expansion into Asia

Japanese Intelligence and the annexation of Korea

In Korea, British observers had been impressed by both the level and quality of Japanese intelligence coverage before the Russo-Japanese conflict. British Minister J.N. Jordan felt "...the Japanese had 'a large and fully trained Intelligence Staff at their disposal' in Seoul", and further, deemed Japanese intelligence in Korea to be "...detailed, thorough and penetrating and their intelligence network to be the most accurate procurer of information which had operated there since 1900."²⁶⁸ Although the efforts of the *Kokuryūkai* may be hard to quantify, it did contribute considerably to Japan's intelligence network in Korea prior to the conflict with Russia. As Nish states:

It goes without saying that the Kokuryūkai and its like were an immense asset in the preparation of war. They contained a nucleus of Japanese residents overseas whose loyalty was entirely dependable. They had the ability to pose as Chinese with a fair chance of getting away without detection. In this way they were a more effective intelligence force than army officers themselves...Both before the outbreak of war and afterwards, the army general staff learnt a great deal from these civilian enthusiasts who were ready to collect intelligence information on the side.²⁶⁹

Following the Russo-Japanese War, however, many in the Imperial Japanese Army assumed a reopening of hostilities was inevitable.²⁷⁰ Within military intelligence, those sent to Moscow and later taking up positions within the *Roshiya Han*, including Sadao Araki and Obata Toshiro, were usually the Imperial Army's most talented and promising officers. None would be sidetracked into a lowly intelligence career, but would have experience of the battlefield methodology of their deemed primary foe. In time, these men

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28

²⁷⁰ Barnhart, *op. cit.*, p. 430

would rise to the top posts of the army: Army Minister, chief of the Army Ministry's Military Affairs Bureau, and, in the General Staff, leadership of the powerful and prestigious First (Operations) Division.”²⁷¹

Political support for the annexation of Korea was on the rise, aided by the *Kokuryūkai*, who had in the years before the conflict with Russia established the *Nichiro Kyōkai* with Uchida Ryōhei as a director. The *Nichiro Kyōkai* sought to prepare for issues that would arise following a Japanese victory over Russia, including a requisite diplomatic assault to justify Japan's continued presence in Manchuria. An intelligence survey as far east as Lake Baikal was also deemed necessary, and was to be undertaken by the society. This included planning for Japanese occupation.²⁷² Toward this aim, the *Nichiro Kyōkai* purportedly enlisted notables including Itō Hirofumi, former Prime Minister of Japan, later to become Resident-General of Korea; Enomoto Takeaki, one time Navy Minister and Foreign Minister (among other political roles) and also Konoye Atsumaro, founder of the *Tōa Dōbunkai* (East Asia Common Culture Society), father of Konoye Fumimaro who would later be Prime Minister of Japan and founder of the *Taisei Yokusankai* (Imperial Rule Assistance Association) in 1940.²⁷³

The Japanese diplomat Gonsuke Hayashi was, on 23 February 1904, able to secure an agreement with Korea, wherein the Government promised to have “full confidence” in Japan, to accept the advice regarding administrative reform, to allow Japanese occupation of “such places as may be necessary from strategical points of view”, and to provide facilities to Japan for the protection of Korea from either both external and “internal disturbances”.²⁷⁴

Japan, however, had greater ambitions in Korea, and at the end of May that same year the Cabinet discussed Japan's future responsibility for Korean security in entirety. Japan envisaged both a military force permanently stationed on the peninsula, admittedly “extremely useful as a means of maintaining our influence in times of peace”, and further, oversight over Korea's foreign relations, this through a Japanese advisor with access to

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² Sabey, *op. cit.*, p. 199

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 200

²⁷⁴ Beasley, W.G., *Japanese Imperialism: 1894-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) p. 86

Foreign Ministry archives. Japan would also seek to install a financial advisor and control the transportation and communications networks. Finally, even the postal and telegraph and telephone systems would be integrated with Japan's own, and under Japanese control.²⁷⁵

In December 1904 Japan would gain supervisory powers over the Korean police forces, both nationally and at a provincial level. Korea had acquiesced to Japan's demands for financial and foreign affairs "advisors" to be appointed earlier in August that year.²⁷⁶ Although these sizeable concessions would be sufficient for Japan through its conflict with Russia, following the cessation of hostilities Japan would seek to make Korea a Japanese protectorate, preferably with Korea's assent, but to be prescribed if this was not forthcoming.²⁷⁷

Following negotiations with Itō Hirofumi, Korea would ultimately sign a treaty with Japan, making it a Japanese protectorate. Itō would become the first Japanese Resident-General assigned as administrator. In the imperial ordinance of 20 December 1905, the Japanese Resident-General held the authority to use Japanese troops in the maintenance of law and order, was able to intervene in Korean governmental decision-making, oversaw Japanese officials and advisors in Korea, and was able to issue regulations, these enforceable through fines or imprisonment.²⁷⁸ By 1906 Itō's staff numbered over seventy Japanese in the Korean capital, with smaller numbers in each of Korea's provinces. Furthermore, Japan had a stationed police force in Korea of some two hundred and fifty men, and two divisions posted on the peninsula as a military garrison.²⁷⁹ Itō was thus by this time able to oversee Korea's defence, foreign relations and communications, and was concurrently able to influence the Korean government in all other matters.²⁸⁰

On Itō Hirofumi's appointment, Sugiyama Shigeru cajoled Hirofumi into employing Uchida Ryōhei on his staff. Uchida would proceed to ally

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 87

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

himself with those Koreans most amenable to full annexation, much to Itō's chagrin, who rather sought a continuance of the status quo.²⁸¹

The *Ilchinhoe* (Advance in Unity Society) was the first "mass-based" political party in Korea. Led by Yi Yong-gu and Song Pyong-jun, the party favoured annexation by Japan.²⁸² Yi and Song had previously offered assistance to Hasegawa Yoshimichi, commander of Imperial Japan's forces in Korea.²⁸³ Yi had mobilized his own troops to aid the Japanese, while Song had acted as interpreter for the Japanese Army Commander during the conflict with Russia through 1904-1905.²⁸⁴ The *Ilchinhoe* also delivered supplies to Japanese forces during the conflict, even building a rail network from north-western Korea to Manchuria to transport Japanese troops, and, further, spied on their behalf.²⁸⁵

The *Ilchinhoe* in many ways met the needs of Imperial Japan, the *Genyōsha* and the *Kokuryūkai*, as its aim encompassed more than simple Korean nationalism. Yi at one time proposed a plan for *Ilchinhoe* members to develop Manchuria, anticipating revolution in China, after which a combined state of Koreans, Japanese, Mongols and Manchus would safeguard against any future Russian encroachment into East Asia.²⁸⁶ This appears to some extent a precursor of Japan's later planning for the future puppet state of Manchukuo (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Uchida would become advisor to the *Ilchinhoe* in 1906, Uchida's former important *Tonghak* contacts now part of this organisation. The *Ilchinhoe* would also receive substantial subsidy from the Japanese military through General Hasegawa, yet only after significant lobbying by Uchida on their behalf to Itō, who had been eventually convinced that the *Ilchinhoe* were the most pro-Japanese group in Korea.²⁸⁷

Uchida would further recommend to Itō, in 1907, the disbanding of the Korean Cabinet and replacing it with one composed solely of *Ilchinhoe*

²⁸¹ Sabey, *op. cit.*, p. 220-221

²⁸² Hotta, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46

²⁸³ Moon, Y., *Populist Collaborators: the Ilchinhoe and the Japanese Colonisation of Korea, 1896-1910* (London: Cornell University Press, 2013) pp. 20-21

²⁸⁴ Hotta, *op. cit.*, p. 46

²⁸⁵ Moon, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21

²⁸⁶ Hotta, *op. cit.*, p. 46

²⁸⁷ Sabey, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-242

members. Rather, Itō sought to placate both Uchida and *Ilchinhoe* concerns by installing one member only into the existing Cabinet.²⁸⁸ Pak Che-sun, then Korean Prime Minister, resigned at the suggestion in protest, and Itō, rather than placate Pak, installed Yi Wan-yong (a Korean minister with pro-Japanese sympathies) as Premier, with Song Pyong-jun as Minister of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. Given the *Ilchinhoe* sought his removal, this move would incense the Korean Emperor, who would approach the Second Hague Peace Conference between June and October 1907 in an ill-fated, and ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to gain Korean independence.²⁸⁹ Following the emperor's subsequent removal under Japanese pressure and the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1907 that placed internal affairs in the hands of Japanese authorities, the *Ilchinhoe* would organise voluntary guards to resist anti-Japanese guerrillas.²⁹⁰

Following the forced abdication of the Korean Emperor in 1907, Itō in the July of that year introduced measures that further usurped Korean authority. Japanese would now hold the positions of Chief Secretary to the Cabinet, Chief of the Home Ministry Police Bureau, vice-ministers of departments, and judges. Furthermore, a Press Law that was introduced empowered the Home Minister to suppress any newspaper deemed “injurious to public order or good morals”. The number of Japanese staff employed in Korea expanded greatly, and Itō's staff numbered 4,500 by 1909 (including some 2,000 Koreans employed in minor roles).²⁹¹

In 1909, the *Ilchinhoe* would issue a statement calling for Korea's complete annexation by Japan.²⁹² Ito, unable to curtail the antagonistic situation that had arisen in Korea, both from the likes of Uchida and his men and general anti-Japanese sentiment, resigned that same year and was later assassinated in Harbin by a Korean nationalist. His successor, Sone Arasuke, was equally harassed and unsuccessful in quelling the volatile situation in Korea, and Japan's leaders would subsequently replace him, following his

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 244

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 244-245

²⁹⁰ Moon, *op. cit.*, p. 21

²⁹¹ Beasley, *op. cit.*, p. 88

²⁹² Moon, *op. cit.*, p. 21

resignation due to health reasons, with a Resident-General amenable to full annexation, Masatake Terauchi.²⁹³

With Uchida Ryohei's support, the *Ilchinhoe* presented to Japanese and Korean authorities a petition calling for a merger of the two nations in order to protect Korea from Western powers, citing the examples of India, Indo-China and Burma.²⁹⁴ Despite some doubts in Tokyo, which questioned what merger might mean, in May 1910 War Minister Terauchi Masatake was appointed Minister-Resident in Seoul, with sufficient military force assigned both to deal with issues of law and order and to ensure compliance on behalf of the Korean government.²⁹⁵ Finally, in secret, a treaty of annexation was signed 22 August 1910, only made public seven days later, after which Terauchi became Japan's first Governor-General in Korea; a position he would hold until rising to become Prime Minister of Japan in October 1916.²⁹⁶

With Korea's full annexation in 1910, Masatake (now Governor-General), with Akashi Motojirō (now director of police affairs within Korea) would provide "...the first real warning to the outside world of the potential menace of Japanese military government."²⁹⁷ Akashi would be appointed Deputy Chief of the General Staff in 1914, and in 1918 (following promotion to full general), Governor-General of Formosa. Masatake, Hasegawa and Akashi would during their later careers seek the "koreanisation" of China.²⁹⁸

Only as Imperial Japan began to exert state power on the Asian mainland, in what was essentially an exercise in puppet governance in Korea, did Japan's intelligence services come to be more systematic, following acceptance of the Imperial Defence Plan (*Teikoku Kokubō Hōshin*) in 1907. Formerly, as had occurred through the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese conflicts, only *ad hoc* arrangements had existed, both in information-gathering and subsequent analysis.²⁹⁹ The first formulation of the National

²⁹³ Sabey, *op. cit.*, p. 220-221

²⁹⁴ Beasley, *op. cit.*, p. 90

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ Harries, M. & S., *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82

²⁹⁸ Motojirō, *op. cit.*, p. 20

²⁹⁹ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 127

Defence Policy in 1907 made no mention of intelligence, however.³⁰⁰ Rather, it defined the focus of attention for the army (Russia, whom many thought would seek vengeance for its recent defeat) and the navy (the United States). The close proximity of the Russian threat meant most intelligence operations would in future be undertaken in Siberia, Mongolia and Manchuria.³⁰¹ In December 1908, the First (Operations) and Second (Intelligence) Departments were again separated. At the same time, the General Staff instituted a section system, with the Second Department now containing two sections, the China Section and the Europe-America Section. Notably, only now was a concerted effort made to induct and organise a core of specialists on China.³⁰²

Japan's annexation of Korea had ultimately been a combined political intelligence operation, utilising both informal and formal intelligence apparatus. Japan's success in this endeavour was, however, reliant on its intelligence saturation and substantial experience in the region over the past fifteen years. With the subsequent ease with which Japan had attained its aims, it appears Japan's policy-makers would be increasingly willing to engage in further political machinations on the Asian mainland. Given the successes of Japan intelligence so far, Japan would continue to rely on this combination of formal and informal intelligence networks, going so far as to incorporate other institutions into the non-conventional intelligence mesh.

The South Manchurian Railway Company (*Manshū Tetsudō*)

The South Manchurian Railway Company (*Manshū Tetsudō*, a name shortened by the Japanese to *Mantetsu*, or simply *Tetsudō*) was founded in 1906 by Imperial order, following Japan's victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. The *Mantetsu* would undertake information-gathering on a massive scale (this over the course of its history often at the request of the IJA).³⁰³ Nevertheless, despite the broad range of experience gained by the

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 135

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 331

³⁰³ Maruya, A., *The South Manchurian Railway Company as an Intelligence Organisation*, A Report of the CSIS, Japan Chair (Washington, Centre for Strategic and International Studies:

Mantetsu in intelligence activities throughout its lifetime, no clear methodology would ever be developed.³⁰⁴

Maruya Akihiko credits Viscount Gotō Shinpei, the *Mantetsu*'s first president, as having developed an organisational structure appropriate for the collection of information, particularly in relation to economic intelligence, to aid Japan's colonial ambitions in Manchuria. Yōsuke Matsuoka, the *Mantetsu*'s 14th president from 1911 to 1916, further expanded the company's intelligence operations through cooperation with the Kwantung Army during his tenure. Although Matsuoka's efforts improved the *Mantetsu*'s intelligence and information-gathering network, as Maruya states: "...the purpose was ambiguous. As some alumni of SMR have pointed out, the organisation was never able to clarify the purpose of its intelligence gathering and operational activities."³⁰⁵

The SMR performed intelligence activities that in modern parlance would be representative of Open Source Intelligence (OSINT), Signals Intelligence (SIGINT), Measurement and Signature Intelligence (MASINT), Human Intelligence (HUMINT), Counter Intelligence (CI), Political Activities and Propaganda.³⁰⁶ Both the SMR and its field offices were responsible for conducting operational and information-gathering activities. As part of its organisational structure it maintained the following: Head Office (Dairen), consisting of the Research Department (*Chōsa Bu*), Intelligence Section (HUMINT) and Data Section/Library (HUMINT); Branch Office (Tokyo), consisting of the Investigation Office (*Chōsashitsu*) (OSINT) and the East Asia Economic Research Bureau (*Tōa Keizai Chōsa Kyoku*); Field Offices (*Kōsho*) (Manchukuo) in Harbin, Mukden, Tsitsihar, amongst other places (HUMINT), Regional Bureau (OSINT), Field Office (Shanghai) (HUMINT) and Resident Officials (that acted as temporary intelligence officials), and finally overseas offices.³⁰⁷

February 2012) available at:

http://csis.org/files/publication/120217_Maruya_SouthManchuriaRailway_Web.pdf p. 1

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2

Presidencies and directorships of the *Mantetsu* included many luminaries. Gotō Shinpei, president from 1906 to 1908, was a statesman and Cabinet minister of Japan, having previously been Home Minister and Foreign Minister, as well as the first Director of the *Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai* (Japan Broadcasting Corporation).³⁰⁸ The management organisation of the *Mantetsu* consisted of one President, one Vice-President and eight Directors who were changed after four-year periods. Continual changes occurred in the personnel from department to department, this in accordance with Japanese custom. Matsuoka Yōsuke, president of the *Mantetsu* from approximately 1935 to 1939, was Minister of Foreign Affairs during the early stages of the Pacific conflict. Count Hayashi Hirotarō, head of the *Mantetsu* prior to Matsuoka, had been a member of the House of Peers.³⁰⁹ The Foreign Office and the South Manchurian Railway were however only known to be connected through the *Mantetsu*'s Presidents, including Matsuoka Yōsuke and Ōmura Takuichi, Matsuoka's successor.³¹⁰ Sugiyama Shigemaru, connected to the *Kokuryūkai*, was also involved with the South Manchurian Railway.³¹¹ Thus continued the pattern, that of linked personages with power over vast resources and bureaucracies, that exemplified Japanese intelligence efforts during the period in question.

The *Mantetsu*'s Research Department (*Chōsa Bu*)

The Research Department (*Chōsa Bu*) of the *Mantetsu* was established in April 1907, soon after the railway's acquisition following the Russo-Japanese War in 1906. Even at this early stage, Gotō Shinpei, then president, sought greater research capabilities so as to aid in the colonial development and management of Manchuria.³¹² Gotō's policy was entitled *bunsō teki bubi*, or

³⁰⁸ Fogel, J.A., *Life Along the South Manchurian Railway: The Memoirs of Itō Takeo* (Armonk, N.Y.; London: M.E. Sharpe, 1988) p. 123

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6315, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 235, 5 June 1946, Item 2154, Interrogation of Yokoyama Ryoichi, p. 12

³¹¹ Jansen, M., *op cit.*, p. 40

³¹² Fogel, *op. cit.*, p. vii

“military preparedness in civil garb”, and his thoughts on this subject were as follows:

In short, colonial policy is military preparedness in civil garb; it is carrying out the hegemon’s strategies under the flag of the kingly way. Such a colonial policy is inescapable in our time. What facilities, then, are necessary to see it through?

We have to implement a cultural invasion with a Central Laboratory, popular education for the resident populace, and forge other academic and economic links. Invasion may not be an agreeable expression, but [language] aside we can generally call our policy one of invasion in civil garb...Certain scholars have said that the secret of administration lies in taking advantage of the people’s weaknesses...Insofar as the secret to administration does hang on the weak points of mankind’s way of life and in fact has throughout history, it is that much more so with colonial policy.³¹³

The Research Department of the *Mantetsu* operated as an organ of political and economic control, and its information-gathering and studies were targeted toward this aim. Gotō himself had been civil governor of Formosa, acting as deputy to then Governor-General Kodama Gentarō who had been involved in both the setting up of the *Mantetsu* and Gotō’s appointment. On Gotō’s selection and acceptance of the position however, Saionji Kinmochi, then Japan’s Prime Minister, informed him he would be in some matters responsible to the Governor-General of Kwantung, a military officer; in others, to the Foreign Ministry.³¹⁴ This would foreshadow later difficulties in chain-of-command, both in relation to political control of the region, but also in relation to focus of the *Mantetsu*’s information-gathering activities. Nevertheless, in the relationship between Kodama and Gotō, and their shared desire to see Japanese’ rule over Manchuria; lay the foundation for what would later be greater understanding and cooperation between the military and information-gathering activities of the *Mantetsu*.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 14

³¹⁴ Beasley, *op. cit.*, p. 97

The initial management structure of the *Mantetsu* included three divisions: the Railway Section, the Local Section, and the Research Section, reflecting the importance placed on research by Gotō. During his tenure as civil governor, Gotō had instigated research on Formosa, in particular in relation to its customs, and these efforts later contributed to his successes within the role.³¹⁵

While the Research Department was led by Kawamura Chūjirō (later one of the *Mantetsu*'s directors) through the period late-1908 to 1917, quality of research was expected to be of an extremely high standard. Kawamura also had experience in the investigation of Formosan customs, originally undertaken on order of Gotō by Professor Okamatsu Santarō, then of Kyoto University; Kawamura's predecessor through the Research Department's first year. Requisite detail and analysis was expected to be of essentially a scholarly level. Kawamura during his tenure would examine each research item in minute detail, asking as many questions as were required to ensure his own understanding. Without this, and without requisite evidential substantiation, reports were not to be written. However, staff were initially allowed an indefinite period in which to undertake their studies. Furthermore, new staff were often not required to undertake any investigative work until they had sufficiently specialised, utilising the *Mantetsu*'s open purse.³¹⁶ Research was thus conducted in such minute detail so as not to be required (for the most part) by intelligence clients. The following picture, a cross section of a Trekhrech'e Cossack home found within "Housing and Lifestyles of North Manchuria Trekhrech'e Russians", a report edited by the *Mantetsu*'s Research Bureau, demonstrates the intricate detail found within many of bureau's reports. It is difficult to reconcile a need for such minutiae for reasons other than academia, or for economic purposes for which this diagram's report was commissioned:

³¹⁵ Fogel, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19

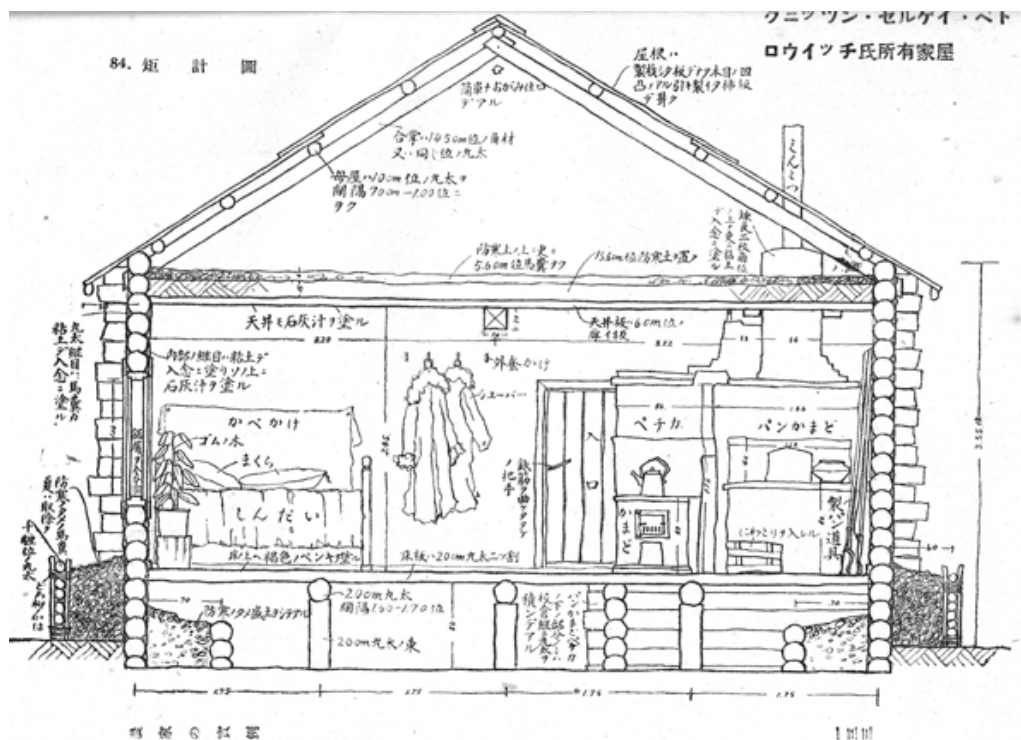


Figure 1. Cross-section view of a Trekhrech'e Cossack home found within *Housing and Lifestyles of North Manchuria Trekhrech'e Russians*, a report edited by the Research Bureau of the South Manchurian Railway, published 1943³¹⁷

Within the intelligence realm this methodology fails to meet some essential criteria, in particular the need for brevity and timeliness, this despite its requisite accuracy. Furthermore, throughout the *Mantetsu's* lifetime no clear standard existed for the evaluation of information. Nevertheless, former *Mantetsu* officials believe intelligence reports provided by the *Mantetsu* to senior government figures were held in high regard.³¹⁸ In the absence of any other form of organised intelligence reports on matters dealt with solely by the *Mantetsu*, and not by its Kwantung Army compatriots, the Japanese would be unable to differentiate between a detailed *research* report, and a truly modern intelligence product; accurate, brief, clear and timely. With the quality of their research reports, in an academic sense; particularly when they had been

³¹⁷ “Cross-section view of a Trekhrech'e Cossack house (*Housing and Lifestyles of North Manchuria Trekhrech'e Russians*, edited by the Research Bureau of the South Manchurian Railway Company (North Manchuria Economic Survey), Hakubunkan, published 1943) Available at: <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/adv/chuo/dy/research/20110407.html>

³¹⁸ Maruya, *op. cit.*, p. 7

examined by especially well-informed and talented individuals such as Kawamura, means these reports may appear to have been, *prima facie*, intelligence reports, but nevertheless remained academic in nature.

This should not be surprising given the crux of the *Mantetsu*'s information-gathering was based on the collection and collation of open source information to support the Research Department. Furthermore, the *Mantetsu* remained a legitimate commercial enterprise and surreptitious operations were never specialised in.³¹⁹ Thus, despite Gotō's belief in the consistency between scholarship and practical affairs and the need for research to enable Japanese colonial governance in mainland Asia, having stated "scholarship is only worthwhile when it is consistent with reality...and studying colonial civil and commercial activities will supply material for research", research undertaken by the Research Department and its subsidiaries was never fully integrated into true modern intelligence products, the two being somewhat at odds with one another.³²⁰

Subsequent difference in sought-after intelligence reports versus the essentially academic reports offered by the *Mantetsu* was further exacerbated by the fact that an "intelligence cycle" was never developed within the *Mantetsu*, this, as Maruya states, "...[was] a common failure among Japanese intelligence organisations."³²¹ However, the above should not be seen to discount the quality of information in reports produced, which utilised refined (for the time), if elementary, means. The *Mantetsu* Head Office's Data Section would publish daily, weekly and bi-weekly reports, with other branches likely publishing something similar. Within these publications can be seen systematic information collection, subsequent analysis, and a refined "intelligence" product being produced.³²²

SMR intelligence gathering and operations would cover a broad scope of intelligence, including i) open source intelligence; including the collection of Russian materials; SMR Reports (produced in the Secretariat, Research Department, Shanghai office, Tokyo Branch and the New York office); the

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10

³²⁰ Fogel, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23

³²¹ Maruya, A., *op. cit.*, p. 9

³²² *Ibid.*, p. 6

Harbin Branch Office, which specialised as an open source intelligence analysis unit; ii) human intelligence, including its Head Office's involvement with Jews and Muslims; including the Xinjiang Operation (the Kwantung Army and SMR's Central Asia guerrilla warfare operation to agitate Muslims in Manchukuo, Mongolia and China); the Mukden Branch Office, which sought internal information on the Qing Dynasty; its Shanghai Branch Office, which investigated the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and *Kuomintang* (Chinese Nationalist Party, or KMT); and the Harbin Branch Office, charged with the investigation of Russia. The *Mantetsu* was further involved with signals intelligence. The names of intelligence operations undertaken by the *Mantetsu* demonstrate an understandable economic focus, including "Jewish Operation at the Economic Section of the SMR Head office".³²³ Others were, however, obviously of a non-economic focus: "Military Intelligence and Operational Activities toward the CCP and the *Kuomintang*" and "Political Operational Activities toward Wang Zhaoming".³²⁴ These latter information-gathering activities are hard to reconcile with a purely economic bias, and their use to Japan's government and military is obvious.

The *Mantetsu* accumulated a massive amount of information of use to Japan's military authorities. The sheer quantity of information collected, however, led to not inconsiderable difficulty in information management. More exhaustive analysis and improved organisation would have improved the *Mantetsu*'s role as a true intelligence organ, but with continued investigation and collection throughout its lifetime the ever-expanding volume of information held by the *Mantetsu* in the absence of an intelligence cycle would eventually lead to redundancy. As Maruya states, these issues faced by the *Mantetsu*, namely information and human resource management, as well as the expedition of information transfer, remain contemporary issues.³²⁵

³²³ *Ibid.*

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10

The East Asia Economic Investigation Bureau (*Tōa Keizai Chōsa Kyoku*)

The *Chōsa Bu* in the *Mantetsu*'s head office in Dairen would eventually maintain four research centres throughout China and Manchuria. In Harbin, there was a centre for the collection of economic information on Russia; in Beijing, another covering North China; in Shanghai, a centre covering central and southern China. Finally, also in Dairen, would be a branch of the East Asia Economic Investigation Bureau (EAEIB), or *Tōa Keizai Chōsa Kyoku*, tasked with economic investigation of areas outside China and Manchuria.³²⁶

In 1909 the East Asia Economic Investigation Bureau was established by Gotō, as part of the Tokyo branch office of the *Mantetsu*, operating concurrently with the Research Department in Dairen. The *Tōa Keizai Chōsa Kyoku* operated independently of the Research Department, but remained under direction of the *Mantetsu*.³²⁷ Initial differentiation between the two entities revolved around scope and geographic area of activity. The EAEIB was established to cover areas in East Asia outside China and Manchuria (already covered by the *Chōsa Bu* in Dairen) over which Japan held, if then unrealised, imperial design. The EAEIB's objective was to collect and organise a broad range of material on this geographical area to ensure an in depth understanding of Japan's, China's and Manchuria's economic position.³²⁸

By the time of the Pacific conflict; the offices of the East Asiatic Economic Investigation Bureau and South Manchurian Railway Company were separate in Tokyo. The offices of the EAEIB were located at Hibiya Park, Tokyo, on the second and third floors of the Imperial Life Insurance building. Students here studied foreign languages, including English, French, Dutch, German, Thai, Chinese, Malay and Hindustani, as well as the economics, history and culture of Asia. Language studies were, however,

³²⁶ Preliminary Interrogation of Ogawa, Shūmei, 26 Dec 45, Box No. 96, Ogata, Taketora Vol. 3 to Olbrueck, Erich, Second Release of Name Files Under the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Disclosure Acts, 1934-2002, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, p. 9

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8

³²⁸ Fogel, *op. cit.*, p. 23

self-taught, and translation of publications was used as practice for these students.³²⁹

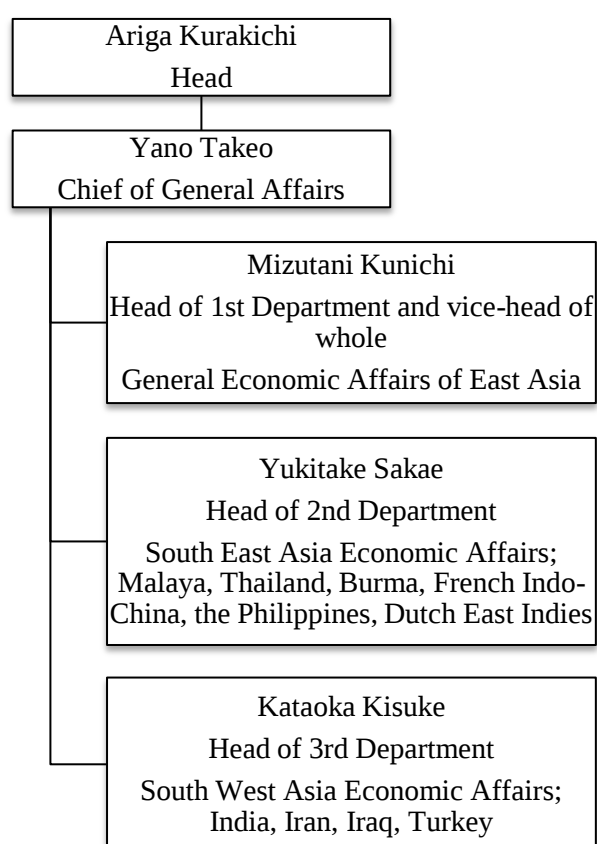


Figure 2. Organisation of the East Asia Economic Investigation Bureau c. 1940³³⁰

The *Mantetsu* was thus the seed from which Japan’s non-military, economically and politically-minded and commercially-based and supported intelligence network sprouted. Furthermore, the *Mantetsu*’s EAEIB provided an initial prototype from which a larger association would arise later in the century, providing coverage of the Asian mainland, utilising a not dissimilar information-gathering structure, and covering a larger number of research institutions.

The saturation of Japan’s informal networks, and the perceived strength of “intelligence” garnered (what would be termed essentially information today in Intelligence circles, given the lack of a developed

³²⁹ TNA: WO 203/6315, Interrogation of Yokoyama Ryoichi, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12

intelligence cycle, a trained intelligence analytical branch, and a timely process), would develop in Japan a false sense of security in its emerging hybrid Intelligence system.

Imperial Japan's early aspirations in China

Japan had since 1895 been heavily involved in China, including the political movement generated by Sun Yat-sen. Uchida Ryōhei, Miyazaki Tōten and Fukumoto Nichinan had visited Singapore to meet the former adviser of China's Emperor, Kang Yu-wei, in 1900; forthright about their intention to become involved in the anti-Manchu revolutionary movement.³³¹ All were subsequently removed from the settlement.³³² Japan had, furthermore, following its victories over China and Russia, become a destination for higher education for the families of Asian nations, in particular China, Vietnam and India.³³³ These students attended not only universities but also military academies. Many of them would go on to positions of power in their countries' nationalist movements, and in this they were often aided unofficially by the Japanese government, individuals (including in particular Tōyama Mitsuru and Uchida Ryōhei), patriotic societies and the IJA. Important figures later connected to the Japanese would include Cuong De of Vietnam.³³⁴ Through this education program Japan would be able to form relationships with those in positions of power in mainland Asia where it would later have imperial aspirations.

Beyond the intelligence activities of such groups as the *Genyōsha* and *Kokuryūkai*, Tōyama [and Uchida] personally sought to cultivate Asiatic nationalist dissident leaders who might later serve Japanese ambitions in mainland Asia. Only beginning with Kim Ok-kyun, the Korean revolutionary whose assassination in 1894 had helped prompt Japan's actions in China and Korea, these included anti-Manchu revolutionaries including Sun Yat-sen, Huang Hsing, Sung Chiao-jen, and later prominent Chinese personages

³³¹ TNA: KV 3/253, Straits Settlements Police Special Branch, *op. cit.*, p. 7

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 135

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 136

including Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei; Indian activist Rash Behari Bose, the former Russian Muslim leader Kourbangalieff, the White Russian leader, Grigory Mikhaylovich Semyonov (Semenov), and Afghanistan's Mahendra Pratap.³³⁵ The purpose of extending hospitality to anti-Manchu revolutionaries such as Sun Yat-sen was to ensure that should they ever gain political power, Japan would be sought for financial support and advice in China's reform and modernisation. Japan, in return, would gain a privileged position in China, and leadership in all vital matters of domestic and foreign policy would eventually be sought by the Japanese. From those others mentioned above, political intelligence might have been expected, and through these contacts both Japan's Foreign Ministry and IJA might gain some influence throughout Asia.³³⁶

Later offshoots of the *Genyōsha* would include the *Yurinkai*, established in 1911 for work with Chinese revolutionaries, and the *Rōninkai*, formed approximately 1914 for work in Siberia and China.³³⁷ A number of *Kokuryūkai* members, including Kayano Nagatomo, Hirayama Shū and Obata Kotaro, left Japan for China to aid in the revolution there, the latter two involved in intelligence activities in the Beijing-Tientsin area, with Kuzuo Yoshihisa and Miyazaki Tōten also gathering information in the Shanghai-Nanjing area.³³⁸ Tōten, although not a member of the *Kokuryūkai*, shared Sun's principles and supported him throughout his revolutionary machinations in China. The *Genyōsha* and *Kokuryūkai* would also remain entwined with Sun Yat-sen's fortunes throughout his political struggles, Uchida convinced that Yuan Shih-kai and his government needed to be replaced, even approaching Premier Ōkuma and Minister Kato, the Foreign Minister, in 1914 to express his (the *Kokuryūkai*'s) and Tōyama's opinion.³³⁹

With the impotence of the Chinese government of Emperor Hsuan-Tung (Pu-yi) now evident, and with growing discontent with the Manchu dynasty, China would ultimately see two regimes established in opposition, with Sun Yat-sen elected President in Nanjing and Yuan Shih-kai made Prime

³³⁵ Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 273

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ TNA: KV 3/253, Straits Settlements Police Special Branch, *op. cit.*, p. 3

³³⁸ Sabey, *op. cit.*, p. 281

³³⁹ Jansen, M., *op. cit.*, p. 181

Minister in Beijing. Later, in order to unite China, Sun would concede the presidency to Yuan.³⁴⁰ The Japanese General Staff, with some exceptions, (including Banzai Richachirō [to be discussed in Chapter 4]) had been against Yuan as early as 1911, when Utsunomiya Tarō, then head of the Second Department, had sought to support the south before meeting resistance from the government in Tokyo. The younger generation of China experts were overwhelmingly so disposed, as was the Japanese media at the time. Those that had supported Yuan had limited experience in China, and would later change their course on Yuan.³⁴¹ However, the Japanese military during this period were willing to aid either side, in so far as Japanese' aims were served. Before the revolution, Japanese "adventurers" had been involved with trying to establish new regimes in Inner Mongolia and Manchuria, often with the tacit approval, and even surreptitious support, of the military; this in the hope that Japanese forces would be drawn into subsequent conflicts.³⁴²

Naniwa Kawashima was first involved in intelligence with the Japanese military during the Russo-Japanese War, and later as a member of the *Kokuryūkai*. Initially Naniwa was a supporter of Sun Yat-sen, as were Tōyama and Uchida. Kawashima later came to distrust Sun, feeling that were he to come to power, his professed friendship with Japan would falter.³⁴³ Naniwa had been instrumental in the restructure of China's police force between 1905-1908, including the creation of a national police force responsible to the emperor, but had also acted as a general advisor to the Qing government during its final years of reform.³⁴⁴ Naniwa had, in his establishment of a school to train Chinese police, been able to infiltrate his own agents into key positions. By 1911, Kawashima, and, by extension, the *Kokuryūkai*, had trained agents throughout China, both Chinese and Japanese, in the same vein as former patriotic society informal intelligence networks elsewhere on the Asian mainland. Agents were infiltrated into the ranks of both Sun Yat-sen and Yuan Shih-kai, and Kawashima even instigated a failed

³⁴⁰ Harries, M. & S., *op cit.*, p. 94

³⁴¹ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 355

³⁴² Harries, M. & S., *op cit.*, p. 94

³⁴³ Deacon, *op. cit.*, p. 101

³⁴⁴ Wakeman, F. E., *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) pp. 189-190

plot to assassinate Yuan (via a bomb on a train); this presumed to be a *Kokuryūkai* operation, as the two military officers involved (Colonel Takayama and Major Taga) had both also been members of that organisation.³⁴⁵ The efforts of figures such as Kawashima would be a precursor of the political machinations and methodologies employed by a politicised intelligence corps, in future also including Japan's formal intelligence elements, later in the 1920s and 1930s in China and Manchuria (to be examined from Chapter 4).

The Anglo-Japanese alliance before the First World War and the Siberian Intervention

Military and naval discussions between the UK and Japan in 1907 had called for the retention of existing levels of intelligence exchange. In regard to land forces on mainland Asia, this appears to have been minimal. Following Anglo-Russian and Russo-Japanese rapprochements, Britain viewed the Anglo-Japanese alliance as more a guarantee of Japanese interests in the Far East; an attack on British interests there deemed highly unlikely.³⁴⁶ Further, the British thought the Japanese intelligence apparatus to date had been most effective, British General Ewart stating in 1909 he had “always understood that the Japanese owed a great deal to the perfection of their pre-arranged system of secret service”.³⁴⁷

British language officers attached to Japanese units had from 1905 noted an increased use of German methods in Japanese training and staff work.³⁴⁸ Preceding a UK decision to establish a separate intelligence organisation in April 1909 (to circumvent expanding German espionage), in January of that year Colonel James Edmonds (of the War Office Directorate of Military Operations, Section 5 [MO5]), wrote a research report on the effective German use of agents and disinformation in earlier conflicts. Edmonds noted: “The Japanese learnt the trick of using officers to perform

³⁴⁵ Deacon, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-103

³⁴⁶ Chapman, *op. cit.*, *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000: Volume III*, pp. 79-81

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 71

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 80

menial duties as servants etc.; in order to gain information, from their masters in the art of war, the Germans.”³⁴⁹

A structured Japanese intelligence apparatus was still in its infancy, and certainly so in the sense of overseas intelligence operations and scope. A certain level of intelligence cooperation was thus doubtless sought in the alliance with Britain. In 1909, however, Japan rather clumsily made requests regarding naval information, this as the UK Admiralty was warning its officers that the alliance might not be renewed past its then end-date of 1915. Information furnished to the Japanese was, given the circumstances, to be limited to that only normally available to an amiable foreign nation; what Japan in the near future might be solely considered. Although assumed Japan would do the same, it was advised care be taken to ask in future only for that deemed of importance, and unobtainable through other means, while avoiding an air of reserve in the asking.³⁵⁰

The Foreign Office proposal to extend the alliance came in 1911. The War Office saw Japan as the greatest beneficiary, but could not discount the benefit to the UK the continued alliance would bring in the reduction of both naval and military forces in the Far East, plus additional protection for both Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, were Japan not allied to Britain, it was feared it would seek to ally itself with a nation inimical to British interests.³⁵¹ Japanese benefit in intelligence cooperation with the UK was therefore incidental, and reliant on British interests in the Far East. Japan would, from necessity, continue to rely on its independently-developed intelligence structure and methodology as it related to the Asian mainland and its perceived enemies there, but be unable to truly benefit from the UK as a mentor in the field of intelligence.

World War I (*Nichi-Doko Sensō*, or Japan’s war with Germany)

The First World War, in which Japan joined the Allies, was for Japan incomparable to the Sino-Japanese or the Russo-Japanese conflicts, and for

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 81

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

this reason an Imperial General Headquarters (*Dai Honei*) was not established as had been the case in 1894 and 1904. As Nish states, Japan could now be seen to be placing lesser importance on circumstances outside the Pacific.³⁵²

Furthermore, in direct contrast with Japan's earlier conflicts, when intelligence preparations had been undertaken in advance, Japan's decision to enter the hostilities in August 1914 "...seems to have been an afterthought – a last minute attempt to seize a convenient opportunity". As Nish states, due to Germany's limited strength in the Pacific region, compensation through extensive political intelligence efforts were of minimal importance to Japan at this time.³⁵³

Following the occupation of Kiaochow (Jiaozhou) and the Mariana, Caroline and Marshall Islands in 1914, Japan greatly increased its trade with both China and Southeast Asia. This, increasing political demands made by the Japanese military, and Japanese support of Indian nationalism, would slowly erode confidence in the alliance in Britain itself. Furthermore, from 1915 the Anglo-Japanese alliance received growing criticism from Japan, particularly from the likes of the *Kokuryūkai* and others with links to both the army and navy.³⁵⁴ Support for the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in the UK was also waning, with Japanese Pan-Asianism of particular concern. However, despite its prevalence in Japan at the time, Pan-Asianism could not be openly adopted by the Japanese government, irrespective of its pervasiveness within the political sphere. The same cannot be said of the Japanese press, able to sway public opinion, and in 1918 the British were taking note of this rising sentiment as the Anglo-Japanese alliance was thought to be drawing to a close.³⁵⁵

Although not a matter of governmental policy, the future role of India in many important aspects of Japanese strategic thinking would create difficulties for its ally. The Pan-Asian movement would be responsible for the harbouring of Indian seditionists, in the hopes that India would secede

³⁵² Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 137

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 138

³⁵⁴ Chapman, *op. cit.*, *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000: Volume III*, p. 84

³⁵⁵ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) CAB 24/64/13, "Memorandum on Japanese Pan-Asiaticism and Siberia", Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, 16 September 1918, p. 1

from British control and turn to Japan for leadership. In such a context, Japan would receive great economic benefit. Japanese summation of the UK's position were this to occur may be found in an article dated April 1917 in the influential magazine *Chūōkōron*:

The preliminary condition for the realisation of Pan-Asiaticism...is in reality a change of jurisdiction in India. Is it not India which constitutes the foundation of the real power of Great Britain, the invader of Asia? Economically and militarily considered, would not Great Britain, divorced from India, become a third-rate Power, as already stated by Lord Curzon? Imagine the advent of the age of the political connection, the unification of thought, the economic alliance and religious sympathy of India, China and Japan. What white-man principles and Occidentalism, what national greed-of-gain principles then bring calamity upon Asia.³⁵⁶

Sohō Tokutomi was founder of the Minyūsha Publishing Company that produced many influential political publications, including the *Kokumin Shinbun* (considered representative of the Government's views in the early years of the 20th century). His statement published in the *Kokumin Shinbun* exemplified at the time the growing desire for freedom from Western influence in Asia:

The mission of the Japanese Empire consists in carrying out the Asiatic Munroe [*sic*] Doctrine in the most complete manner. By this Asiatic Munroe Doctrine we mean the principle that Asiatic affairs should be dealt with by Asiatics...We do not hold so narrow-minded a view as to wish to drive the whites out of Asia. What we want is simply that we become independent of the whites...The Asiatic Monroe Doctrine is the principle of Eastern autonomy, that is, of Orientals dealing with Eastern questions...It is clear as light that the above theory will be received by the whites with anything but favour, but world affairs

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3

cannot always be settled to the advantage of the whites, nor were we born to serve the whites.³⁵⁷

Sohō, intimate with Prime Ministers Yamagata Aritomo and Katsura Tarō, would be of such influence as to be arrested as a Class “A” war criminal following Japan’s later defeat.³⁵⁸

In May 1915, the UK found its ally had attempted to exploit China while the great powers were entwined in the war in Europe. Most troubling to the UK, however, was the realisation, made possible through British sources, that Japan was supporting Indian sedition, even harbouring the leadership of a failed uprising in 1915.³⁵⁹ Following Britain’s request that this threat to their interests be swiftly dealt with:

Evidence rapidly emerged of significant political influences in Tokyo that were not only hindering any action against threats to Britain seeking a sanctuary in Japan, but also fostering secret Japanese support across Asia for ‘Pan-Asian’ and Indian nationalist plots against British rule in the subcontinent.³⁶⁰

British agents in Japan had by 1916 reported support for Indian nationalists could only occur with the support of senior Japanese political leaders, and possibly even the Prime Minister, Count Shigenobu Ōkuma. Ōkuma openly held ‘Pan-Asiatic’ views, and had supported the formation of an ‘Indo-Japanese Association’ as early as 1907. Ōkuma was further known to be sympathetic with Tōyama Mitsuru, who supported and had provided refuge to Rash Behari Bose when he had fled to Japan in 1915. Furthermore, the UK became aware in August 1916 that a secret supply of weapons for a military uprising in India was being supplied by the Kuhara Company (the *zaibatsu* [a corporate cooperative or financial clique] that after 1945 became the Hitachi and Nissan corporations) with the active support of Fusanosuke Kuhara.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2

³⁵⁸ See Pierson, J.D., *Tokutomi Sohō 1863-1957: A Journalist for Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980)

³⁵⁹ Everest-Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 679

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 680

Fusanosuke was connected with the *Seiyūkai* political party, and given the standing of both he and Ōkuma, it was now difficult to deny the Japanese government were not aware of, if not directly involved with, the Indian revolutionary cause.³⁶¹ Although the Japanese police watched these groups closely, they were allowed a broad degree of freedom.³⁶² Thus did the apparent inability of the Japanese political leadership to confront and suppress ultra-nationalism, and also the willingness of well-placed and funded Japanese to actively patronise these organisations, become known to Britain.

The future dissolution of the Anglo-Japanese alliance was foreseen by Uchida, who in 1916 had published a pamphlet envisaging a clash between Japan and the UK following World War I, as their mutual interests in seeking domination in East Asia clashed; Japan invariably needing to secure Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, but not necessarily so with the deterioration of Japan's relationship with China.³⁶³

In December 1917, Okuda, former Director of the Bureau of Information at the Japanese Foreign Ministry, confirmed that the policy of protecting Indian seditionists had originated with Ōkuma through the agency of Tōyama. Tōyama's name had also been found in a coded list of contacts held by captured members of the nationalist cause, Tōyama appearing complicit in a plot to establish centres of anti-British sympathy under fronts of places of pilgrimage. A former employee of the Japanese consulate at Calcutta was a suspect in the plot, having stayed on in India in the guise of a student. The British were also deeply suspicious of the Mitsui Trading Corporation.³⁶⁴

Nonetheless, the alliance persisted in its existing form until the advent of the Russian revolution and the subsequent Siberian Intervention.³⁶⁵ Britain held significant reservations regarding the alliance, but evidence does exist of UK aid to the Japanese, generally on a one-off basis, rather than as an example of systemic cooperation. During the period 1904 to 1919, the UK had sought to strengthen its communications systems, and in 1907 warning

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 682-683

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 682

³⁶³ Beasley, *op. cit.*, p. 119

³⁶⁴ Everest-Phillips, *op. cit.*, pp. 683-684

³⁶⁵ Chapman, *op. cit.*, *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000: Volume III*, p. 84

was made to Japan's military about the use of Eastern Extension cable lines between China and Europe as known thefts of cyphers had occurred during the Russo-Japanese War, these codes subsequently being sold on by officials. Between 1909 and the end of the First World War, however, the UK provided only minimal intelligence to the Japanese. Following the war Japan was summarised by the British as follows:

Although in theory the Japanese were treated preferentially in regard to the exchange of secret information, in practice little or no confidential information as regards materiel was communicated to them, and we avoided taking advantage of their offers to communicate confidential information of any kind to us. It was felt that the acceptance of such offers laid us open to requests for information on their side, and that the balance of advantage was considerably in their favour.³⁶⁶

It should be noted, however, that during World War I, despite British reservations about imparting information to the Japanese, nevertheless a certain amount of confidential information was passed on through necessity.³⁶⁷ Requests for secret information were nonetheless avoided as often as possible, but for that requisite to the wars progression, and especially so in regard to post-war developments. As such, Japan was treated as a "lesser ally"; France and the US in contrast having been provided Admiralty liaison officers.³⁶⁸

The alliance served both nations well throughout the Russo-Japanese War and World War I. Japan had been able to allay supply concerns through continuing trade and commerce throughout its conflict with Russia, and Britain had maintained its Pacific empire through Japan's support during the course of World War I. The extent to which Japan helped in this should not be underestimated. Even following naval limitations instigated in the Washington Conference in 1921, Britain's 40% naval superiority would not have allowed a split force to cover both western and eastern hemispheres.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

With British colonial possessions being so heavily reliant on naval protection and supply, the Japanese Navy's continuing support throughout the period (without discounting Commonwealth support), was integral.³⁶⁹ During World War I Japan served the Allies in removing German influence from Tsingtao, removing the German naval presence in the Pacific, providing financial aid to the French and Russians, and providing naval support in the Mediterranean. Japanese sacrifices were however not deemed commensurate by many within the Alliance to justify the gains Japan received following the war.³⁷⁰

The First World War would however serve Japan's later mainland ambitions, providing the military, following Tanaka Giichi's appointment to the General Staff in 1915, the theatre in which to practice political intelligence operations. Following China's signing over to Japan German rights in Shandong, and further expanding Japan's rights in Manchuria, with government support, the IJA concluded an intelligence operation that would prevent Yuan Shih-kai, the Chinese president, from enthroning himself as the new Chinese emperor (see Chapter 4).³⁷¹

The Siberian Intervention

The success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia led to a resurgence of anti-Russian sentiment in Japan. Allied thought at the time sought a curb to Bolshevik influence, but how this was to be undertaken was then unknown. Given Japan's history and geographic position, but against a backdrop of misgivings regarding her true purpose in the Far East, a guarded but not entirely negative attitude to Japanese involvement in Siberia would slowly emerge.

Lord Milner, then UK Secretary of War, felt Japan was in a natural position to defend its Allies' interests in the Far East, and despite misgivings by many within the UK about Japan's assistance to that date, felt that in

³⁶⁹ Dua, R. P., *Anglo-Japanese Relations: During the First World War* (New Delhi: S. Chand & Co. (Pvt.) Ltd., 1972)

³⁷⁰ TNA: CAB 24/64/13, "Memorandum on Japanese Pan-Asiaticism and Siberia", *op. cit.*, p. 8

³⁷¹ Humphreys, L.A., *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920's* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995) p. 23

Siberia, if Japan were willing, Japan could take action on behalf of its allies. Milner nevertheless held some reservations, namely, were Japan to take action solely i) Russia may resent it, and ii) Japan may well take advantage of the opportunity to the detriment of her Allies.³⁷² In Milner's view:

To my mind it is clear that, if there must be intervention, it will, from the nature of the case, be mainly if not wholly Japanese. The only question is whether it is to take the form of Japan intervening in the name of and on behalf of the Allies, and with their goodwill, or of Japan finally intervening "on her own" after a greater or less degree of friction, due to the insistence of other Allies upon having a finger in the pie.³⁷³

Milner further sought greater Japanese involvement in concerns integral to UK interests, the conflict with Germany still in full swing, with considerable foresight:

I believe it would pay us, and I think there is too there a certain advantage in getting Japan more deeply committed than she actually is in the world-struggle against Germany and German influences. There is always a certain danger, as it seems to me, as long as she remains only half in, of her gradually slipping out and even ultimately of her being "got at" by the Germans.³⁷⁴

Support for Japanese intervention came from elsewhere in the British establishment, guided by *realpolitik*. In communication with Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour, Sir William Conyngham Greene, UK Ambassador to Japan, wrote 17 January 1918:

...as it appears likely enough that [the] Japanese will not hesitate to take independent action if they consider it desirable, and that we can do

³⁷² The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) CAB 24/40/22, "Possibility of Japanese Intervention in Siberia", Correspondence between Mr. Balfour and Lord Milner, 21 January 1918, p. 1

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 2

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

nothing to stop them, we might make virtue of giving way gracefully,
and so have one less military anxiety upon our minds in coming
months.³⁷⁵

Nevertheless, support for continued cooperation between the two nations, against the backdrop of the Bolshevik Revolution and the continuing hostilities with Germany; could be found on both sides. Colonel Kono of the Japanese General Staff, in a memorandum dated 27 February 1918, recommended future cooperation between the UK and Japan. A certain level of ambivalence, for various reasons, was however identified. Kono thought that against a backdrop of reservation in Japan regarding the Anglo-Japanese alliance' revision, centred on economic competition in South China and the South Seas, and which had led the Kaiser to state "England had lost Japan from among her Allies", closer cooperation in Siberia in opposition to the Germans would do much to strengthen bilateral ties. Kono did however draw attention to a certain vacillation then present in the UK regarding Japanese officers stationed there who had found themselves sidelined. Kono, one of those attached to the Staff of the 2nd Army during the Russo-Japanese War to act as liaison with foreign attachés, including Colonel Haldane, thought this may have been in reaction to foreign officer treatment during this conflict, but candidly stated that those Japanese officers now posted to Japan "...are all the best of our Army, men of promise who will one day hold prominent positions. To treat them satisfactorily, and to make cordial relations between us would surely be the best preparation for a future close cooperation between our two Armies."³⁷⁶

Kono's memorandum, despite its *prima facie* position that cooperation was in the best interests of both nations, nonetheless foreshadowed future Japanese moves in the Far East, all but confirming UK suspicions, appearing to use the backdrop of the then German threat as a pretext:

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4

³⁷⁶ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 106/870, Memorandum by Colonel Kono, Japanese General Staff, 27 February 1918, pp. 4-5

What must be considered at this juncture is that Japan's influence must proceed, as to position and relationships, in concert and in unison with Great Britain in the South West. Thus Japan must hold the territory East of Central Siberia, and exert herself to set up an independent State there.³⁷⁷

On 23 January 1918, before the Imperial Diet, Viscount Motono Ichirō, then Foreign Minister and supporter of what would become known as the Siberian Intervention, stated during a speech: "If Japan has a special position in these regions it is clearly due to the immense sacrifices and incalculable efforts which she has made, and it is in consequence of this that she has acquired these rights and interests which have been consecrated by treaties and agreements."³⁷⁸ In this and other such statements, little to no hint of Japanese demands connected with the Siberian situation were evident. On 26 March 1918, Viscount Motono made the following statement:

It is also unnecessary to state that should the condition of affairs in Siberia threaten the safety of Japan or endanger her vital interests, Japan is determined to take prompt measures of self-defense to meet the emergency, even should this country be compelled to take necessary action in Siberia. Not only is there no intention of treating Russia as an enemy, but an aggressive policy of the kind now being pursued by Germany in Russia would never be adopted. Moreover this country will never cease to feel the most profound sympathy for the whole Russian people and to desire to maintain friendly and cordial relations with it.³⁷⁹

To British eyes, due to political and perhaps economic reasons, the Japanese were initially averse to the idea of a joint military operation in Siberia. To outward appearance this attitude later changed, with Japan stating her only desire was to fulfil her duty as part of the alliance, and that the General Staff

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3

³⁷⁸ TNA: CAB 24/64/13, "Memorandum on Japanese Pan-Asiaticism and Siberia", *op. cit.*, p.

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³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10

had dropped its objection to having Allied forces within its own operation. Over time, within the European Allied nations, sentiment grew that Japan should provide the majority of military strength in the intervention and further should hold supreme command.³⁸⁰ The French, English and American Foreign Ministers decided at the Supreme War Council on 3 June 1918 in Versailles to ask the Japanese, were the US to accept an intervention in Siberia, would they intervene according to the following: i) that Japan would respect Russian territorial integrity, ii) would Japan be willing to take no side in regard to internal Russian politics, and iii) would the Japanese advance as far westward as was necessary to confront German forces.³⁸¹

Before sending troops to the Asian mainland, the Japanese agreed in principle to the first two conditions. In a discussion between UK Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour and the Japanese Ambassador on 24 June 1918, Japan's written response was discussed. Within, Japan stated she could not "engage to extend westward the sphere of their military activities beyond the limits of Eastern Siberia in view of the grave difficulties with which such operations will be practically confronted." Within the context of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, Japan thus saw its obligations as extending only to eastern theatres of war.³⁸²

The Japanese Cabinet would on 20 July 1918 agree to a US proposal to send some 7,000 troops.³⁸³ This number was increased on 3 August, by agreement with the Allies, to some 12,500 (the total number of Allied troops being 25,000), Japan retaining command of its forces.³⁸⁴ The US was willing to countenance further Japanese reinforcements in need, and Japan stated 12,000 would be landed in Vladivostok, consultation to be undertaken with the US regarding any posting beyond the city. Japan stated however at this

³⁸⁰ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) CAB 24/67/31, "Memorandum on the Japanese Role in the Intervention in Siberia", Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, 15 October 1918, p. 1

³⁸¹ Kennan, G.F., *Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920: The Decision to Intervene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956) p. 384

³⁸² The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) CAB 24/55/53, "Japanese Intervention in Siberia", draft communication by Mr. Balfour to Sir C. Greene, 24 June 1918, pp. 2-3

³⁸³ TNA: CAB 24/67/31, "Memorandum on the Japanese Role in the Intervention in Siberia", *op. cit.*, p. 2

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

time she reserved the right “to take immediate action should a sudden grave emergency call for such a course.”³⁸⁵ On landing troops, the Japanese Government issued a proclamation stating its desire to promote amicable relations with Russia, and her unwillingness to intrude upon internal politics.³⁸⁶ Furthermore, once the intervention’s objectives had been met (namely the relief of Czech forces and halting Germany’s advance eastward), Japan would “...immediately withdraw all Japanese troops from the Russian territories and will leave wholly unimpaired the sovereignty of Russia in all its phases, whether political or military.”³⁸⁷

Public sentiment in Eastern Siberia had called for Japanese intervention, even were the Western allies not involved. Only in February 1918 was the decision made in Britain to support Semenov’s movement in Siberia. The Japanese however were interested in Semenov’s organisation from the beginning, providing arms and ammunition, even at one time offering a volunteer force to Semenov of some 1,000 men. Such Japanese overtures were meant to be made in secret.³⁸⁸ On 28 February 1918, the Japanese informed the British that arms required by Semenov would be provided in short-time, and further that Japan was prepared to send troops to provide support. The Japanese at this time stated no intention existed to occupy Siberia. Later, Japan’s Western allies sought to stem Semenov’s efforts, due in large part to continuing disagreements between Semenov and Admiral Kolchak, the latter believing the Japanese sought to spread disunity in order to assume a dominant position in the region.³⁸⁹

Viscount Ishii Kikujirō, former Foreign Minister, on 29 September 1917, before a US audience, stated:

The policy of Japan with regard to China has always been the same story: we want good government which keeps peace, security and the development of opportunity in China...At no time in the past, and at no time in the future, did we, or will we, seek to take territory from China

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1-2

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1

or to despoil China of her rights. Not only will we not seek to assail the integrity or sovereignty of China, but we shall eventually be prepared to defend and maintain the same integrity and independence of China against any aggressor.³⁹⁰

From the outset of the intervention, however, Japan's stated intent and known actions of Japanese agents in Siberia were seemingly at odds, and differed markedly from the then stated position vis-à-vis China. For the principal Western allies, including the US, the Siberian intervention was meant to stymie Germany's advance into Russia, along with tying down her troops there and restoring Russian sovereignty. The UK, however, felt Japanese intentions in Siberia were not so objective.³⁹¹

The Japanese had in fact formed a Siberia Planning Committee, a joint organ between the General Staff and the War Ministry, in February 1918. Planning at this early stage included the establishment of a Japanese buffer state extending from the eastern side of Lake Baikal to Vladivostok, and included the opening of two fronts, one to secure the Maritime Territories, the other aimed westward along and utilising the China Eastern Railway.³⁹² Japan thus had never envisioned its own contingent extending westward beyond Chita, and as such did not comply fully with Allied intentions for the intervention.³⁹³ Japan's decision would surprise her allies, as would the scale of its forces that would eventually take part. Rather than sending approximately half of the allied intervention force, meant to total approximately 25,000, Japan would ultimately send some 70,000 troops, each increase in number justified as a reaction to the local situation.³⁹⁴

In Siberia, Japan first sought to secure its position in Eastern Siberia, later turning its attention to Western Siberia. The British would, in time, find

³⁹⁰ TNA: CAB 24/64/13, "Memorandum on Japanese Pan-Asiaticism and Siberia", *op. cit.*, p. 9

³⁹¹ TNA: CAB 24/67/31, "Memorandum on the Japanese Role in the Intervention in Siberia", *op. cit.*, p. 1

³⁹² Harries, M. & S., *op cit.*, pp. 102-103

³⁹³ TNA: CAB 24/67/31, "Memorandum on the Japanese Role in the Intervention in Siberia", *op. cit.*, p. 1

³⁹⁴ Harries, M. & S., *op cit.*, p. 102

that Japan's methodology relied on maintaining a sense of disorder, one memorandum stating:

...part of the Japanese method is to keep things in a ferment and turmoil, and as in conditions of plasticity and fluidity, it is easier to push forward with a definite policy, even following up lines of action that temporarily run counter to her main idea for purposes of deception, and dropping them later as soon as the main purpose is secured.³⁹⁵

In conjunction with the military intervention, an economic relief programme was initiated by the Allies, including guarantees against unscrupulous actions by privateers, to ensure the local population did not fear future Allied economic exploitation of the region. Japan became suspect in this area however, over time reported as "using every effort to secure valuable rights and concessions of all kinds".³⁹⁶ In this, Japanese intentions mirrored what had been suspected of it in China, Sir John Jordan, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to China, stating:

I have endeavoured in a number of recent despatches to convey some idea of the policy and methods of exploitation which have been pursued by Japan in this country during the past year. Misgivings of Japanese Government as to wisdom of that policy synchronise as closely with change of allied fortunes of war as with change in Japanese Cabinet. When result of that policy comes to be reviewed by Allied Governments it will be impossible for the Japanese Government to evade responsibility for deliberate adoption of a policy which has resulted in establishment of a preferential status for Japanese in communications, industries, and commerce of this country, and in continuation of a disastrous civil war, Japan's action in China will be

³⁹⁵ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) CAB 24/75/51, "Memorandum on Japanese Activity in Siberia and Recognition of the Omsk Government", Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, 18 February 1919, pp. 2-3

³⁹⁶ TNA: CAB 24/67/31, "Memorandum on the Japanese Role in the Intervention in Siberia", *op. cit.*, p. 3

found strongly at variance with the aims and principles proclaimed by the Allies.³⁹⁷

British concerns regarding Japanese planning in the Soviet Far East were manifold by late 1918. A telegram from Vladivostok in November 1918 stated:

There is a complete change in Japanese policy which now proposes to leave Siberia but to hold the Manchurian railway with the object of influencing China, whose alliance is sought against the USA...Henceforward Japan will work through her Secret Service to support the Bolsheviks with the object of fomenting riots...The Army and Navy will be increased, and when conditions are favourable, troops will be sent on the pretext of quelling disorder and defending Japanese subjects. They hope thus to annex more of Siberian territory...Their former aggressive attitude is now abandoned and great efforts are being made to conciliate Russia...The Grand Hotel at Harbin, also several flour mills on the Amur and Harbin have been purchased by the Japanese at tremendous premiums. They have also bought several electric stations in Siberian towns, while gold mines on the Amur and Zia are under the control of their troops.³⁹⁸

By mid-1920, Japanese *zaibatsu*, including Suzuki, Mitsubishi and Mitsui, had opened branches in Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Harbin, Nikolaievsk and Chita. 50,000 Japanese settlers accompanied this economic expansion.³⁹⁹

In its attempt to secure its position in Siberia, Japan sought local centres of authority, for example under Dmitri Khorvat (the Russian governor of Harbin) and Semenov, and supported these through Japanese arms and finance.⁴⁰⁰ Reasoning for such a course was the rather plausible inability to form a strong centralised Siberian authority at this stage, and localised centres

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁸ TNA: CAB 24/75/51, "Memorandum on Japanese Activity in Siberia and Recognition of the Omsk Government", *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10

³⁹⁹ Harries, M. & S., *op. cit.*, p. 102

⁴⁰⁰ TNA: CAB 24/75/51, "Memorandum on Japanese Activity in Siberia and Recognition of the Omsk Government", *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7

of stability should be sought, these centres to be amalgamated at a later time.⁴⁰¹ This path would, however, confound any unified Allied stratagem. British intelligence sources solidified British theories, reports from December 1918 onward demonstrating Japan had sent special envoys to key White Russian figures (including Kolchak, Semenov, Khorvat and Kalmykoff) with offers of assistance, but only if one or another condition was met. Kolchak was convinced that the Japan was machinating conditions for its extending its operations in the Far East, stating a communication from one of his Generals advised that the Japanese General, owing to the present conditions, intended on securing all railways and communications between Chita and Manchuria.⁴⁰² Furthermore, the Japanese were thought to be undermining Kolchak's authority. By December 1918 it was thought that no less than twenty-six Japanese officers in the area were attempting to persuade White Russian officers away from Kolchak's cause, and despite official Japanese support for his regime, Kolchak had himself been informed that were he to impede Semenov, the Japanese would support the latter by force. Thus, Japan's stated policy and its intentions and actions were at odds.⁴⁰³

Later, in light of the increasingly difficult situation faced by Allied forces confronting the Bolsheviks in Russia, it was proposed by US President Woodrow Wilson that the Russian factions meet in Prinkipo, Turkey, for discussions. The proposed Prinkipo conference would, however, fail to materialise. Although the Bolsheviks had agreed to attend, anti-Bolshevik forces refused.⁴⁰⁴ Following the failure of Prinkipo, British sources in Vladivostok communicated the following:

In consequence of the Allies' declaration (re. Prinkipo), the Japanese Staff is very busy among the Russian officers spreading the view that the Allies have deserted Russia. They urge the Russians to come to an agreement with Japan under which Japan would guarantee to employ sufficient forces to crush [*sic*] the Bolsheviks throughout Russia in two

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 8

⁴⁰⁴ McFadden, D.W., *Alternative Paths: Soviets and Americans 1917-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) pp. 191-217

months. Japan thereafter would support the restoration of the Monarchy. Nothing definite was said about the terms of the agreement proposed, but considering the previous Japanese efforts to secure control of the railway and telegraph system to the Urals, it is obvious that their military intervention in Russia proper would involve such control. Doubtless there would be other conditions relative to the Chinese Eastern Railway, the position of the Japanese in Siberia and liberty of action in China so far as Russia is concerned.⁴⁰⁵

Admiral Kolchak could verify a number of Russian officers had gone to the front advocating an agreement with the Japanese. Disturbed by these events, Kolchak considered going to the front personally to counter such sympathy.⁴⁰⁶ Kolchak knew of Japan's efforts to undercut his authority, and when he heard his personal friend Admiral Tanpka was travelling to see him, was convinced this was another attempt by the Japanese to contact him after communication between the two had been severed following Kolchak's refusal of Japan's railway proposal. British sources were concerned regarding Kolchak's safety, considering he was surrounded by officers sympathetic to Japanese support in the restoration of the Russian monarchy, those very same certain Kolchak would not come to any agreement with the Japanese. Further, these same sources were certain Kolchak would not be allowed to go to the front.⁴⁰⁷ Kolchak remained convinced that were the Allies to intervene in greater force, Japanese schemes would be frustrated. Such assistance would not however materialise, and ultimately Kolchak would fall.

Japanese Intelligence in Siberia

One important feature of Saigō Takamori's *Shi-gakko* (Private School), used as a model for Japan's patriotic societies (see Chapter 1), was its emphasis on a requisite élite. Throughout Japan's pre-Meiji period, and even during the early years following the Meiji Restoration, ranks were filled with the

⁴⁰⁵ TNA: CAB 24/75/51, "Memorandum on Japanese Activity in Siberia and Recognition of the Omsk Government", *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13

warrior-gentry, but this rapidly became not so important. Leaders of Japan's patriotic societies saw themselves as the élite upon who lay the burden of command, instruction, guidance, cajolery and beguilement of the masses.³²⁸ Additionally, and not unlike any other organisation within Japanese culture, political or otherwise, these societies revolved around a central powerful personality, emulating the ancient master/disciple relationship. Such structure allows for not only indoctrination of one's students, but also a certain plausible deniability on behalf of the leader who may seek anonymity and or misdirect attention from their true intent. As Norman explains:

It frequently happens that the formal head of an organisation is not so important in policy-making as some dynamic personality who makes decisions from "behind the screen." This has been true to a certain extent of the *Genyōsha* where from its early days till the present the most fearful leader in it has been Tōyama Mitsuru, although he has never been named as head of the society.³²⁹

However, organisationally, here lay the precursor for later weakness in Japan's intelligence leadership.

Norman believed leaders of secret societies were for the most part highly qualified and well-educated intelligence officers, if informally so.⁴⁰⁸ These men were both talented and charismatic, and able to amass a great number of willing participants in their informal intelligence gathering operations. The zeal of intelligence operatives was integral in the informal intelligence field, as was strength of personality within its leadership (see Chapter 1). The *Kokuryūkai*, for example, would be the only offshoot of the *Genyōsha* never to voluntarily disband, despite its raison d'être having been effectively accomplished with the curtailment of Russian ambitions in the area following the Russo-Japanese War. Other subsidiary societies would either dissolve or reorganise under similar circumstances. What is apparent is that, in much the same manner that Tōyama had held sway over the *Genyōsha*, so too Uchida, whose greater ideals related to *Dai Ajia Shugi* (Greater Asia) and hence extended beyond solely resistance to Russian influence, held such

⁴⁰⁸ Memorandum "Japanese Secret Societies", 16 January 1946, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*

influence over the *Kokuryūkai* that the society's stated aims later blended with that of its leader, and when the *Kokuryūkai*'s initial purpose had been accomplished it simply adjusted its aim and focus accordingly. Thus, both the *Genyōsha* and the *Kokuryūkai*'s longevity may be attributed to its strong and charismatic leadership, other societies, and indeed organisations, lacking the same.⁴⁰⁹ Post-World War I Imperial Japan, unlike the UK, still did not maintain a departmental nor governmental apparatus aimed at overall strategy, and, likewise, strategic intelligence collection and appraisal. The *genrō* continued in this role.⁴¹⁰ Japan thus continued to rely heavily on a select few.

Throughout the Intervention, the Japanese relied heavily on the secret services, without whom their machinations could not have been hidden for as long as they were. Following its decision to establish an independent buffer state between it and Russia just before the Siberian Intervention, two 2nd Department officers undertook a mission through Siberia, and this followed by another undertaken of the Soviet Maritime Provinces by the Department head personally. Subsequently, 2nd Department intelligence officers were directed to form intelligence networks throughout Manchuria, northern China and Siberia (in the Amur Valley).⁴¹¹

Only by February 1919, following the close of the Great War, were British suspicions of Japan's intentions confirmed, a report from Vladivostok in 1919 stating:

The Japanese Secret Service agents have received instructions to establish friendly relations with the Russian Zemstvo [local governments] in Siberia and they are using Russian agents for this purpose. They are interested in the ideas and financial position of the Zemstvo and in its character and political sympathies, particularly with regard to the Bolshevism of its Chairman. Anticipating a sudden swing to the Left from the present reactionary policy in Siberia, the Japanese are befriending the Socialist element and sometimes appearing as bogus Japanese Revolutionists...The Japanese are interested in the condition

⁴⁰⁹ Sabey, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-187

⁴¹⁰ Kotani, *op. cit.*, p. 138

⁴¹¹ Weland, J., "Misguided Intelligence: Japanese Military Intelligence Officers in the Manchurian Incident, September 1931", *The Journal of Military History* 58 (July 1994) pp. 451-452

of the Vladivostok Fortress, and number of guns, etc. It is certain that this country will be occupied by them. They are instituting enquiries about Nikolaievsk on Amur and are collecting a fleet in anticipation of the opening of navigation on the Amur... While the Japanese are loudly advertising the return of half their troops, they are only returning those men whose service has expired and intend to replace them with recruits to be trained by the men now here. Siberia's position as regards the number of Japanese troops will be the same.⁴¹²

In British eyes, the Japanese had throughout the intervention operated at cross purposes with its allies, continuously raising objections and essentially obstructing the reestablishment of a central Russian authority in Siberia. Against this backdrop, the UK suspected Japanese frustration following Germany's defeat; and with the UK and US no longer counter-posed, Japan was concerned its colonial ambitions in the Far East might come under greater scrutiny, and at worst be compromised.⁴¹³ The UK was further concerned that Japan might now seek greater accommodation with either Germany or Russia toward these ends, and that Japan had already sought to distance itself from its Western allies.⁴¹⁴

The Japanese had for their part long foreseen the need for a full-scale expeditionary force to combat Bolshevik influence coming into Manchuria and the Japanese colony of Korea. Importantly, the need for advanced intelligence groundwork had not been missed, and the General Staff, under the influence of General Tanaka Giichi, had sent its intelligence chief, Major-General Nakajima Masatake, to Vladivostok to establish a spy ring. Nakajima, proficient in Russian and only just returned from a posting to Petrograd, where he had observed Russian war efforts, formed a unit of officers (including Major Ishimitsu Makiyo) to establish ties with right-wing leaders around Vladivostok, Blagoveshchensk and Harbin. Despite intensive efforts up to August 1918, including offers of cash, technical advice and arms

⁴¹² TNA: CAB 24/75/51, "Memorandum on Japanese Activity in Siberia and Recognition of the Omsk Government", *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

(but stopping short of offering troops), along with negotiations with the likes of Semenov, Khorvat and Kolchak, there was little tangible result.⁴¹⁵

In the official history of the Japanese military police in Siberia, an obvious connection exists between the Japanese *gendarmerie* and intelligence duties, but finds this role to be incidental. Rather, the predominance of intelligence (*chōhō*) activities in Siberia were undertaken by special service units (*tokumu kikan*) involving officers that resided in Siberia and the Soviet Far East, and were thus well acquainted with local conditions. Japan already maintained an intelligence apparatus with specialists in Harbin and Vladivostok, but these were primarily concerned with the governance of Korea, and investigated insurrectionists and disgruntled ethnic Koreans.⁴¹⁶ The Korean population of Manchuria was predominantly made up of political refugees and their descendants who had previously fled Korea on Japanese annexation in August 1910, and again following the failure of the Korean National Independence Movement of 1918-1920. Despite their desire to be outside Japanese jurisdiction, the Japanese had declared them subjects nonetheless and maintained extraterritorial jurisdiction in order to “protect” them from the authorities under which they now lived.⁴¹⁷

Two months before the Allied agreement on the expeditionary force to be sent to Vladivostok, Major-General Yui Mitsue, Chief of Staff and a former military attaché to the UK, sent instructions to the then deputy commander of the *gendarmerie* unit in that city, Major Fujiwara. In this, intelligence and its importance is made clear, with investigation to be made of communications, bandits, raw material distribution, matters of operational importance, and tellingly, Allied movements. The *tokumu kikan* for their part were to investigate the political situation and conditions of the people. Nish accurately recognises that the intelligence duties of the military police were thus very broad, and covered intelligence targets including anti-Japanese

⁴¹⁵ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, pp. 139-40

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-1

⁴¹⁷ “Background and Modern History”, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 2

Koreans, the Bolsheviks, and further Japan's allies. Additionally, intelligence activities covered the operational, political and economic spheres.⁴¹⁸

At this juncture, Japan's efforts at mainland territorial expansion using Kolchak and Semenov would be thwarted, Kolchak perishing in 1920, and Semenov's unstable government disintegrating in 1922. One aspect made evident through Japan's intelligence activities throughout the Siberian Intervention is the rudimentary model from which Japan's later intelligence structure, in terms of jurisdiction and delineation of duties (intelligence versus counterintelligence), would be based. In Western military thought, military police by definition have a strong focus on counter-intelligence, but for the Japanese their primary focus would be on law and order, counter-intelligence duties being of an integral, but nevertheless secondary, role. Furthermore, the newly-formed *tokumu kikan* continued to rely on a select if talented few, at least knowledgeable in local conditions (in line with both formal and informal elements of Japanese Intelligence so far), but for their part would focus primarily on the political sphere of operations. These efforts would be important to Japan's later efforts in establishing sympathetic puppet regimes throughout mainland Asia (to be examined in Chapters 3, 6, 7 and 8).

⁴¹⁸ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 141

4 Japanese machinations in post-revolution China

Following the revolution in China, General Yamagata Aritomo attempted to send two divisions to Manchuria, but the Saionji Cabinet circumvented this plan. Political support for the military's machinations in China was at this time lacking, and the IJA (as a whole) was not yet ready for its part to act completely independently in the political realm in China.⁴¹⁹ There are, however, exceptions. Employment of civilians as intelligence agents, particularly those involved in Japan's patriotic societies, would continue through the first attempts to secure Manchurian independence in 1912 and 1916. In both instances the General Staff's 2nd Department, in order to protect South Manchurian Railway and Kwantung Leased Territory interests, would provide officer and materiel support, at least initially, to patriotic Japanese agents, including Naniwa, in their efforts to have Manchuria secede from China.⁴²⁰ Sugano Nagatomo, thought to have aided Sun Yat-sen during the revolution between 1911 and 1915, would do so alongside Tōyama Mitsuru, Miyazaki Tōten and Inukai Tsuyoshi.⁴²¹ Notably, in 1912, the General Staff would not advise the Japanese Cabinet of its machinations in advance.⁴²² Thus, IJA political (intelligence) operations were in play as early as this, although undertaken as informal intelligence activities and through informal networks, rather than as stand-alone military political operations.

Japanese advisors had been posted to China as early as 1901, when Major Tachibana Shōichirō was sent at the request of Yuan Shi-kai to aid in the training of his army. By the time of the Russo-Japanese War, some twenty Japanese officers, wearing Chinese garb and sporting pigtails, were serving Yuan, while others were attached to other regional commands in central China and as far as Szechuan.⁴²³ By 1912 there were twenty-five foreign advisors in China, attached to the government in Beijing, six of whom

⁴¹⁹ Harries, M. & S., *op cit.*, p. 94

⁴²⁰ Weland, *op. cit.*, pp. 450-451

⁴²¹ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 208/3916, S.E.A.T.I.C., 24 August 1946, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 17

⁴²² Weland, *op. cit.*, pp. 450-451

⁴²³ McCormack, G., *Chang Tso-lin in Northeast China, 1911-1928: China, Japan, and the Manchurian Idea* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977) p. 120

were Japanese. Two of these were senior in rank.⁴²⁴ By 1913, official Japanese policy would favour Yuan Shih-kai over Sun Yat-sen. Sun's republican vision was capable of either developing a strong, united China or provoking intervention by Western powers; both probabilities distasteful to Japan and its interests. Yuan Shih-kai would, however, defeat Sun's *Kuomintang* in 1913, and subsequently disbanded the parliamentary system then in place in China. The strengthening of Yuan's regime would to an extent swing the Japanese pendulum of support back in the other direction, with the IJA even aiding some of Sun's allies to flee.⁴²⁵

As early as August 1914, Motojirō Akashi (by this time Deputy-Chief of the General Staff) had sought a solution for all "pending questions" regarding China, the military demanding Japan take over the lease of Shantung, and its leases secured over Manchuria following the Russo-Japanese War extended to ninety-nine years.⁴²⁶ Following the resignation of Katō Takaaki in August 1915, Cabinet posts of the Ōkuma Shigenobu government were filled by *Kokumintō* politicians; the political party formed by Inukai Tsuyoshi, these having developed ties with the *Tairiku Rōnin* during their time in opposition during the 1900s and having subsequently come under their influence.⁴²⁷

Around this time, the General Staff saw a change of guard and began to seek a more positive China policy, led by Uehara Yūsaku and Tanaka Giichi; Uehara becoming Chief of the General Staff in December 1916; Tanaka, Vice Chief some time earlier in October 1915. At the time of a strengthened and rejuvenated General Staff, both War Minister Oka and Yamagata Aritomo were ill, and Terauchi Masatake, who would oppose Ōkuma's anti-Yuan Shi-kai policy, was unable to act due to his acting as Governor-General in Korea. The General Staff were thus in a position now to affect Japan's China policy.⁴²⁸

Tanaka had in the past been willing to distort information to suit a political stratagem. During the Russo-Japanese War Tanaka had purposely

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁵ Harries, M. & S., *op cit.*, p. 94

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95

⁴²⁷ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 352

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 352-353

distorted the number of trains available to the Russians, and thus the number of troops that could be transported to the front (see Chapter 2). As such, and as had occurred also in the First Sino-Japanese War, information delivered by agents in the field was “politicised” by Japanese senior officers to suit particular aims.⁴²⁹ This readiness to subvert the objective norms of the intelligence field would continue, and Tanaka would not abandon his proven *modus operandi*.

On behalf of the General Staff, Tanaka would provide an outline of the military’s proposals to solve the China situation to Army Minister Oka Ichinosuke. These subjective proposals were largely incorporated into the Ōkuma government’s controversial “Twenty-One Demands” later put to China in 1915. Within these demands, China would be required to employ Japanese advisors, these being able to effect control over China’s police and finance.⁴³⁰ For his part, Ōkuma was known to be an advocate of ‘Pan-Asianism’, and beholden to Tōyama Mitsuru, leader of the *Shina-rōnin* (China *rōnin*, or masterless samurai), who had long advocated Japanese military action on the Asian continent.⁴³¹

China would unwillingly accept these demands, but following (ultimately successful) moves by Yuan Shi-kai to install himself as the new Chinese Emperor, Tokyo would need to reassess the situation in China. The then military attaché in Beijing, Machida Keiū, advised Tokyo that Yuan required Japanese support, and Japan might in return demand some benefit.⁴³² Uchida Ryōhei, however, argued that Yuan was adept at using foreign threat (real or perceived) as a political expedient, and would be able to unite local opposition using this ploy. Uchida thus called for surreptitious support of the anti-Yuan movement. Machida’s plan received support from Tanaka, while Uchida’s received support from former *Kokumintō* politicians.⁴³³ In the end, a

⁴²⁹ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 135

⁴³⁰ Nish, I., *Japanese Foreign Policy, 1869-1942: Kasumigaseki to Miyakezaka* (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977) pp. 98-99

⁴³¹ Everest-Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 682

⁴³² Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 353

⁴³³ *Ibid.*

compromise was reached, calling for a postponement of Yuan's plan in the interests of "peace and order in the Far East".⁴³⁴

In Beijing Banzai Richachirō, a long-time associate of Yuan, was with Tanaka trying to persuade Yuan to seek Japanese support, tying Chinese-Japanese cooperation to a united front against Western interference.⁴³⁵ When Yunnan declared independence and its intention to undertake military action against Yuan, he decided to hasten his inauguration, which would now occur in February 1916. Japan changed its policy rapidly, Tanaka cancelling Banzai's mission 17 January. Despite continued *prima facie* support for Yuan, Tanaka urged War Minister Oka to gain Cabinet agreement on removing Yuan as early as 1 February 1916. Aoki Norizumi, now a Lieutenant General, was assigned to the General Staff and posted to Shanghai, where it was thought a compromise would be sought were the conflict between north and south China to come to a stalemate.⁴³⁶ Aoki was to ensure that were a compromise reached, it would be of benefit to Japan. Following a ceasefire on 31 March, the terms of a compromise remained uncertain, and Tanaka urged the anti-Yuan parties to unite and call for his removal.⁴³⁷ Japanese anti-Yuan policy, through the General Staff, would ultimately lead to support for two uprisings, one under Sun Yat-sen, and financial support for the Yunnan army.⁴³⁸

In the northeastern provinces, the General Staff first sought to combine the Manchu restorationists and the Mongols, both being opposed to the rise of Yuan, but for differing reasons. The *Tairiku Rōnin*, including Kawashima Naniwa, had formulated this idea.⁴³⁹ However, the General Staff would usurp command, sending Koiso Kuniaki⁴⁴⁰ and Doi Ichinoshin, who had served previously in Beijing and had been involved in espionage in Manchuria before the Russo-Japanese War. The former consul, Morita

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 354-357

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 357

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 357-358

⁴⁴⁰ Head of the China Section (1915-1917), who would later become Vice Minister of War (1932), Chief of the Kwantung Army General Staff (1932-1934), Commander of the Korea Army (1935-1938), Governor of Korea (1942-1944), and ultimately Prime Minister of Japan (1944-1945) - *Ibid.*, p. 349

Kanzō, was also sent to inform the Japanese authorities there that uprisings were to be dealt with a light hand if they were in opposition to Yuan.⁴⁴¹

Japan's second plan in Manchuria was to aid Chang Tso-lin, the prominent Chinese warlord, either through a declaration of independence or in direct opposition to Yuan. In doing so, it was thought Japanese interests in Manchuria could best be protected. The Foreign Ministry, due to its likely being less disturbing, preferred a declaration of independence and Tanaka supported this position. Doi was directed to postpone his plans, and Kwantung Army Chief of Staff Nishikawa Torajirō was ordered to persuade Chang to declare independence. Both the Foreign Ministry and Tanaka were, however, concerned that due to Chang's former close association with Yuan, any direct approach to Chang might be used by Yuan as proof of external threat. In time, Japan would also come to realise Chang had no sympathy for the movement in the south, and as such would have to tread carefully in their dealings with him.⁴⁴² The General Staff's initial plan regarding uprisings would also be halted, however. Major Isogawa Tatsuzō advised Uehara that were Japan to assist the restorationists, this would bode badly in the south. Additionally, were the uprisings in the north to be suppressed, Japan's prestige would be damaged. In the end, both of Japan's plans would falter.⁴⁴³

Following the death of Yuan Shih-kai in June 1916, China would descend into a period of warlordism. The IJA had by this time already demonstrated its willingness to operate on the mainland, both in terms of intelligence and political operations, through its sponsoring of the efforts to prevent a new imperial dynasty in China under Yuan.⁴⁴⁴ The normally arbitrary decisions made by the military were not occurring at this time. Rather, there was concerted coordination between Japan's apparatus, including its China specialists. Machinations of the time were led by the General Staff and its intelligence capabilities; the Foreign Ministry and Cabinet lacking sufficiently strong leadership to provide an alternative. Decisions were, furthermore, made at the upper echelon, namely Tanaka,

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 358

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 359

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁴ Humphreys, *op cit.*, p. 23

using information delivered by officers in the field.⁴⁴⁵ Kitaoka seems to highlight this (although it is difficult to gauge whether this is in a positive or negative light), stating “...decision making in this case was top-down in appearance, but bottom-up in substance”, drawing attention to the advice received by Tanaka from the likes of Nishikawa and Banzai.⁴⁴⁶ Within the realm of intelligence (setting aside for the moment that political decisions were now being made by a “former” military -- and in particular intelligence - officer) this appears to be what should always be, a cognisant upper echelon informed by equally well-informed field experts.

In relation to policy arguments put forth by these specialists, however, these were many and varied. Japan had intelligence officers connected with all of its intrigues; Banzai in Beijing, Nishikawa in Lushun, Yamagata Hatsuo in Yunnan, and all had been successful in ingratiating themselves with their objective and respective personages. What this meant in time, however, was that each sought to convince the General Staff of the merits of their own enterprise, even to the point of acting sympathetically with their respective Chinese causes. Such plethora ideas regarding what was to be done in China would complicate Japanese planning later in China and Manchuria.⁴⁴⁷

As China descended into warlordism following Yuan’s Shi-kai’s death, the IJA sought greater participation in the China question, even in opposition to government and Foreign Ministry policy.⁴⁴⁸ With China divided into various fiefdoms, Japanese advisors were welcomed, and due to the military frame of mind in place, growing “diplomatic” ties with the IJA were welcomed.⁴⁴⁹ The growing importance of the army in Sino-Japanese relations became apparent with Tanaka Giichi’s visit to China in 1917, where he spoke with all of the relevant warlords and politicians, including Sun Yat-sen.⁴⁵⁰ By 1918, the IJA had twenty years experience on the Asian mainland, with

⁴⁴⁵ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 359

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 359

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 360

⁴⁴⁸ Humphreys, *op cit.*, p. 23

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24

garrisons in Tianjin, Beijing, and Manchuria (the future Kwantung Army), and a two-division strength Chōsen Army in Korea.⁴⁵¹

The influence of the IJA was, of course, not simply limited to troop numbers, but rather to its now extensive intelligence network throughout China. Japanese attachés overseas continued to receive budgets to engage in espionage activities, including sabotage and the employment of agents.⁴⁵² The activities of Colonel Akashi Motojirō were by now legendary in military circles, particularly those of the army, and these activities would be emulated in the inter-war period by his successors across Europe. In this, they were aided by the employment of former Tsarist officers and contact with White Russian exiles and other dissident minority groups.⁴⁵³

The first military attaché had been sent to China by Japan in 1880, and tenure within the post was substantially longer than at the China Section in Tokyo (Aoki Nobuzumi, for instance, served in the role four times, for a total of twelve years). Assistant military attachés were also put in place in 1916. Banzai Richachirō, Japan's greatest China expert, served as either a semi-official or official attaché throughout the period 1911 to 1927. Importantly, until 1918 the role of military attaché in China was held predominantly by China experts (Machida the exception), all working in cohesion with Banzai. China policy was discussed between the attaché, Banzai, the Chief of the General Staff, the Vice Chief of the General Staff, and the head of the 2nd Department.⁴⁵⁴ Both Banzai and Aoki had actually developed their own "Residences". Although not formally military in nature, given their establishment and oversight by military officers, they could not be seen as completely separate either. These organs were involved in diplomatic negotiations with Chinese military authorities, but were also primary intelligence-gathering institutions. Although the Japanese government, through the Foreign Ministry, was responsible for negotiating with Beijing, due to the primary actors within the Chinese government being warlords, these "Residences" would undertake initial negotiations. In instances of

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵² Chapman, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 147

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-8

⁴⁵⁴ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, pp. 344-347

military agreements, the Foreign Ministry would take no part whatsoever. This is what is referred to as Japan's two-tiered, or dual, diplomacy.⁴⁵⁵ The combined IJA presence in Japan, including advisors to China's warlords, resident military officers in major cities, military attachés and assistant military attachés, and respective headquarters (all with their own intelligence-gathering capabilities), meant the IJA now controlled the largest of Japan's intelligence networks in China, aided further by the existence of the informal networks already in place under Japan's patriotic societies.⁴⁵⁶

It should be noted that although certainly competent, officers involved were nevertheless undertaking an intelligence role as only an, if important, part of their normal duties. Although obviously intelligent, requisite to their having risen to their positions, the intelligence structure remained heavily reliant on talented individuals rather than on a regimented training regime. As Ōkuma Shigenobu had said in 1913, what was required at the time in East Asia was "Western money and Japanese brains". Japan recognised the need for intelligence, but remained uncertain as to how best install a viable and efficient intelligence system. Nish states:

[Japan's] intelligence officers were not senior wranglers or members of Mensa. They were on the whole simply men, who had been brought through the Japanese education system, War College and Staff College. They were practicing the arts of military...intelligence: acute observation, information-gathering, reporting and information processing.⁴⁵⁷

Although the 2nd Department's officers had received considerable experience in political manoeuvring and operations during the 1910s, initially these officers had been responsible only for information collection and reporting. Through their Manchurian experience, and up to the Siberian Intervention, the military now sought active organisation of political dissidents in mainland Asia toward the aim of political takeover. This would be evident in large part

⁴⁵⁵ Fogel, *op. cit.*, p. 115

⁴⁵⁶ Humphreys, *op cit.*, p. 24

⁴⁵⁷ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 142

during the following decade. Nevertheless, the 2nd Department was hampered by the lack of an institutionalised and professional structure for information-gathering and intelligence in general, being heavily reliant on civilian agents.⁴⁵⁸

The development of Japan's China Section, its specialists and plans

Japan, despite official policy to maintain the status quo in Asia, had been heavily involved in the politics of Asia through interested private parties, particularly within military intelligence. Although nominally unofficial, these men were not so far removed from Japan's leaders, including Colonel (later General) Aoki Nobuzumi, military attaché in Beijing, active before and during the Russo-Japanese war; Colonel (later General) Banzai Richachirō, a former military advisor to Yuan Shih-kai and founder of the "Banzai Mansion", an intelligence training establishment for Japanese in China operating on a semi-official basis; and finally Colonel (later General) Doihara Kenji, a pupil and associate of Banzai, who would come to specialise in Manchuria.⁴⁵⁹ Doihara had been deeply involved with the *Anfu* (Peace and Happiness) Club, the political wing of the Anhui Clique of Duan Qirui in Beijing, a movement so powerful it controlled much of the Chinese government.⁴⁶⁰ Rumours would in time arise that various members of *Anfu* had sold concessions in Manchuria to the Japanese without governmental consent or knowledge.⁴⁶¹ When riots began, organised in secret by Doihara, the latter provided sanctuary in the Japanese embassy for the Chinese president, who became beholden to both Doihara and Honjō Shigeru.⁴⁶²

Japan had in China, under the administration of Masatake Terauchi, supported the powerful Chinese warlord Duan Qirui up to 1920. At this time, however, the Hara Cabinet came to power, under the aegis of the *genrō* General Aritomo Yamagata; Hara announcing that Japan would not intervene

⁴⁵⁸ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 451

⁴⁵⁹ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 136

⁴⁶⁰ Seth, R., *op. cit.*, *Encyclopedia of Espionage*, p. 165

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*

in Chinese affairs in line with the Western powers.⁴⁶³ The Hara Cabinet, notably Japan's first "party" government and led by a commoner, thereafter aligned itself with then Chinese President Xu Shi-cha and sought negotiation between the northern and southern governments of China, even embargoing financial aid and weapons shipments to China. These embargoes were however only put in place due to pressure from Western governments, and surreptitious support of Duan continued in order to avoid upsetting pro-Japan sympathisers in the north.⁴⁶⁴

Following the military downfall of Duan in the Zhili-Anhui War of 1920, Chang Tso-lin was seen as a credible replacement within both Japan's political and military circles. The change in Japan's China policy was however slow. Following the Anhui-Chihli War, Japanese officials hurriedly forwarded analyses of past China policy and future recommendations to Tokyo but these remained biased. The same officials had had deep ties with the faction previously supported by Japan.⁴⁶⁵ The military attaché in Beijing, Major General Higashi Otohiko, blamed Duan's fall on the Hara Cabinet's neutrality.⁴⁶⁶ Banzai Richachirō blamed China's difficult position on Japan's China policy shortfalls, namely a reliance on intrigue, and called for Sino-Japanese cooperation.⁴⁶⁷

A coherent China policy from Japan's numerous China experts would be difficult to achieve. The first four heads of the IJA's 2nd Department, up to 1917, had at least some experience in, or of, China, but were nevertheless generalists. Matsuishi Yasuharu, bureau chief from 1908 to 1909, is attributed with the creation of Japan's initial intelligence system on China.⁴⁶⁸ Utsunomiya Tarō, bureau chief from 1909 to 1914, had been sent to China in 1899 by Kawakami Sōroku to persuade Chinese leaders to cooperate with Japan in countering Western advances.⁴⁶⁹ Fukuda Masatarō, head from 1914-1916, had formerly been chief of what would become the Kwantung Army

⁴⁶³ Young, J.W., "The Hara Cabinet and Chang Tso-lin, 1920-1", *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 27, No.2 (Summer, 1972) p. 125

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 128

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129

⁴⁶⁸ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 336

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

staff in Manchuria, there having observed Japan's diplomatic negotiations with China. And finally, Machida Keiū, head from 1916-1917, had formerly been military attaché attached to the Beijing legation, and witness to the negotiations regarding Japan's "Twenty-One Demands". All four were notably connected with Uehara Yūsaku, Chief of the IJA General Staff, and later with Tanaka Giichi.⁴⁷⁰

Up to 1917, the Second Bureau was of use as an important source of Japanese policy as it related to China, and appointment as head of the IJA's Intelligence Department meant that one might influence Japan's policy in China.⁴⁷¹ After 1917, it was difficult to have a China expert rise to become head of the 2nd Department without the support of a powerful figure from within the IJA. These officers were, however, China policy decision-makers, and as such a China specialist as head of the 2nd Department was deemed not so important.⁴⁷² In relation to the China Section of the 2nd Department, Honjō Shigeru, head of the section between 1918 and 1919, unlike most of his predecessors, was involved in China immediately following his graduation from the War College.⁴⁷³ Only Banzai Richachirō (class of 1906) and Matsui Iwane (class of 1907) had similar experience formerly.⁴⁷⁴

The rise of party politics under the Hara Cabinet would not, despite outward appearances, soften Japanese intentions in China. Hara wrote in his diary on 29 September 1917:

It is only in diplomatic language that we [Japanese] hold that China must become a unified country; that she must advance her civilisation, become economically wealthy and militarily strong, etc. Although it is not to be publicised at home, let alone abroad, from the point of view of our national interest it is of no account whether China actually becomes civilised, rich or strong. In view of the Chinese national character, it is extremely dubious whether she would adopt a friendly attitude toward our country, were she actually to become rich and strong. In any case,

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 336-337

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 337

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 338-339

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 342

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

even if that happens, it will not occur within the next few decades. Therefore, although we must naturally maintain an outwardly diplomatic attitude toward China, it is absolutely necessary that we have no illusions [with respect to our national interests].... We should advise the Chinese to unify their country, but if they fail, it is of no matter to us. The point is that we should avoid antagonising them, and causing them to have ill feeling toward us. If the Chinese [political] factions have some disagreement among themselves, from our point of view that is not only harmless, but it is even advantageous. We should strive to take advantage of [such disagreements] and to profit from them. It is in this respect that the Ōkuma Cabinet failed; instigating the southern faction while it simultaneously aided the northern faction, it caused strife among the Chinese, with the final result that both the Chinese and the powers were extremely hostile toward Japan. In the future, we must be very cautious, and must maintain a clear distinction between the outward handling of [foreign] affairs and the actual decisions on policy.⁴⁷⁵

Major General Minami Jirō, commander of the North China Garrison Army (established following the Boxer Rebellion of 1899-1901), and Japan's ranking officer in China, stressed the importance of Sino-Japanese cooperation in order to combat Western influence, but could offer no solution to improving pro-Japanese sentiment in the Chinese population. Minami called for support of Chang Tso-lin, realising the potential of Japanese support for the latter, who had increased his fighting capacity in China (both in terms of numbers and quality) after having acquired superior Japanese weaponry.⁴⁷⁶

Chang, for his part, initially sought to convince the Japanese he would not betray them, issuing orders to his forces in north China to maintain cordial relations with Japanese forces there, even calling on Major General Kishi Yajirō of the Kwantung Army's Intelligence Section to assure him all provincial authorities had been informed they were to be pro-Japanese, and that anti-Japanese sentiment would not be tolerated north of the Yangtze River. Following Japan's invasion of Chientao province in October 1920, and

⁴⁷⁵ Young, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130

in response to defeated Anhui leaders being granted asylum in the Japanese Legation in Beijing, Chang protested to Consul-General Akatsuka Shōsuke, asserting this undermined Japan's stated neutrality, and further jeopardised future cooperation between Chang and Japan. In response, Akatsuka stated this was merely diplomatic custom, and Japan would aid Chang and his compatriots in similar circumstances.⁴⁷⁷ Akatsuka further stated that the Canton government and Western powers had found common ground in opposing Duan, and that this would likely continue against Chang. As such, cooperation with Japan would be in his best interests. In autumn 1920 Japan sent Major General Satō Yasunosuke, a long-term acquaintance of Chang's, to Fengtien. Satō was to assess Chang's intentions and usefulness to Japan, and reported that although Chang appeared genuine in seeking Sino-Japanese cooperation, this was ultimately toward extending his own power into southern China. Satō did, however, elaborate, stating he did not believe Chang would be able to accomplish what Yuan Shih-kai could not.⁴⁷⁸ The Hara Cabinet would nevertheless decide to actively support Chang, seeing him as able to best secure Japanese rights and privileges in Manchuria.

Nagao Hanpei, a railway official in Harbin and Japanese representative on the international commission managing Russian rail lines from the beginning of the Siberian Intervention, was instrumental in rebutting initial discord at supporting Chang. Nagao saw that Japan's China policy and its use of proxies was ineffectual in the face of growing nationalism in China, but that this nationalism was also directed at imperialism. Were Japan to retain a policy of neutrality, a passive strategy, Chinese nationalism would continue to grow. Allowing that Japanese intervention in China could provoke Western powers; Japan could present its strategy as the only one capable of negating Bolshevism, of obvious concern to both the UK and US. Nagao concluded his advice with:

In brief, I propose that Japan announce publicly and straightforwardly that she is going to assist Chang Tso-lin to exterminate the enemy of all humanity [i.e., Bolshevism]. Thus, we could secure the cooperation of

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 132

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133

the Western powers. This is an opportunity that will never come again, and there will be no other more suitable figure than Chang Tso-lin, whose objectives [as we define them] are clearly attainable. But if Japan should later take a last-minute noncommittal attitude toward Chang, the last Chinese general who is publicly pro-Japanese, as she did with Generals Horvath and Semenov, the northern and southern factions in China, Tuan Ch'i-jui and others, then Chang will also fail.... Japan will only earn the ill-feeling of both sides and will lose prestige in the eyes of the world, as well as her established interests in Manchuria and Mongolia.... In assisting General Chang Tso-lin we have everything to gain and nothing to lose.⁴⁷⁹

By spring 1921 the Hara Cabinet was re-examining its China policy. Changes in the political situation in Russia complicated the government's political situation throughout the region; with Japanese troops still based in Vladivostok, were Japan's allies to recognise the Bolshevik government these would need to be withdrawn. Furthermore, War Minister Tanaka was now ill, with Chief of Staff Uehara vehemently opposing any withdrawal from Siberia, claiming this an infringement of "the prerogative of supreme command" installed by Yamagata in 1900 to ensure the military's autonomy within the Japanese state and its ability to perform its own diplomacy. Tanaka was the bridge between all parties, and thus was Hara heavily reliant on him continuing in his role. Tanaka would ultimately agree to retain his role until the General Staff acquiesced to the evacuation of Siberia.⁴⁸⁰

In its subsequent policy of May 1921, Japan, firstly, called for informal discussions with the Bolshevik government to guarantee its interests in Korea and Manchuria, and to evacuate its troops from northern Manchuria and Vladivostok. Secondly, Japan would turn over the Shantung Railway to Chinese authorities as an entry-point to further satisfaction of the Shantung question. Finally, Japan declared its desire to establish its power in Manchuria and Mongolia, as this territory was integral to Japan's economic and military interests, and Japan's position there had already been recognised

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-136

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137

by China, the UK, the US and Russia.⁴⁸¹ This would include non-provocation of Chinese nationalism and support of the “open door” policy, in so far as this did not threaten Japanese’ interests.⁴⁸²

In Korea, from 1919 either a civilian or an officer would hold the role of Governor-General, while the commander of the Kwantung Army would now come under direction of the General Staff, not the Governor-General. The Kwantung Army had thus lost influence, and its size dropped to its lowest level through the mid- and late-1920s.⁴⁸³ The situation for both Chang and the Japanese in the northeastern provinces during the early 1920s was further complicated by the fact that Japanese operations could at any one time be directed by either the Japanese Foreign Ministry consuls stationed there, the Kwantung Army, the Governor of Korea, occasionally the Administrator of Kwantung province, or even by those Japanese officers stationed with Chang Tso-lin as advisors. Within, and between, these various groups, the line from Tokyo was often far from clear.⁴⁸⁴ Advisors connected to Chang were, perhaps of necessity, most vocal in their support of him. Many would operate as key officers within Chang’s command, in effect as senior staff officers. This was especially so in the case of officers who had previously spent some time in Mukden, these officers tying their career advancement to Chang’s success.⁴⁸⁵

Other non-official lines of communication also existed between Japanese commercial concerns and Chang, including, most importantly, the South Manchurian Railway, using its semi-governmental status. Matsuoka Yōsuke, during his time with the *Tetsudō* (1921-1926), would be involved with Chang on matters of some importance. Etō Toyōji, a Mitsui man who managed the Mukden office from 1913, developed a long-term relationship with Chang, and through his connections with Japanese business and political leaders later operated as middleman in negotiations between Chang and Tanaka Giichi’s *Seiyūkai* party government later in 1927-1928.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 138

⁴⁸³ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, pp. 349-350

⁴⁸⁴ McCormack, *op. cit.*, p. 120

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 124

During the Fengtien-Chihli War, Chang Tso-lin requested arms and munitions as the conflict with Wu Pei-fu, another of China's prominent warlords, intensified. In Tokyo, Banzai and Minister Obata in 1922 sought to hedge Japan's bets, noting Wu had not always been anti-Japanese, while military attaché Higashi sided with the Kwantung Army.⁴⁸⁷ The Kwantung Army supported Japanese assistance to Chang, while the Foreign Minister, Uchida Yasuya, rejected the idea. Japan ultimately did not interfere during the First Fengtien-Chihli War of April-June 1922. During the Second Fengtien-Chihli War of September-October 1924, Hayashi and Minister Yoshizawa Kenkichi sought to manipulate both sides, offering assistance to both, but despite predominant support from within the Katō Takaaki Cabinet and the support of the Kwantung Army, Foreign Minister Shidehara circumvented the government's decision to intervene. The Japanese army would however intervene surreptitiously, with the approval of War Minister Ugaki and Chief of the General Staff Uehara, whereby several officers persuaded one of Wu's subordinates to rebel, leading to a Chang Tso-lin victory. Finally, during the Kuo Sung-lin incident of November-December 1925⁴⁸⁸, the Kwantung Army openly intervened, having stretched its orders and mandate in order to do so. The Kwantung Army's warning delivered to both sides regarding the retention of order in Manchuria led to disquiet in Beijing and subsequent criticism from Yoshizawa. Suzuki Teiichi, operating under then attaché Honjō, actually sympathised with Chang's aggressor. Without this intervention, however, Chang would likely have been defeated.⁴⁸⁹

This demonstrates a growing of the military's influence over Japan's China policy, and a growing distance between its own policy and that of the Foreign Ministry. However, Kitaoka argues that during the First Fengtien-Chihli conflict Chang's position in Manchuria was not threatened, nor was Japan's position there.⁴⁹⁰ Further, neither Chang nor Wu could necessarily be

⁴⁸⁷ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, pp. 361-362

⁴⁸⁸ Kuo Sung-lin, a commander of the Fengtian clique, mutinied against Chang Tso-Lin – Li, C., Ingalls, J., & Teng, S., *The Political History of China, 1840-1928* (Princeton, N.J., D. Van Nostrand Co., 1956) pp. 490-491

⁴⁸⁹ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, pp. 361-362

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 361

relied upon to establish in Beijing a pro-Japanese government, as was Japan's desire at the time. Wu, however, was in a better position during the Second Fengtien-Chihli conflict to threaten Japan's interests in Manchuria, and Chang was in very real danger of defeat.⁴⁹¹ Kitaoka argues that rather than the interventionists becoming stronger, rather the situation on the ground meant more were willing to intervene.⁴⁹² This seems however one and the same, the idea of intervention becoming more amenable due to circumstances on the ground meant the interventionist cause by definition had become stronger. Any difference in interpretation appears mute.

As such, and despite the commencement of a more cooperative and multilateral China Policy emanating from Tokyo in the 1920s, Japanese advisors in China had continued their operations without noticeable change, the inherent danger of this state of affairs only known to Tokyo in 1922. Nevertheless, Tokyo refrained from withdrawing these men, and these officers had ultimately influenced the second Fengtien-Chihli War that year. Due to the Japanese military's involvement, allegations of Japanese political interference in Chinese affairs abounded. The subjectivity of these Japanese advisors was demonstrably incompatible with the impartiality promulgated by the Foreign Ministry, and the situation caused some embarrassment and consternation in Tokyo. Nevertheless, the system was allowed to continue through the mid-1920s, Japan's advisors receiving at best minimal direction to seek instruction from and act in accordance with the wishes of the Foreign Ministry in their own negotiations. In 1924, with the onset of the second Fengtien-Chihli war, Chang was aided by Colonel Honjō Shigeru, Machino Takema, and Kishi Yajirō; Kishi, not actually an advisor, but as the Kwantung Army's Special Service agent in Mukden, acted in close cooperation.⁴⁹³ Furthermore, General Shirakawa Yoshinori, of the Kwantung Army, had been involved. Shirakawa's arbitrary actions in aid of Chang would become a precedent for the *Kantōgun*'s acting on its own. Shirakawa was not

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 362

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*

⁴⁹³ McCormack, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123

remonstrated by Tokyo, and was, in fact, appointed War Minister under the Tanaka Giichi Cabinet, formed in 1927.⁴⁹⁴

In August and September 1924, Major General Kikuchi Takeo and Colonel Matsui Nanao replaced Kishi and Honjō. The role of Japan's advisors was expressed succinctly in the instructions carried by Matsui on his posting:

During the period of your secondment you are to facilitate the mutual cooperation of Japanese and Chinese armies in the event of emergency by influencing the military-related installations of Fengtien province to be modeled on those of the [Japanese] Empire.

To fulfill your duties you will need to act as liaison with the Headquarters of the Kwantung and Korean armies, and with the Imperial [Japanese] military officials in Mukden, Harbin, etc., and of course to maintain close contact with officers serving in the Three Eastern Provinces.

You must strive to provide intelligence information to this Department as far as is possible and without obstruction about military matters, internal affairs, communications, financial and economic matters, geographical resources, and the influence of powers in Fengtien province.⁴⁹⁵

The fact that the Japanese government knew of the apparent disparity of roles between its advisors and its non-interference policy, but effectively did nothing, is telling, namely in that the system was so advantageous to Japan that nothing needed to be done. From an intelligence point of view, this was especially so. Unlike other foreign advisors of Chang, Japanese officers maintained a dual responsibility to both serve and advise Chang, but, furthermore, and, most importantly, to inform their own Headquarters and Tokyo.⁴⁹⁶ Tokyo was thus able to gather a great deal of information on Manchuria, all while actively aiding its “man” in Manchuria, while not

⁴⁹⁴ Coox, A.D., *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985) pp. 13-14

⁴⁹⁵ McCormack, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122-124

actually aiding in the establishment of a united Chinese government that might one day utilise rising Chinese nationalism in opposition to Japan.

Under Army Minister Ugaki Kazushige, Tanaka's successor in the role from 1924 to 1926 (and again from 1929 to 1931), factional politics rose within the IJA, and it was during this period that China experts held the role as head of the 2nd Department. Often away from Tokyo, these officers had been less likely to be involved in these rivalries, and as such were both welcome to the role but also less likely to sway Imperial policy toward China. Thus China specialist intelligence officers were separated from the decision-makers.⁴⁹⁷

Japan's military intelligence continued to emanate from the General Staff in Tokyo, but despite Japan's deep involvement in China, only in 1925 had a China specialist risen to head the 2nd Department.⁴⁹⁸ Matsui Iwane had involved himself in Chinese affairs immediately after graduating from the War College, choosing to study there following graduation. Before Matsui, a graduate of 1906, only one other had ever chosen China as their destination. After Matsui, only Isogai Rensuke, bureau head between 1933 and 1935, and Okamura Yasuji, 1935-1936, were China specialists, and like Matsui, would have little experience in other areas.⁴⁹⁹

By the 1920s, Japan's Special Service Organs (*tokumu kikan*) were fully operational and formed an integral part of the intelligence apparatus. Furthermore, the 2nd Department within its ranks held considerable experience in political operations. In the early 1920s, Major Doihara Kenji and Major Itagaki Seishirō were assigned to the China Section of the 2nd Department. Kanda Masatane, the former head of the Aigun Special Service Organ throughout the Siberian Intervention, was made head of the Russia Section. General Matsui Iwane, former advisor to Chang Tso-lin, would lead the 2nd Department from 1925 to 1928, providing further advisors to Chang, including Doihara, but also Machino Takema and Matsui Nanao. Colonel Tatekawa Yoshitsugu would be posted as military attaché to Beijing in

⁴⁹⁷ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, pp. 338-339

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 337

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

1928.⁵⁰⁰ Machino had been an instructor at the Police College and an advisor to the Ministry of the Interior in Beijing between 1906 and 1913, and both Machino and Kikuchi Takeo had previously been advisors to previous military governors of Fengtien; Machino for his part resigned his commission in 1923, and thereafter as a reservist Colonel served Chang as a “private” advisor. Araki Gorō, a graduate of Japan’s Officer Cadet School (*Shikan Gakkō*) was a self-confessed member of the *Tairiku Rōnin*. Although not rising above the rank of 2nd Lieutenant within the IJA, he nevertheless maintained close contact with the Japanese military whilst concurrently of high rank in Chang Tso-lin’s forces. Agents of the Mukden Special Service were often mistakenly identified as Japanese advisors, but operated in much the same role regardless.⁵⁰¹

The China Section of the General Staff’s 2nd Department (Intelligence) was fully developed by 1923 under the leadership of Satō Saburō. Under Satō were Majors Itagaki Seishirō, Doihara Kenji, Okamura Yasuji, Iwamatsu Yoshio and Sasaki Tōichi, and Captains Kita Seiichi, Sakai Takashi and Nagami Toshinori. All would later become well-known China specialists. As the China Section became more bureaucratically developed however, circulation of its personnel among other departments lessened. Following Satō, heads of the China Section had very similar careers, perhaps serving as head or on the staff of a field unit, but nevertheless revolving primarily between China proper and the China Section, rarely if ever being posted to another country, or even another department in Tokyo or the Kwantung Army. Alternatively, few officers of other departments, but for those of the Kwantung Army Staff, had experience of the China Section. As such, as the China Section became more specialised, so did its remoteness from other parts of the military. Ultimately this would lead to a lack of differentiation in thought within the Section. Furthermore, securing cooperation from other departments would become increasingly difficult.⁵⁰²

During the period 1922-1925, a new guard of China experts were employed in the China Section, namely Kōmoto Daisaku (graduated from the

⁵⁰⁰ Weland, *op. cit.*, pp. 452-453

⁵⁰¹ McCormack, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-122

⁵⁰² Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, pp. 342-343

War College in 1903), Okamura Yasuji (1904), Isogai Rensuke (1904), Sasaki Tōichi (1905), and Suzuki Teichi (1910). Kōmoto was assistant attaché in Beijing from 1923-1925; Okamura was posted to Shanghai from 1923-1925; Isogai was in Kwantung 1920-1922 and again 1925-1927; Sasaki was in Kwantung 1922-1924, and also served as assistant attaché in Beijing 1926-1927; and finally Suzuki was in Beijing 1923-1925. All conferred with one another frequently, discussing such issues as the growing influence of the Nationalists in the south of China⁵⁰³

These officers opposed the Kwantung Army's policy of aiding warlords in the north, this predominantly as it did not take into account the growing power in the south, but also arguing advisors posted to various warlords would be unable to make independent decisions. This would mark a departure from Kwantung Army policy to date. This new guard saw *Kantōgun* support and manipulation of warlords, including Chang Tso-lin, in effort of securing Japanese interests in Manchuria nominally under Chinese rule, as insufficient. What was eventually called for would be direct Japanese control over Manchuria; only then would confrontation or agreement with the Nationalists in China south of the Great Wall be possible. Such thought would receive little support from the IJA during the early 1920s.⁵⁰⁴

The post of assistant attaché, formed 1916, was by this time gaining greater influence for the General Staff's China Section in Beijing. Between 1921 and 1927, competent officers including Kōmoto Daisaku, Shigetō Chiaki, Itagaki Seishirō and Sasaki Tōichi manned the post. These officers' efforts would nevertheless receive little response from Tokyo, at this time less activist in China, and as such these junior officers found it most difficult to sway policy in China. Difference in opinion did not exist solely with Tokyo. In Beijing these junior officers differed from the more senior officers as to China's future, many having had experience of China's south and placing more importance here than did their superiors. Honjō Shigeru's appointment as military attaché in 1925 did little to dissipate this difference between junior and senior officers; continuing to place great importance on Chang Tso-lin,

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 364

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 364-365

following Tanaka's policy, at a time when the centre of Chinese politics was moving to the south.⁵⁰⁵

Imperial Japan's focus remained on Manchuria for economic and security reasons, and assistance of the South Manchurian Railway continued. Recruitment and training within the *Mantetsu* was at this time now divided into "research" and "intelligence gathering and operations", yet rarely were new employees involved in the latter. Furthermore, opportunities for promotion were few in the "intelligence" arm of the company; this, as Maruya states, likely affecting morale for those so employed.⁵⁰⁶

The *Mantetsu* had instituted a recruitment and training scheme circa 1909, according to Maruya, for the development of "intelligence and operational officers". Meant to educate future officers from an early age (as young as four), the program was initially unsuccessful and shelved. From 1926 however, with Matsuoka Yōsuke now a director of the *Mantetsu*, the programme was reinstated with approximately 3,000 applicants for the programme in its first year (only three or four, however, were selected; these being high school graduates of about 17 or 18 years of age). These young men were educated in the conventional Japanese system, and further undertook extensive studies in foreign languages including Russian, French, Chinese, English, Mongolian, Greek and even Latin. Such an educational program was only possible due to the personal relationships held by Matsuoka.⁵⁰⁷

Graduates of the programme would come to be employed throughout the Japanese intelligence system, including the military, Itō Takeo of the *Mantetsu* recalling the example of one Shikurushii Ichio Waki who, after graduating, was employed by the Intelligence Division of the Army Ministry, the 7th Section (China Office) and the 8th Section (information analysis, propaganda, and conspiracy – to be discussed in Chapter 8) of the 2nd Department of IJA HQ.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 346-347

⁵⁰⁶ Maruya, *op. cit.*, p. 10

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

The end of Japan's involvement in Chinese warlordism

Tanaka Giichi and his Cabinet wanted Chang Tso-lin to maintain his position in Manchuria, consolidating through him Japanese interests there. By 1928, however, Chang had undertaken forays into China proper, with Japanese materiel not meant for this purpose. Furthermore, Chang by this time had proceeded to build railway lines in direct competition with those of the South Manchurian Railway, encouraged China's nationalist movement, and, at least in Japan's opinion, had slighted Japanese privileges in Manchuria. Finally, Chang had begun seeking support elsewhere, including from within China, the United States and the United Kingdom.⁵⁰⁹

The *Kuomintang* had established its Nationalist government in Canton in 1925, and by spring 1928, under Chiang Kai-shek, was advancing on Beijing with the intent of breaking the warlords' power over Northern China. Japan, for its part, maintained its neutrality.⁵¹⁰ Tanaka's Cabinet was concerned that Chang would be defeated in China and forced to return to Manchuria, thereby extending the theatre of war into an area inimical to Japan's interests. As it became evident that Chiang's forces would be victorious, Japan would, however, advise Chang to retreat to Manchuria, there to rebuild his forces; warning both sides that Japan would oppose any disturbance there.⁵¹¹ In doing so, the Tanaka government had circumvented a Kwantung Army plan to become militarily involved (to enforce security) were the opposing forces to enter Manchuria, much to the surprise (and likely chagrin) of *Kantōgun* HQ.⁵¹²

Up to the late 1920s, the development of expertise on China in the Kwantung Army had been lacking.⁵¹³ However, as the China Section of the General Staff's 2nd Department developed more China experts than were necessary, some of these found themselves within the ranks of the

⁵⁰⁹ Dull, P. S., "The Assassination of Chang Tso-lin", *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Aug., 1952) pp. 453-454

⁵¹⁰ Coox, *op. cit.*, p. 14

⁵¹¹ Dull, *op. cit.*, p. 454

⁵¹² Coox, *op. cit.*, p. 14

⁵¹³ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 351

Kantōgun.⁵¹⁴ These officers included Colonel Kawamoto Daisaku, Itagaki Seishirō, Doihara Kenji, and Okamura Yasuji. This group desired full Japanese occupation of Manchuria by the Kwantung Army, in order “to create a new regime of peace, law and tranquillity of the north by separating that area from the Nanking government, and also by getting rid of the war lords whose influence prevailed in Manchuria.”⁵¹⁵ During his time in Manchuria in 1929, Doihara had acted as aide to Matsui Nanao, who was at that time the Japanese military advisor to Chang Tso-lin.⁵¹⁶ By the late 1920s an old-hand in China, Doihara had over time come to the realisation that rather than work from within China itself, he should first help in Manchuria’s subjugation. He understood, however, that Manchuria would not fall as easily as had Korea, despite its apparent weaknesses, due to a strong leader in Marshal Chang Tso-lin and a reasonably well-equipped army.⁵¹⁷ Doihara and this group felt Chang’s son, Chang Hsiao-liang, would be more suggestible, and found support in senior Kwantung Army officers, including Honjō Shigeru, Matsui Iwane, Tatekawa Yoshitsugu and Hata Shunroku.⁵¹⁸ As these China experts (those who had previously disagreed with the Kwantung Army’s former policy of cooperation with Chinese warlords) diluted the Kwantung Army’s ranks, a change of China policy occurred within.⁵¹⁹

Colonel Kawamoto had during a speech stated: “The malignant cancer today of Japan’s Manchuria and Mongolia policy is Chang Tso-lin. If we get rid of him somehow, after that there will be no difficulty from appeasement with [*sic*] the youthful Chang Hsuehliang [Hsiao-liang].” A senior staff officer, Kawamoto, was closely tied to those who would later found the *Sakurakai* (discussed in the following chapter), including Koiso Kuniaki and Ōkawa Shūmei (to be discussed in Chapters 5 and 7).⁵²⁰ General Richachirō Banzai, following his departure from Beijing in 1927, now painted a miserable picture of China; stating during a speech “China was doomed to

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 350-351

⁵¹⁵ Dull, *op. cit.*, p. 454

⁵¹⁶ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 21-22*, International Military Tribunal for the Far East records, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, California 94305-6010, p. 15723

⁵¹⁷ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Encyclopedia of Espionage*, p. 166

⁵¹⁸ Dull, *op. cit.*, p. 454

⁵¹⁹ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, pp. 350-351

⁵²⁰ Dull, *op. cit.*, p. 455

collapse." He was also highly critical of the low standard of the Chinese soldiers.⁵²¹

Through the early and mid-1920s, many within Japan's civilian leadership felt Japan's security lay in trade and cooperation with other industrialised nations, and the military would subsequently have its funding drastically decreased.⁵²² In 1927 Shidehara, the Foreign Minister, appeared agreeable to a sacrifice in Japan's Manchurian position toward this aim; a move deemed detrimental to Japan's interests by the military. The Japanese military in Manchuria now actively sought change, and those in intelligence were best positioned and capable of instigating this. Although Japan's military intelligence service' primary role was to serve its military focus, over time it had developed capabilities conducive to political aims. Aided by its networks of agents, a reporting system and a body of experts, over time the Kwantung Army had developed both an ability and willingness to become involved in clandestine political activities.⁵²³ In Manchuria, Japan's new guard of China experts were less constrained than they had been in China proper. Public opinion was easier to sway in regard to concerns in Manchuria, and furthermore their machinations could rely on the military forces of Japan and not those of Chinese warlords. Finally, these plans were assisted by the deadlock in Japan's old China policy, between plans to manipulate warlords or to support Chiang.⁵²⁴ With the tipping of the scales in sought-after policy, inside an intelligence clique now resident in a semi-independent organ (the Kwantung Army), itself growing more willing to operate independently of Tokyo, so was the stage set to finalise Japanese' policy in dealing with warlords and to seek the separation of Manchuria from China.

A conference was convened in Tokyo in June 1927, aimed at deciding policy on the *Manmo* area (Mongolia and Manchuria), after which it was decided there was to be a difference in policy toward it and China. *Manmo*, deemed decidedly different and separate from China proper in Japan's eye,

⁵²¹ United States Air Force Academy Library, *The Intelligence Revolution: A Historical Perspective* (Colorado: 1988) available at: <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS57419>

⁵²² Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 448

⁵²³ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁴ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-365

was to be separated from China and made a colony of Japan. Importantly, this conference was convened by Tanaka Giichi and was attended by, along with the heads of the Army, Navy and Foreign Ministries; the Japanese ambassador to China, Yoshizawa; the consul-generals of Fengtien and Hankou; the head of the Kwantung Bureau, Kodama; Mutō, commander of the Kwantung Army; and importantly, Kawamoto Daisaku, now the latter's senior advisor.⁵²⁵

Kawamoto Daisaku would, within the pro-active political climate in Manchuria and the Kwantung Army, take it upon himself to formulate a plan to assassinate Chang Tso-lin in the bombing of the latter's train. Having practiced through the blowing up of two Chinese Eastern Railway bridges earlier in 1928, Kawamoto sought to foment a "black flag" operation; three Chinese "guerrillas" with Russian made bombs would be despatched following the incident, one with secret papers on his person. Kawamoto's former "experiments" had been successful, and Japanese media reports had not suspected any Japanese involvement.⁵²⁶ As Chang travelled by train from Beijing to Mukden, explosives planted by a demolitions expert from Seoul were detonated beneath his carriage, easily discernible as the only car not of third class. The warlord's death was meant to instigate a broader conflict that would lead to the Kwantung Army's annexation of Manchuria. Despite dying the following morning, Chang's death was not announced by the Mukden authorities until 21 June following Chang Hsiao-liang's assuming authority.⁵²⁷

Kawamoto had not acted alone, and had communicated with other new guard China experts, Sasaki in Nanjing and Isogai in Tokyo, while planning Chang's assassination.⁵²⁸ The Commander of the Kwantung Army, Muraoka, his Chief of Staff, Saito, War Minister Shirakawa and the Chief of the General Staff, Suzuki, claimed no link with the plot that killed Chang, and no evidence could link any of these personages to the plan.⁵²⁹ This was despite at least an

⁵²⁵ Lu, M., "The Inner Mongolian "United Autonomous Government", in MacKinnon, S.R., Lary, D. & Vogel, E.F., Eds., *China at War: Regions of China, 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007) pp. 150-152

⁵²⁶ Coox, *op. cit.*, p. 15

⁵²⁷ Dull, *op. cit.*, p. 456

⁵²⁸ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 365

⁵²⁹ Dull, *op. cit.*, p. 462

apparent awareness of the plot; Hayashi Kyūjirō, Japanese consul-general in Mukden, having caught wind of the conspiracy prior to its fruition and having protested to the Kwantung Army commander beforehand to no avail.⁵³⁰

Although near certain the Kwantung Army leadership had wanted Chang gone, only in 1961 did Kawamoto admit privately to a Japanese politician that General Muraoka had suggested the idea of Chang's assassination. However, Sasaki Tōitsu, a former military advisor to one of Chang's subordinates, and who would later be reassigned as advisor to Chiang Kai-Shek as a lieutenant colonel, would also later claim it had been he who had first suggested the plan to assassinate Chang to Kawamoto.⁵³¹

In Tokyo, Tanaka initially sought to punish those responsible with the assistance of War Minister Shirakawa, but later found most high-ranking officers opposed this. Tellingly, this appears to have less a demonstration of sympathy with the conspirators, the General Staff in Tokyo having been unaware of the plan, but rather a closing of the ranks in the face of "outside" pressure on the army; this stance receiving support from the likes of General Sugiyama Hajime, head of the Military Affairs Bureau, and General Kanaya Hanzō, Chief of the General Staff.⁵³² Prince Saionji, one of the last *genrō*, called for punishment of the conspirators, while within Tanaka's own political party, the *Seiyūkai*, including some of the more influential Cabinet members, there was desire to let the matter rest (as were those responsible proven to be Japanese, this would embarrass the Emperor). Ultimately Tanaka had the matter investigated administratively, rather than judicially, this meant as a compromise, but nevertheless Tanaka drew the military's ire.⁵³³

The Emperor would ultimately ask for a report on the incident, and with the Emperor only acting on advice of one of his executive organs, it is likely important political personalities, including Prince Saionji, instigated this request. On 27 June 1929 Tanaka would actually deceive the Emperor, claiming the culprits had not been Japanese, although administrative action was being taken against those responsible within Kwantung Army. War

⁵³⁰ Coox, *op. cit.*, p. 15

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16

⁵³² Dull, *op. cit.*, p. 458

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 458-459

Minister Shirakawa continued the deception, advising the Emperor that Muraoka, Commander of the Kwantung Army, had been placed on the reserve list, Colonel Kawamoto had been suspended from duty, and both Saitō and Mizuta, Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army and Commander in Chief of Gendarmerie respectively, had been censured. The Emperor, aware of the truth of the matter, later placed Tanaka on the spot, with Tanaka and his Cabinet subsequently resigning 1 July 1929.⁵³⁴

Thus, the machinations of Japanese intelligence officers were now influencing, if indirectly, conditions in Tokyo. Chang Tso-lin's assassination was not a manifestation of the China policy of the Tanaka Cabinet, but rather the first independent exercise of power by intelligence officers, centred on Japan's new guard of China experts, now well established within the Kwantung Army, along with sympathisers in Tokyo.

Furthermore, Chang's assassination exemplifies the then growing disparity between intelligence planning and operations between different groups of intelligence officers. At the time of the explosion, Chang had with him a Japanese advisor, Major Giga.⁵³⁵ Although Giga survived the explosion that killed Chang, it is obvious that the plot was kept secret from the majority of those involved in Japanese intelligence. In truth, however, irrespective of where any Japanese plot may occur, it would be difficult to avoid a Japanese advisor, with their own sympathy with their posting. By 1928, one month following Chang Tso-lin's death, it is estimated there were no less than fifty Japanese advisors stationed with the Fengtien armies alone.⁵³⁶

The hoped-for annexation of Manchuria by the Kwantung Army would not come to pass. Captain Ōzaki, one of Kawamoto's subordinates, was meant to issue a mustering order, but was countermanded (following an apparent about-face) by General Saitō.⁵³⁷ Kawamoto's efforts would, however, foreshadow a more successful coup later, the "Manchurian Incident" of 1931 (Chapter 5).

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 460-461

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 456

⁵³⁶ McCormack, *op. cit.*, p. 120

⁵³⁷ Dull, *op. cit.*, p. 457

By 1928 Chinese nationalism had reached its peak, and the *Kuomintang* had completed its Northern Expedition, signifying the end of China's warlord period; the Nanjing Government established in December that year. Within China, Chang Tso-lin's assassination backfired dramatically, unaided by the survival of one of the Chinese "accused" of the bombing who reported to Chang's son, Chang Hsiao-liang, Manchuria's new ruler, the truth of which side was responsible. Chang the younger would in time pledge allegiance to Chiang Kai-shek's *Kuomintang*, moving to consolidate his position in Manchuria unaided by the Japanese.⁵³⁸

The *Kuomintang* government, under Chiang Kai-shek, by 1929 sought to reassert China's sovereignty in the northeast. In these efforts it was greatly aided by the acquiescence of Chang Hsiao-liang. Neither military nor civilian authorities in Japan would countenance the loss of Japanese interests in Manchuria, however. Foreign Ministry efforts that countenanced some sacrifice in Manchuria concerned the military that saw the proposed benefit to Japan as both ephemeral and ill-defined, related primarily to economic benefit rather than Japan's strategic defence. Such political interference in security affairs was unacceptable, especially so considering those commercial concerns most likely to gain through Foreign Ministry overtures were those that supported Japan's political parties, and military planning began on how to secure Japan's geo-political position on the mainland.⁵³⁹

Heavily reliant on Manchuria, the Japanese were unable to withdraw as were other foreign powers. Several strategies arose as to how Japan should deal with the situation, all tellingly from those with some connection to the South Manchurian Railway Company. The first, from Yamamoto Jotarō, the *Tetsudō*'s former president, called for diplomacy, asking that Japan's "special interest" in Manchuria be recognised by China. Yamamoto felt continued Japanese' economic development of Manchuria would benefit both nations, and that the Nationalists would also come to this understanding. This strategy drew support from politicians in the *Seiyūkai*, but the sentiment was not met on the Chinese side, and the Cabinet of Tanaka Giichi had ultimately needed to station greater security apparatus' on the mainland to protect Japanese

⁵³⁸ Ienaga, S., *The Pacific War, 1931-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978) p. 59

⁵³⁹ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 453

interests.⁵⁴⁰ Banzai had departed Beijing in 1927, and after Honjō and Tatekawa, Satō Saburō became attaché in 1929, moving to Shanghai from Beijing in 1930. By this time the opportunity to somehow influence Chiang Kai-Shek or the Chinese Communist Party had passed. As Kitaoka states, Japan's former policy of manipulating China's various warlords in the north was ineffective against the *Kuomintang*.⁵⁴¹

A second strategy was forwarded by a group of some fifty SMR personnel. From these the idea of the *Manshū Seinen Renmei* (Manchurian Youth League [MYL]) emerged. The League sought Japanese administration of the Liaotung peninsula and SMR properties, as opposed to the prefectural system then in place in Kwantung, but importantly also called for greater cooperation between Chinese and Japanese in the area. The League rapidly grew in strength, sending delegates to deal with authorities on matters of conflict between Chinese and Japanese and holding public meetings throughout Manchuria in the hope of garnering Chinese support. The *Seinen Renmei* also importantly opposed Tanaka Giichi's doctrine of perpetuating Japan's existing rights in the area and also the tactics of the Kwantung Army.⁵⁴² Field-grade officers of the Kwantung Army, disillusioned with Japan's existing China policy, would, however, seek to separate Manchuria altogether from China and bring it under Japanese domination.⁵⁴³

Summary

Through the late 1910s, Japan's China policy had been increasingly driven by the military, itself increasingly involved in political (and, importantly, *politicised*) intelligence operations on the Asian mainland. Initially, China's warlords had been "assisted" by Japanese advisors. This led to inconsistency in policy advice, as individual intelligence officers increasingly came to sympathise with their causes. Nevertheless, the Japanese military's

⁵⁴⁰ Myers, R., "South Manchurian Railway Company" in Duus, Myers and Peattie, *Eds.*, *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) pp. 128-129

⁵⁴¹ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 347

⁵⁴² Myers, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-131

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 131-32

machinations were undertaken, *for the most-part*, with Tokyo's tacit approval, but over time a reliance on intrigue further separated its policy from that of the Foreign Ministry. By the 1920s, as Japan's China-related intelligence officers increasingly specialised, so too did they become increasingly insulated and isolated from other departments, leading to greater similarity in thought. As a younger generation rose through the ranks, with greater experience of the nationalist movement, there would be a growing awareness that the former policy of aiding Chinese warlords would need to be abandoned. These Chinese specialists would in time find themselves posted to the Kwantung Army, promulgating the annexation of Manchuria, inside a premier field formation increasingly willing to operate outside policy emanating from Tokyo.

5 Japanese plans for Manchuria

Factionalism, coups and insubordination during the 1930s

Left wing politics, in particular communism, had been steadily gaining momentum in Japan from about 1923 onward, in particular with students and Japan's intellectuals. This interest went beyond that of academia, and a movement was developed in Japan along Communist lines, encompassing political, economic and social aspects of internal politics. From 1928 onward, China's anti-Japanese feeling increased, and while the USSR increased its armaments, a move that might be conceived as a threat to not only Manchuria but also Japan itself, Western nations followed a policy that seemed aimed at preventing Japan's securing of special provisions in China proper.⁵⁴⁴

From Japan's General Election in 1928, its two main political parties, encompassing both the left wing (*sayoku*) and right wing (*uyoku*), were engaged in factional conflict in a struggle for power. Both parties, however, advocated disarmament, the flagging economy cited as reason.⁵⁴⁵ A number of serving Japanese officers took umbrage at this state of affairs and sought to affect a *coup d'état* against the politicians involved and the plutocracy (*zaibatsu*) that held power behind the scenes.⁵⁴⁶ In this way, the *Sakurakai* (Cherry Blossom Association) came into being, its membership including both military and civilian sympathisers, intent on eliminating political parties and installing a totalitarian system in Japan. Membership was restricted to graduates of the staff college with the rank of colonel and below, and who were assigned to the War Ministry or General Staff.⁵⁴⁷ So had cliques formed in the military (with civilian sympathisers) willing to seek political power, many of whom were in intelligence.

Ōkawa Shūmei, a civilian ultranationalist along the line of his predecessors Tōyama Mitsuru and Uchida Ryōhei, later claimed before the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) that his "intimate

⁵⁴⁴ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 1

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁵⁴⁷ Drea, *op. cit.*, p. 167

friends” Colonel Shigetō, head of the Second Department’s Chinese Affairs Section, and Lieutenant Colonel Hashimoto Kingorō of the Russian Affairs Section of the General Staff, had informed him that at the time “...the upper class of the army was burning with indignation at the Diet and that the Diet should be crushed.” Hashimoto and Shigetō had sought the opinion of Lieutenant General Ninomiya, then Deputy Chief of Staff, and Major General Tatekawa, Chief of the Second Department. According to Ōkawa’s testimony, it was not the intention of this clique to destroy the Diet completely, but rather to form a Cabinet centred on General Ugaki, and soon thereafter an abortive attempt was made to do this in Tokyo, purportedly with the support of such high-profile names as Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau, Koiso Kuniaki.⁵⁴⁸ Other principal figures involved in this included General Nagata Tetsuzan of the War Ministry, and Major Chō Isamu, a member of the *Sakurakai*.⁵⁴⁹ Mori Kaku, Parliamentary Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, a political opportunist and Ugaki sympathiser, had also been complicit, this despite his main advisor being Kita Ikki, a known rival of Ōkawa.⁵⁵⁰

The “March Incident”

Hashimoto would finance a failed coup, later to be known as the March Incident, with secret military funds provided to Ōkawa. Despite the gravity of such a plot, however, the instigators essentially went unpunished. This point would not be lost on others of like mind later in the decade.⁵⁵¹ In fact, from approximately mid-1933, former *Sakurakai* members began returning to Tokyo, although in small numbers initially. At the same time a growing number of officers, unconnected with either the *Kōdōha* (Imperial Way)

⁵⁴⁸ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 17-20*, International Military Tribunal for the Far East records, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford, California 94305-6010, pp. 15580-15582

⁵⁴⁹ *IMTFE - Proceedings May 15-16*, International Military Tribunal for the Far East records, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, California 94305-6010, pp. 22202-22203

⁵⁵⁰ Yoshihashi, T., *Conspiracy at Mukden: The Rise of the Japanese Military* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963) pp. 88-89

⁵⁵¹ Drea, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-168

faction or the *Sakurakai*, were increasingly of the opinion that political reform was required, yet apparently understood the dangers inherent and sought to uphold discipline within the IJA. These officers believed that were military discipline not maintained, the state itself could not possibly stabilise. Nevertheless, insofar as internal stability and discipline were maintained, the IJA was felt justified in asserting its own political conviction.⁵⁵²

Following Chang Tso-lin's assassination, moderates in Tokyo had been unable to reign in the actions of the more radical wing, Cabinet "interference" having caused a closing of ranks within the military, even though IJA senior officers were not, at least initially, sympathetic.⁵⁵³ Ishiwara (Ishihara) Kanji (below) would state that no officer stationed in Manchuria had been involved in the March Incident, the affair and the *Sakurakai* not being issues of concern in Manchuria.⁵⁵⁴ Nevertheless, as Japanese forces became further dispersed and entrenched outside of Japan (the key example of course being the Kwantung Army), so too had there been a growing willingness to take action contrary to official Japanese policy, exacerbated by a growing tradition of defiance of orders (*gekokuujō*) which would come to the fore during the 1930s.⁵⁵⁵

Planning and instigation of the "Manchurian Incident"

The 2nd Department, despite its primary intelligence role, held operational capabilities, exemplified by its Special Service Organs, these operations able to be undertaken outside normal military chain of command. The 2nd Department also held a policy-making role, aided by its specialist and experienced intelligence officers, but these same men were able to undertake action in line with the department's own policy and under its sole authority.⁵⁵⁶ To the end of the 1920s, political intelligence operations by the 2nd Department in mainland Asia were undertaken (but for the first attempt at Manchurian independence in 1912 – see Chapter 4), with the approval, and

⁵⁵² TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 3

⁵⁵³ Dull, *op. cit.*, p. 462

⁵⁵⁴ *IMTFE - Proceedings May 15-16, op. cit.*, pp. 22202-22203

⁵⁵⁵ Chapman, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 147

⁵⁵⁶ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 459

prior knowledge, of the Tokyo Government. These actions had been bilateral in nature, serving legitimate military goals. The means by which success was attained were, however, covert, including the channeling of secret funds, and the use of local puppets, both political and military in nature. Covert political operations had become standard operating procedure.⁵⁵⁷

Despite the apparent power held by Japan's Intelligence Department, to the end of the 1920s postings to China of Japan's China experts appears to have been a reaction relevant to the then political situation. Banzai had been posted at the time of the Boxer Rebellion. Matsui and Honjō went to China after the Russo-Japanese War, with subsequent regular postings corresponding to the revolutionary years in China. By the late 1920s, however, Matsui and Honjō, between the old and new guard of China experts, were assigned important positions by War Minister Ugaki; Honjō as chief of the Kwantung Army, Matsui as head of the Second Department.⁵⁵⁸

Early in the century, Japanese intelligence officers had been aided by physical characteristics that were near-indistinguishable from the local population of mainland China. This, combined with a deep knowledge of local languages and knowledge of local dress, undoubtedly aided their activities.⁵⁵⁹ By 1931, however, Japan's best-known military intelligence officer, Captain Nakamura Shintarō, was famous not for his prowess, but rather for his being caught and summarily executed. In a photograph taken just before his departure on his ill-fated expedition, Nakamura wore a black leather coat, peg-top trousers, and leather boots, while his companion wore Chinese clothes.⁵⁶⁰ Tellingly, however, Nakamura "...looked like an army officer, having a clipped moustache and a 'short-back-and-sides' haircut. He bore little resemblance to a Chinese and was not trying to look like one. Even

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁸ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 342

⁵⁵⁹ Nish, I., "Japanese Military Intelligence on the Eve of the Manchurian Crisis", in Nish., I., *Collected Writings of Ian Nish, Part 2: Japan, Russia and East Asia* (Tokyo: Japan Library & Edition Synapse, 2001) p. 251

⁵⁶⁰ The Japanese Consulate at Tsitsihar, "The Nakamura Incident", Box 24, Vladimir D. Pastuhov Papers, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Stanford, California 94305-6010, p. 6

Nakamura's companion, who had dressed in Chinese clothes, "...still carried a tell-tale straw hat."⁵⁶¹

Chang Hsiao-liang, now ruler of Manchuria, against a backdrop of Kwantung Army and *rōnin* reconnaissance missions, had informed the Japanese consul-general in Mukden that Japanese were not allowed in the area to negotiate and reconnoitre as "the Chinese were unable to offer protection against bandit activity".⁵⁶² Despite receiving travel authorisation from the consulate-general in Harbin (the consulate-general in Mukden had initially declined to issue this earlier), on being detained the Chinese authorities' suspicions regarding Nakamura's party documents, exacerbated by the extravagant sum carried in local currency by the group, ultimately led to their execution as foreign spies.⁵⁶³

Japan's military intelligence continued to emanate from the General Staff's 2nd Department, which received information from field army intelligence staff, including those of the Taiwan Army, the Korean Army, and of course the Kwantung Army. Furthermore, the 2nd Department maintained its own organs in the field, the Special Service Organs, small intelligence detachments throughout cities in Manchuria. Although theoretically under command of the Kwantung Army's Commanding General, the organs actually answered to Tokyo through direct communications. These organs operated as intelligence gathering centres, covering the economic, political, social and military spheres, and further provided support to Japanese military advisors attached to warlords and Chinese governors. Military attachés and intelligence agents reported to the 2nd Department, Tokyo, through the Special Service Organs, and the later undertook their own clandestine operations. Nakamura Shintarō had himself been attached to the China Section of the 2nd Department.⁵⁶⁴

It would appear that Nakamura's activities were split between examining both Russia and Chang Hsiao-liang. For a Japanese intelligence officer, however, Nakamura's efforts were rather incompetent. Firstly,

⁵⁶¹ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Collected Writings of Ian Nish*, p. 251

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 252

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253

⁵⁶⁴ Weland, *op. cit.*, pp. 448-449

Nakamura carried two passports, one identifying him as an educator, the other without job title but identifying him as “*tantei*” (detective or even spy). Secondly, Nakamura had requested travel permission from the Chinese authorities for something inherently subversive. Given the political conditions at the time, even with proper travel authorisation Nakamura would have no guarantee of his own and his party’s safety, and as such, official paperwork would be superfluous, seemingly understood by Nakamura in his carrying such a large sum. Following Nakamura’s capture and subsequent execution, Japan was reluctant to admit his employment, but following a memorial service, and subsequent efforts by the Chinese authorities to quell Japanese indignation through official apology and arrest of the local commander on 17 September 1931, the stage was set for the Manchurian Incident, which was to follow on 18 September after not inconsiderable planning.⁵⁶⁵ The “Nakamura Incident”, as it came to be known, was not significant for the apparent incompetence of the mission (far from being characteristic of Japanese intelligence operations at the time as a whole), but rather for the manner in which it was utilised as a pretence for the initiation of further conflict.

IJA planning against Manchuria began in April 1930, with the 2nd Department’s annual “Estimate of the Situation”. At this time, Major General Tatekawa Yoshitsugu led the department. Previously, as attaché in Beijing, Tatekawa had advised Chang Tso-lin that he retain autonomy from China in Manchuria, and, following Chang’s death, Tatekawa continued to seek Manchurian autonomy.⁵⁶⁶ In this Tatekawa was not alone. Sharing his opinion were Lieutenant Colonel Shigetō Chiaki and Lieutenant General Nemoto Hiroshi, heads of the China Section and China Sub-Section respectively; and Lieutenant Colonel Hashimoto Kingorō, head of the Russian Section and former head of the Special Service Organ in Manchouli (Manzhouli) during the Siberian Intervention.⁵⁶⁷

The subsequent plan established by the 2nd Department, beyond the decision that military action would be essential to secure Japanese interests in

⁵⁶⁵ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Collected Writings of Ian Nish*, pp. 253-255

⁵⁶⁶ Weland, *op. cit.*, pp. 453-454

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 454

Manchuria, involved three main elements: i) Chang Hsiao-liang and Chinese authorities were to be pressured to respect Japanese interests, ii) were this to fail, Chang's regime was to be substituted by another more sympathetic, and iii) were the first two goals to fail, Manchuria was to be occupied by the Japanese military. This plan was accepted and became IJA policy. Ultimately, however, the plan was inadequate. As Weland states, pressure on Chang could not be undertaken solely by the military; Japanese political support was also required, and this was not forthcoming.⁵⁶⁸

In the planning of the 1931 estimate, this "weakness" in planning was removed. Emphasis was now placed on application, particularly as it related to ii., the installation of a regime in Manchuria sympathetic to Japan. The issue of Chinese sovereignty over the new regime was disposed of with the assertion "...we can place it under the sovereignty of the central Chinese government." Key, however, was the estimate's closing statement: "If Manchuria is not disposed of, and if the government does not comply with the opinion of the army, it will be necessary to expect resolute action to be carried out." This allowed, even called for, unilateral action on the part of the military.⁵⁶⁹

During the subsequent General Staff meeting to discuss the estimate, Tatekawa's unprecedented request to allow his section chiefs to attend was allowed. Unlike in 1930, in 1931 it was decided that should an "incident" occur in Manchuria, the army should defend itself, although in what fashion was left undecided. Importantly, following the estimates acceptance, Shigetō, Hashimoto and Nemoto, the strongest proponents of rapid action in Manchuria, decided an "incident" must occur. These three planned a propaganda campaign, accompanied by provocation of Chang's troops who, were they to take the bait, would instigate a situation that would allow the Kwantung Army to retaliate. Importantly, this plan was authorised by Tatekawa.⁵⁷⁰ This plot would not come to fruition, but would not need to, a similar plan being undertaken from within the Kwantung Army itself.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 454-455

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 455

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 455-456

Ishiwara Kanji came to the Kwantung Army only four months following the assassination of Chang Tso-lin. Ishiwara argued for a Pan-Asian League backed by Japanese military power.⁵⁷¹ Importantly, it appears Kawamoto Daisaku's (see Chapter 4) recommendation may have played a part in Ishiwara's appointment; demonstrating Intelligence officers influence in the selection of operations officers.⁵⁷² Both Ishiwara and Itagaki Seishirō, the latter Kawamoto Daisaku's successor in the Kwantung Army and former assistant attaché in Beijing, would be instrumental in what would later be called the Manchurian (or Mukden) Incident of 1931.⁵⁷³ Colonels Ishiwara and Itagaki, notably operations officers, were the primary instigators of the incident. Itagaki had earlier in his career served on the intelligence staff at HQ. While Senior Staff Officer in the Kwantung Army, Itagaki led its intelligence section and acted concurrently as liaison with the Mukden Special Service Organ.⁵⁷⁴ Ishiwara for his part held no previous intelligence role. These officers were joined in their endeavour by Major Hanaya Tadashi, deputy chief of the Mukden Special Service Organ; and Captain Imada Shintarō, assistant advisor to Chang Hsiao-liang.⁵⁷⁵

At the time of Nakamura's mission, both Colonel Itagaki and Colonel Ishiwara were present in Heilungjiang province to analyse the results of these reconnaissance operations in light of future conflict with Soviet Russia. Already aware of rumours of Nakamura's disappearance, on return to Port Arthur both were informed by the Special Service Agency in Harbin, operating under Kwantung Army, of the rumours of Nakamura's death. This led both to call for a settlement in Manchuria separate from China.⁵⁷⁶ Ishiwara stated "the whole army, its commander, staff officers, force commanders, officers and men entertained the idea that an armed conflict was inevitable", and that this state of affairs had been reported to Kwantung Army superiors in Tokyo, namely the War Office under General Minami. Although Ishiwara could not confirm if the Consulate-General in Manchuria had been

⁵⁷¹ Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 131

⁵⁷² Drea, *op. cit.*, p. 166

⁵⁷³ Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 365

⁵⁷⁴ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 445

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 445-446

⁵⁷⁶ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Collected Writings of Ian Nish*, p. 253

aware, he could confirm that the sentiment had been conveyed to the Consul in Mukden, Hayashi Kyūjirō.⁵⁷⁷

Itagaki and Ishiwara, along with others on the Kwantung Army staff, planned something similar to Shigetō, Hashimoto and Nemoto in Tokyo, and by late summer 1931 required only an “incident” to occur. Notably, three of four officers connected with this planning were of the Mukden Special Service Organ, its communications and secret service abilities acting as base and basis of operations. This group sought to emulate the efforts of 1916, where Japanese patriots were to be employed, dressing in the uniforms of Chang’s troops, and creating an incident that the Kwantung Army might respond to. Importantly, Itagaki met with Shigetō and Hashimoto in Tokyo in July 1931, advising them of the plan and asking for funding for the endeavour. This was agreed to and sourced from the president of the Tokyo *Asahi Shinbun* (a preeminent newspaper), Fujita Isamu, a relative of Shigetō.⁵⁷⁸

Little is known of the *Kantōgun* special service agencies (*tokumu kikan*) beyond their existence in Port Arthur, Harbin, Mukden, Tsitsihar and, in China, Tientsin. However, Nakamura had received orders from the General Staff in Tokyo to undertake his mission. On arrival in Manchuria, he had made contact with the special service agencies in Port Arthur, Mukden and Harbin, and appears to have been heavily connected with these organisations. Furthermore, it was the *kikan* that predominantly sought information following Nakamura’s death.⁵⁷⁹ Nish states the position of the *tokumu kikan* within the hierarchy of the Kwantung Army is difficult to determine, noting only they were distrusted by local diplomats.⁵⁸⁰ The US Army believed all Special Service Agencies in Manchuria were attached to Kwantung Army Headquarters under the general supervision of the Second Department.⁵⁸¹ The progression of orders from Tokyo to a military intelligence officer on its staff,

⁵⁷⁷ *IMTFE - Proceedings May 15-16, op. cit.*, pp. 22199-200

⁵⁷⁸ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 456

⁵⁷⁹ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Collected Writings of Ian Nish*, pp. 251-255

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 255

⁵⁸¹ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X; Japanese Intelligence Planning Against the USSR*; Military History Section, Headquarters, Army Forces Far East; Distributed by Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army; June 1955; Microfilm 8490; 35mm; Reel 2; From Library of Congress, p. 15

and Nakamura's subsequent contact with these agencies, certainly alludes to an element of direct command emanating from Tokyo to these agencies, but in real terms, it seems likely the Kwantung Army exercised a great deal of (and likely direct) control over these agencies following their establishment and/or posting under field formation areas of control.

This argument is strengthened when considering that most of the *genrō*, formerly responsible for intelligence collation and appraisal, had passed away during the 1920s, and during the inter-war period the IJA had successfully usurped the *genrō*'s position, with emphasis now placed on tactical, rather than strategic, intelligence, this being of key importance to field units (namely the *Kantōgun*), where these special service organs were stationed.⁵⁸² In Manchuria, the Kwantung Army's Second Department held responsibility for intelligence. Up to the Manchurian Incident of 18 September 1931, however, the Japanese had only one division with a small intelligence section in Manchuria.⁵⁸³ Thus it would appear the *tokumu kikan* were integral to *Kantōgun* intelligence, and operated predominantly under its orders rather than those of Tokyo.

Itagaki admitted the Kwantung Army had developed an operational plan prior to the Manchurian Incident, but distanced himself from its drafting, referring to the difference in role between operational officers and intelligence officers, namely that operations officers, in accordance with orders and instruction from General Headquarters, were solely responsible for operational planning. Intelligence officers had no part in the drafting of operational plans.⁵⁸⁴ Ishiwara had, however, been responsible for the Kwantung Army's operational planning, and before the International Military Tribunal for the Far East stated that Itagaki would have been aware of the Kwantung Army's operational plans. In relation to planning in Tokyo, Ishiwara stated he knew very little, nor would have Itagaki, having never been posted there for any length of time. The Kwantung Army as a whole received

⁵⁸² Kotani, *op. cit.*, p. 138

⁵⁸³ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, pp. 11-12

⁵⁸⁴ *IMTFE - Proceedings Oct. 6-8*, International Military Tribunal for the Far East records, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, California 94305-6010, pp. 30338-30339

reports from Tokyo only on matters that affected the Kwantung Army's duty.⁵⁸⁵

The *Kantōgun*, in developing its yearly operational plan, customarily took into account and incorporated only the operational plan of the previous year, not those of any earlier years. As such, when Ishiwara became responsible for the *Kantōgun*'s operational planning in 1928, he was only made aware of the operational plans of 1927 and 1928. Furthermore, according to Ishiwara, only in 1927 had operational planning against China been conceived, two or three years before that, no operational planning against China had existed. Interestingly, although generally taken as implicit that imperial sanction was required before action against a third power, nowhere in these operational plans was this actually written.⁵⁸⁶

Finally, military training and preparation of the Kwantung Army was not reported to the Japanese consuls in China, this due to the requisite secrecy involved. The Foreign Ministry was simply to rest assured that were an incident to occur, the military was well prepared for any eventuality. It was Ishiwara's opinion that were the Foreign Ministry informed, this would be the greatest source of information leakage.⁵⁸⁷ Ishiwara denied military planning of the Kwantung Army was not divulged to the Consul due to the Foreign Ministry at that time undertaking friendly negotiations with China in order to settle the Nakamura Incident.⁵⁸⁸ All incidents between the Chinese and Japanese in northeastern China had formerly been dealt with by the Foreign Ministry. The Kwantung Army, was it to be aware of any such instances, would contact the Foreign Ministry through their representative in Mukden. The Nakamura Incident, however, concerning one of its own officers, had called for a military investigation, and the Foreign Ministry's intervention was not required. Ishiwara claimed that only after the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident did the military become aware that the staff of the Consulate-General in Mukden did not sympathise with the views of the military.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁵ *IMTFE - Proceedings May 15-16, op. cit.*, pp. 22157-22160

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 22176-177

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 22179-180

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 22180-181

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 22168-171

The Kwantung Army thus had broad scope for territorial planning, and, ultimately, and despite proposals by the Chinese that those responsible for the death of Nakamura would be punished, the army and its sympathisers would push ahead with their plans.⁵⁹⁰ Mori Kaku, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, would journey through Korea and Manchuria through July and August 1931, but sympathised with Kwantung Army planning in Manchuria, holding a meeting in Mukden with the now-Commanding General of the *Kantōgun*, Honjō Shigeru, formerly deeply involved in intelligence as it related to China; Miyake Mitsuharu, Chief of Staff; Doihara, now head of the Mukden Special Service Agency; and Miura, head of the Japanese *gendarmérie* in Mukden. Tellingly, Mori would also meet with Kawamoto Daisaku, who would act as liaison between Mori and Itagaki and Ishiwara, and later in 1932 Kawamoto would become a director of the South Manchurian Railway through Mori.⁵⁹¹ Colonel Kawamoto's military career had been ended following the assassination of Chang Tso-lin, but he had continued his covert activities in Manchuria and in Japanese politics, continuing his relationship with Ōkawa Shūmei and the *Sakurakai*, and was deeply involved in the March Incident of 1931 with the military clique including Colonel Hashimoto Kingorō and General Koiso Kuniaki. It is also suspected that Kawamoto was involved in the explosion that would ultimately instigate what would become known as the Manchurian Incident, this operation following the same method as that that killed Chang. It is almost certain he knew of the plot. Kawamoto would become managing director of the Manchurian Amakasu Picture Company, managing director of the Manchurian Coal Company, and president of the Tamanishi Industrial Company. Finally, Kawamoto would even be considered for an important political position in 1941.⁵⁹² Kawamoto thus provides an example of how apparent initial dissent would ultimately be rewarded, as these intelligence officers' activities found greater sympathy throughout Japan's political arena over time.

⁵⁹⁰ Yoshihashi, *op. cit.*, p. 147

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148

⁵⁹² Dull, *op. cit.*, pp. 461-462

Throughout the events of the Sino-Japanese War 1894-1895 and the Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905, the military clique and Foreign Ministry had been in unison in regard to foreign policy. Only later had the military clique sought to take advantage of China's internal disunity; developing their own foreign policy that differed markedly from that of the Foreign Ministry.⁵⁹³ The influence of the Foreign Ministry was on the wane, and Japan's "dual diplomacy" had become progressively singular as the military increasingly influenced Japanese foreign policy.⁵⁹⁴

Initially at least, the *Kantōgun* would seek to assuage Foreign Ministry concerns, Itagaki stating that during a meeting between Consul Morishima, the Kwantung Army Chief of Staff and head of the local *gendarmérie*, and also in a subsequent meeting between Consul-General Hayashi and General Honjō, that the Foreign Ministry was advised that no *military* administration was to be established.⁵⁹⁵ The Foreign Ministry, who had been attempting to peacefully settle the Nakamura Incident with China, would, however, come to know of the Kwantung Army's machinations; a telegram dated September 1931 from Foreign Minister Shidehara to Consul-General Hayashi stating:

We have heard that Colonel Itagaki and others of the Kwantung Army at your place are exerting themselves in various activities recently with considerably ample funds and are manipulating Japanese adventurers in China and members of the '*Kokusui-Kai*' ...and that in view of the tardy progress of the negotiation regarding the Nakamura Incident, especially, they have decided on some concrete move around the middle of this month...please take further deliberate steps for controlling the activities of the Rōnin and the like.⁵⁹⁶

Ishiwara would, before the IMTFE, state it was Itagaki's responsibility to contact officials of the Consulate-General in Manchuria.⁵⁹⁷ Given the military's unwillingness to inform the Foreign Ministry of its planning, let

⁵⁹³ TNA: WO 203/6319, Interrogation of Consul-General Minoda Fujio, *op. cit.*, p. 24

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁵ IMTFE - *Proceedings Oct. 6-8*, *op. cit.*, pp. 30356-30358

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30343

⁵⁹⁷ IMTFE - *Proceedings May 15-16*, *op. cit.*, p. 22187

alone Itagaki's sympathies and covert manoeuvring, it is unsurprising that Itagaki appears to have ignored this duty. In his own testimony, Itagaki would deny knowledge of Foreign Minister Shidehara's telegram to Consul-General Hayashi above, admitting only to knowledge of the subject matter within. According to Itagaki, sometime after the Manchurian Incident Major General Miyake, Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army, had put before Itagaki a telegram, but had also derided the substance within, informing Itagaki he had passed on these thoughts to the Consul-General.⁵⁹⁸

The Foreign Ministry were concerned that Japanese "adventurers" continued to be utilised by the Japanese military on the Asian mainland. The *Kokusuiikai* had been established in 1919, a combined effort between the *Seiyūkai* Home Minister, Tokonami Takejirō, and organised crime.⁵⁹⁹ Gotō Shinpei (see Chapter 3) is thought to have sought the organisation's presidency in 1926.⁶⁰⁰ In 1929 the organisation's presidency would be held by Suzuki Kisaburō, a former Home Minister and Justice Minister, who would later become president of the *Seiyūkai*. By the early 1930s, the association is thought to have held a membership of approximately 200,000. By the mid-1930s the organisation's vice-presidency would be held by a vice admiral, while its chief director was an IJA lieutenant general.⁶⁰¹ Directors and advisors would include five other IJA lieutenant generals, four IJN vice admirals, and three IJN major generals. Importantly, the *Kokusuiikai* would include amongst its advisors Tōyama Mitsuru.⁶⁰²

Unilateral action undertaken by the Kwantung Army remained unacceptable to the IJA leadership, however, and rumours about the plot would also reach these officers in Tokyo. Chief of Staff Kanaya would order Tatekawa to Manchuria to curtail any such action. This was thwarted however by Hashimoto who used the 2nd Department's direct communications with the Mukden Special Service Organ to forewarn of Tatekawa's arrival.⁶⁰³

⁵⁹⁸ *IMTFE - Proceedings Oct. 6-8, op. cit.*, p. 30343-30343-30344

⁵⁹⁹ Siniawer, E.M., *Ruffians, Yakuza, Nationalists: The Violent Politics of Modern Japan, 1860-1960* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2008) pp. 109-111

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 125

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 126

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*

⁶⁰³ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 457

Significantly, this appears to have been on the orders of Tatekawa himself, who on receiving orders to go to Manchuria to circumvent Itagaki's plot had himself called for a meeting with Shigetō, head of the China Section; Hashimoto, head of the Russia section; and Nemoto, head of the China subsection; at which he ordered secretly that two telegrams be sent; one to General Honjō from the General Staff's General Affairs Office, and the other (above) from Hashimoto to Itagaki covertly.⁶⁰⁴

On the night of 18 September 1931, Ishiwara was in Port Arthur with General Honjō and Chief of Staff Miyake. Itagaki had gone to see General Tatekawa in Mukden, but had left his company without being made aware of the message he was carrying. Purportedly, when Tatekawa had asked whether the younger officers were "not extremely excited" regarding the Nakamura affair, Itagaki responded that this was not the case. Tatekawa stated he was pleased with this answer, and when asked by Itagaki as to the message he carried, replied that he was then very tired and that they should speak the following day."⁶⁰⁵

Rather than abort the mission, the plotters decided to proceed with their plans before they could be ordered to the contrary, utilising their own men rather than "adventurers" due to time constraints. Neither Tatekawa nor those Kwantung Army officers sent to meet him had discussed his purpose in being there, and overnight, while Tatekawa drank sake and slept, the bomb on the South Manchurian Railway that would ignite the Incident was detonated.⁶⁰⁶ Tatekawa's failure to relay orders in a timely fashion imply Tatekawa had been sympathetic, even arguably complicit, with what would occur later that night. This further intimates tacit approval within the IJA's uppermost intelligence echelon in Tokyo, given Tatekawa's earlier formal approval of Shigetō, Hashimoto and Nemoto's planning in Tokyo earlier toward the same outcome.

Furthermore, Captain Wachi Takaji of the China Section, and now Colonel and head of the Mukden Special Service Organ, Doihara Kenji, had transported funds for Ishiwara and Itagaki's plot to the mainland, although it

⁶⁰⁴ Yoshihashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-156

⁶⁰⁵ *IMTFE - Proceedings May 15-16, op. cit.*, pp. 22215-22217

⁶⁰⁶ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 457

should be noted that Doihara did not arrive in time, having stopped overnight in Korea. Shigetō and Hashimoto, despite sharing similar aims, would in future not trust Doihara, having seen his unexplained delay as an attempt at sabotage.⁶⁰⁷ Itagaki would later before the IMTFE flatly deny that he had either held ample funds, or had ever manipulated Japan's "adventurers" on the Asian mainland.⁶⁰⁸ This answer would, however, rely on historical circumstance rather than historical intent; funding for the incident being impossible to track, and the use of military officers rather than *rōnin* a matter of necessity given time pressures.

According to Ishiwara, following the assassination of Chang Tso-lin, after which Kawamoto was punished and the Kwantung Army's commander was dismissed, the *Kantōgun*'s commanders had been especially careful that the army would not initiate any armed conflict. Were the Chinese to start something however, the troops were always to respond immediately.⁶⁰⁹ Doubtless, for this reason, the planned explosion under the South Manchurian Railway was intended yet again to appear to have been an attack by Chinese forces. Before the IMTFE, Morishima and Hanaya testified it was, in fact, Captain Imada Shintarō of the Special Service Agency who had placed the explosives.⁶¹⁰ Doihara's estrangement from Shigetō and Hashimoto, despite their apparent convergence in aims, exemplifies the lack of cohesiveness then prevalent within Japan's politicised intelligence apparatus and officers. For his part, Honjō Shigeru, a former advisor to Chiang Kai-Shek before the former's rise to the position of Commanding General of the Kwantung Army, would not be aware of Itagaki and Ishiwara's plot, this being the product of a successively lower generation of intelligence officers.

Itagaki stated before the IMTFE that he had, while returning to his accommodation following his meeting with Tatekawa, gone to the Special Service Organ in Mukden, where he remained for a couple of hours.⁶¹¹ Itagaki claimed his visit had been informal, and only due to his having some spare time. While present here, however, the "incident" occurred. It is

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 456-457

⁶⁰⁸ *IMTFE - Proceedings Oct. 6-8, op. cit.*, p. 30344

⁶⁰⁹ *IMTFE - Proceedings May 15-16, op. cit.*, p. 22196

⁶¹⁰ Yoshihashi, *op. cit.*, p. 165

⁶¹¹ *IMTFE - Proceedings Oct. 6-8, op. cit.*, pp. 30349-30352

important to note that all communications at the time with *Kantōgun* Headquarters were customarily and necessarily requested through the Special Service Organ.⁶¹² The agency, therefore, served not solely in information collection and propaganda, but also maintained a communications role, this due to its apparent monopoly on military cypher.⁶¹³ All coded military communications were thus required to go through this office.⁶¹⁴ During the Manchurian Incident, Itagaki was thus party to every call that came in from the front to the Special Service Organ.⁶¹⁵ The Special Service Organ's complicity may be further inferred; when Lieutenant Nagamine, on the front line, requested an emergency message be forwarded to *Kantōgun* HQ in Port Arthur, reporting fire between his and Chinese forces, this message was delayed until the "incident" was well under way.⁶¹⁶

Finally, when questioned as to whether Itagaki had ordered Garrison Commander Shimamoto and Regimental Commander Hirata, key officers in the assault of Mukden following the detonation that evening, Ishiwara clarified that Itagaki held no authority over these two, but rather could only "convey to them the ideas of the Commander-in-Chief clearly". In this, Itagaki could only "influence", rather than command their actions, and had done so "properly".⁶¹⁷ This appears however an exercise in semantics only; influence being a demonstrably tangible and effective asset within Japan's military, political, and importantly, intelligence circles, exemplified by the continuing interconnectedness within these and also Japan's informal networks.

The actions undertaken before and through the Manchurian Incident were by those with a shared motivation shared by many within Japan's upper echelons. Ultimately, Japan's immediate strategic aims and concerns had been allayed, but the Incident left the Japanese military with a weakened command structure.⁶¹⁸ Field grade officers had been able to formulate

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 30351-30353

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 30353

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30356

⁶¹⁶ Yoshihashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161

⁶¹⁷ *IMTFE - Proceedings May 15-16, op. cit.*, pp. 22152-153

⁶¹⁸ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 460

operations and act on their own. Senior commanders were no longer in command in regard to these covert political actions. Rather, these officers would only be able to belatedly grant authorisation, and only because of overall shared aims would they be willing to do so.⁶¹⁹

Plans for puppet governance in Manchuria

Itagaki, before the IMTFE, denied a conversation with General Tanaka in Port Arthur, several months before the Manchurian Incident of 1931, regarding the establishment of a future puppet state in Manchuria.⁶²⁰ Tanaka's testimony, however, stated such a conversation had indeed occurred, during which the following had been discussed: i) the situation between China and Japan was aggravated due to then existing issues, including treaty issues, ii) that this situation had been further inflamed following the death of assassination of Chang Tso-lin, iii) that the issues between the two countries could not be solved through diplomatic means, and that military force would be required to drive out Chang Hsiao-liang, and iv) following the expulsion of Manchuria's warlords, a model state should be established in Manchuria to develop Chinese and Japanese cooperation.⁶²¹

The Kwantung Army had no authority to draw up operational plans that included the transfer of Korean Army units into Manchuria. Operational plans drawn up by the central military authorities were given to the individual commanders of the Korean Army and the Kwantung Army, in so far as these related to them. Within the existing operational plan, were fighting to break out in Manchuria, the Kwantung Army was authorised to call upon a mixed brigade from Korea. Ishiwara was not certain, however, if this plan had received Imperial sanction, and the Korean Army would in the end send this brigade regardless.⁶²² Following the explosion that instigated the Manchurian Incident, the Kwantung Army's defensive plan was initiated, in line with the

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁰ *IMTFE - Proceedings Oct. 6-8, op. cit.*, pp. 30324-30325

⁶²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30325

⁶²² *IMTFE - Proceedings May 15-16, op. cit.*, pp. 22236-22237

operational plan agreed on earlier in 1931.⁶²³ Throughout the period August to September 1931, however, the Kwantung Army had not consulted with the central military authorities regarding its operational planning⁶²⁴, and within 48 hours it had occupied Mukden, Yingkou and Changchun by force.⁶²⁵

Subsequent to the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident, the Kwantung Army did receive instructions from Tokyo, namely to limit military operations, although this lay in accordance with its planning at that time. When it was put to Ishiwara that despite this apparent convergence of policy between that of the Commander of the Kwantung Army and military authorities in Tokyo, and that a great number of actions of the former did not so align, Ishiwara responded “I regret to say that there were very many points on which the actions taken by the Kwantung Army did not coincide with the policies of central military authorities.”⁶²⁶

Strong opposition from Tokyo would halt the Kwantung Army's hopes for full occupation and annexation of Manchuria following the events of 18 September 1931. The army received a preventative order from the Chief of the General Staff and the War Minister on 19 September, and sought Tatekawa's support for further action.⁶²⁷ Tatekawa, however, would not acquiesce to *Kantōgun* advancement into North Manchuria, due to concerns of possible Russian intervention.⁶²⁸ Thus, it was found that Kwantung Army support in Tokyo did not maintain the same scope as it held in Manchuria. It would, however, be Tatekawa who first sought a pro-Japanese regime under former Chinese Emperor Pu-yi.⁶²⁹

Following consultation with Tatekawa, the *Kantōgun* would withdraw its attempt at full annexation of Manchuria.⁶³⁰ At a conference of the Kwantung Army on 22 September (attended by Doihara of the Mukden Special Service Organ), it was decided that a puppet regime would be

⁶²³ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 457

⁶²⁴ *IMTFE - Proceedings May 15-16, op. cit.*, p. 22147

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 22183

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 22147-22149

⁶²⁷ Ogata, S.N., *Defiance in Manchuria* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964) p. 74

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 74

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 75

established, but more in line with the policy of the *Manshū Seinen Renmei*; this being more acceptable to foreign powers and the Japanese Government. The Kwantung Army moved into action, sending officers, ostensibly political intelligence officers, to prominent Chinese throughout Manchuria, intent on persuading these to declare independence and form a new puppet state. Vice Chief of Staff Ninomiya approved of this resort to political manoeuvring by the *Kantōgun*, but the same cannot be said necessarily, at least initially, of the Chief of the General Staff or the Minister of War.⁶³¹

The Minister and Vice Minister of War would issue orders expressly forbidding political actions to establish a new regime in Manchuria in late September, the Minister even writing to the Kwantung Army Commander warning against involvement. Furthermore, the IJA Chief of Staff informed the Prime Minister that army officer participation in a proposed instalment of the former Chinese Emperor was false, he himself having disallowed this. Nevertheless, indecision and disparate motivations in Tokyo meant the Kwantung Army could continue in its machinations. The Vice Chief of General Staff and the Vice Minister of War were unable to transmit their support for a new regime, and instead voiced their support to the head of the General Staff's 2nd Department, Hashimoto Toranosuke.⁶³² Even Hashimoto, who had come to Manchuria to attempt policy coordination with the *Kantōgun* on 26 September, was only able to state that even though the establishment of a new regime in Manchuria had been decided upon, this must be done in secret.⁶³³

In the face of continued resistance in Tokyo from the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of War, the Kwantung Army would in October issue an anti-Chang statement detailing the *Kantōgun*'s aims in Manchuria.⁶³⁴ Even Honjō, once an advisor to Marshal Chang Tso-lin, would later as Commander of the Kwantung Army send Lieutenant Colonel Nagatsu to Marshal Chang Hsiao-liang with a message. Within, Honjō would lament how his own overtures to ensure friendly relations between China and Japan

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-79

⁶³² *Ibid.*, p. 79

⁶³³ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81

had been in vain, attributable to the “Northeastern military authorities” having disregarded treaties between the two nations as well as anti-Japanese sentiment.⁶³⁵ Further, in his “last personal greetings” conveyed to “His Excellency”, Honjō would convey:

At present it must be admitted that the returning to Mukden of your Excellency, with party [*sic*] is not welcomed either by the Japanese in Manchuria or the Chinese people who have a personal grudge against you because they have long been oppressed, nor by other foreigners. Furthermore, your presence has no important bearing on the peace of Manchuria, nor is it advantageous to the people of the Northeastern provinces. In consideration of his [Honjō’s] friendly relations with you for years I [Nagatsu] cannot help transmitting these words to you with pains.⁶³⁶

In addition, the support of Uchida Yasuya, the president of the South Manchurian Railway, with access to Japan’s politicians, was sought. Uchida had formerly been a supporter of Foreign Ministry non-intervention, but quickly came to support the extension of Japanese control into northern Manchuria. In December 1931 Uchida would publish a pamphlet titled “The Independence of Manchuria and Mongolia”. In it, Uchida detailed a plan of development in Manchuria, and how it could be placed into the Japanese economic bloc. In effect, Uchida’s writing was a piece of propaganda, developed to persuade the Japanese population to support the invasion of Manchuria. Uchida’s efforts were bolstered by yet more nationalist societies that temporarily federated to form the *Manshū Mandai Kaiketsu Dōmei* (League for the Solution of the Manchurian Question), chaired by Viscount Inouye, a former director of the South Manchurian Railway, with Tōyama Mitsuru yet again in the position of advisor. The league included prominent politicians, including members of the House of Peers, military officers, diplomats, and, importantly, journalists tasked with focusing attention away

⁶³⁵ Nagatsu, Lt. Col., “A message from General Honjō to Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang”, Vladimir D. Pastuhov Papers, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Stanford, California 94305-6010

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*

from domestic concerns to the benefits of Japanese domination of Manchuria, including colonisation.⁶³⁷ Thus, the *Kantōgun* began its own diplomatic offensive, in terms of presenting a new state in Manchuria being of benefit to Japan, as well as utilising supporters as effective diplomats to sell its plans to the highest echelons in Tokyo. By mid-October, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet had decided not to “prevent the activities of the Chinese to establish a new regime in Manchuria”, although without Japanese support or assistance, but had to acknowledge “underground activities could not be helped.”⁶³⁸ The Kwantung Army had, through its arbitrary actions, and despite resistance in Tokyo, come to an acceptable compromise. In terms of the Japanese intelligence corps, however, politicisation now extended to the upper-most echelon, and with innumerable sympathisers, political control would now be sought, in Tokyo, Manchuria, and later, in China (discussed below).

The “October Affair”

Dissent in Tokyo continued, both in terms of internal politics and across the straits, and on 21 October 1931 the *Sakurakai* and elements within the military would collude to overthrow the government in Tokyo. This event would become known as the “October Affair”, or “Revolution under the Imperial Banner”. The leadership of the “October Affair” would again include civilians, Nishida Zei, Kita Ikki and Ōkawa Shūmei.⁶³⁹ Ōkawa’s involvement in the Manchurian Incident, the *Sakurakai* and its planned coup d’états, his military connections, his commercial information-gathering role combined with his political leanings, would once again exemplify the connexion between civilian, military, and commercial intelligence activities that formed the overarching intelligence structure of Imperial Japan at the time.

Lieutenant Colonel Hashimoto and Major Chō Isamu would, alongside Ōkawa Shūmei, Kita and Nishida, seek to replace the government, installing themselves in key Cabinet posts. Hashimoto was to be Home Minister,

⁶³⁷ Norman, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-4

⁶³⁸ Ogata, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-85

⁶³⁹ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 2

Tatekawa was to be Foreign Minister; Ōkawa, Finance Minister; Chō, Superintendent General of the Metropolitan Police Board; and, completing the list, General Sadao Araki was to be offered the joint role of War Minister and Prime Minister. Such a government would support the Manchurian Incident. Unlike the March Incident earlier in the same year, Hashimoto would draw from field-grade officers rather than those of high rank. Many company-grade officers persuaded to the cause would actually join another ultranationalist group, the *Kokutai Genri-ha* (National Foundation Principle faction) that maintained close links with the *Kōdōha* faction founded by Araki.⁶⁴⁰

Ultimately, the conspirator's machinations were discovered before instigation. Those officers involved would be disciplined by the military, but only in a perfunctory manner. The main instigators, including Lieutenant Colonel Hashimoto, Major Chō Isamu and Captain Tanaka Wataru, would receive very light sentences (20 days internment for Hashimoto, 10 days for Isamu and Tanaka), and the detention undertaken in resorts near Tokyo.⁶⁴¹

On the conspirators' arrest, one (perhaps Hashimoto) proclaimed "you might make arrests in Tokyo, but in Manchuria the Kwantung Army will attain autonomy just the same."⁶⁴² Such was the concern in Tokyo regarding this that a joint statement signed by the sub-chiefs of the supreme command (Sugiyama, Vice-Minister of War; Ninomiya, Assistant Chief of Staff and Araki, Assistant Chief Inspector of Military Education) was sent to the Kwantung Army stating: "Any act of conspiracy, such as one aimed at attainment of independence of the Kwantung Army or the like, will not be tolerated."⁶⁴³ Further, Sugiyama sent a telegram in cypher to Kwantung Army units, warning against lending support in the event *Kantōgun* HQ were to rise against Tokyo.⁶⁴⁴

According to the testimony of Wachi Takaji before the IMTFE, former head of both the China Section and Mukden Special Service Organ, and once subordinate to Hashimoto, Hashimoto had never met Doihara, Itagaki or

⁶⁴⁰ Yoshihashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-196

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 203

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 199

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 200

Ishiwara prior to the Manchurian Incident. Nevertheless, it appears likely at least tacit agreement between Tatekawa and Koiso of the General Staff and Itagaki of the Kwantung Army existed. General Tanaka Ryūkichi's testimony, although making clear Ishiwara had no connection with the October Incident, does, however, point to a connection with Itagaki, and, furthermore, a connection between Chō and the Kwantung Army. Indeed, at least one rumour suggested that ¥200,000 may have been provided by Itagaki to finance the plot, although another suggested that this sum may have been provided by Marquis Tokugawa Yoshichika to Ōkawa.⁶⁴⁵ Itagaki maintained before the IMTFE that he had no connection with the March Incident or October Incident, or the *Sakurakai*. Itagaki did, however, admit knowing Ōkawa Shūmei, but, despite witness testimony to the contrary, denied having any conversation or even correspondence with Ōkawa for five or six years before 18 September 1931.⁶⁴⁶ The truth regarding the web of relationships and the individuals' complicity is by its very nature, but also doubtless through concerted obfuscation on the defendants' part, difficult to determine.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-201

⁶⁴⁶ *IMTFE - Proceedings Oct. 6-8, op. cit.*, pp. 30323-30324

6 The Establishment of Manchukuo

During testimony before the IMTFE, Tanaka Ryūkichi stated that during a conversation with General Honjō in the summer of 1935, Honjō had expressed that he had come to the conclusion around December 1931 that Manchuria must become an independent state. Itagaki would later go to Tokyo to convey this to the then government and military circles, but found limited support, particularly in regard to full independence.⁶⁴⁷ Notably, however, War Minister Araki Sadao by this time purportedly supported the idea, stating full independence was the only solution to the Manchurian Incident.⁶⁴⁸

On 19 September 1931 the Kwantung Army, with considerable assistance from the *gendarmérie*, had already begun the seizure of the Chinese Postal Administration in Manchuria. This process would be complete by July the following year.⁶⁴⁹ Tellingly, Doihara himself appears to have been involved, one report stating:

A former postal employee of Tientsin, named Tan Ku-yuan, went to Mukden upon the request of Doihara [*sic*] to investigate the possibility of seizing the postal service in the Three Eastern Provinces. This Tan has formulated plans to be presented to the Headquarters of the Kwan-tung [*sic*] Army at Mukden.⁶⁵⁰

Also immediately following the “Incident” of 18 September, the Manchurian salt gabelle was seized, and all revenue frozen and placed under military control.⁶⁵¹ While the independence or annexation of Manchuria was not yet

⁶⁴⁷ IMTFE - *Proceedings Jan. 21-22, op. cit.*, pp. 15853-15854

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15854

⁶⁴⁹ Koo, W., Memorandum on the Japanese Seizure of the Chinese Postal Administration in the Three Eastern Provinces”, 17 August 1932, Box 23, Vladimir D. Pastuhov Papers, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Stanford, California 94305-6010, pp. 1-15

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6

⁶⁵¹ See Koo, W., Memorandum on Japan’s Seizure of the Salt Gabelle”, 3 August 1932, Pearson, C.G.C., “Japanese Interference with Salt Revenues of Manchuria”, and Cleveland, F.A., “Report on the Salt Revenues of Manchuria with Special Reference to Questions Arising out of the Japanese Military Occupation”, 17 December 1931, Box 23, Vladimir D.

decided, certainly the territory had been wrested from Chinese control, and not solely in military terms.

Kwantung Army officers had sought the occupation and full annexation of Manchuria, but Tokyo had not consented. With the return of Chang unworkable, there remained the fundamental problem of how to establish a regime sympathetic to Japan in Manchuria. Doihara Kenji would provide the answer, the establishment of an independent Manchuria through a local independence movement with the encouragement of the Kwantung Army.⁶⁵² The foundation of the state of Manchukuo would follow a series of covert political operations. In Chientao, Koreans were organised in order to instigate a disturbance, justifying Kwantung Army occupation. In Harbin, anti-Japanese propaganda was distributed and bombs thrown at the Japanese embassy, leading to calls for protection. Lieutenant Colonel Hyakutake, head of the Harbin Special Service Organ, was responsible for both actions.⁶⁵³ Colonel Ōsako, head of the Kirin Special Service Organ, succeeded in coercing the Chinese governor to cooperate.⁶⁵⁴ Major Hayashi, head of the Tsitsihar Special Service Organ, attempted to achieve the same but without success.⁶⁵⁵

Doihara had carried out missions in North China and Manchuria as early as 1913 and up to 1918, and by 1922 had been appointed “special agent” to General Banzai. By 1924 Doihara was an advisor to the Chinese government, and by 1928 acted as military advisor to the Manchurian government.⁶⁵⁶ Doihara was at one time advisor to Chang Tso-lin, and is suspected of having been involved in the plot that assassinated him.⁶⁵⁷

Pastuhov Papers, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Stanford, California 94305-6010

⁶⁵² Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 457

⁶⁵³ Shimada, T., “The Extension of Hostilities, 1931-1932”, in Morely, J.W., Ed., *Japan Erupts: The London Naval Conference and the Manchurian Incident, 1928-1932* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1984) p. 261

⁶⁵⁴ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 458

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 458

⁶⁵⁶ “Biographic Report Doihara, Kenji”, 21 February 1950, Folder Doihara, Kenji, Box No. 26, Docheff, Ivan Vol. 2 to Dolezalek, Alexander, 2nd Release of Name Files, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁶⁵⁷ “Doihara, General Kenji”, June 1943, Folder Doihara, Kenji, Box No. 26, Docheff, Ivan Vol. 2 to Dolezalek, Alexander, 2nd Release of Name Files, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD.

One report states Doihara had been imbued early with the doctrine of Toyama Mitsuru of the *Kokuryūkai* (Black Dragon Society), even at one time travelling through Korea disguised as a peddler extolling Tōyama's ideas.⁶⁵⁸ Importantly however, Doihara was one of the few Japanese intelligence officers who had mastered the Chinese language, and furthermore Chinese etiquette, culture and customs, so as to be indistinguishable from the local population when in local dress.⁶⁵⁹ It is thought Doihara instigated the use of plain-clothes agents, putting this system in place in Manchuria during his tenure there. His choice of agents was somewhat unscrupulous however, including local landlords and politicians, bandits, military personnel and local police, coolies, pedlars, fortune-tellers, low-level civil servants and gangsters.⁶⁶⁰ Poor choice of agents would remain a flaw in the Japanese intelligence system and operations thereafter (see below).

Soon after the Manchurian Incident, Doihara was appointed Mayor of Mukden, and would later be sent to Tientsin on a special mission.⁶⁶¹ Key to Kwantung Army planning for a puppet state in Manchuria was the installation of China's former emperor as head of state, and Doihara would call on Pu-yi in Tientsin in October 1931 on the orders of General Honjō⁶⁶², Commanding Officer of the Kwantung Army, and under direction of Colonel Itagaki Seishirō, head of Intelligence. According to Doihara, Itagaki's instruction was for Doihara to convey that Pu-yi, were he to return to Manchuria, would be welcomed by the Kwantung Army. Doihara would later deny personal knowledge of any future plan to establish Pu-yi as the figurehead of a future Manchukuo, but allowed that the Kwantung Army likely had this in mind at

⁶⁵⁸ "Lt. Gen. Kenji Doihara", undated, Folder Doihara, Kenji, Box No. 26, Docheff, Ivan Vol. 2 to Dolezalek, Alexander, 2nd Release of Name Files, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁶⁵⁹ "Doihara, General Kenji", RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶⁰ Untitled, 11 December 1944, Folder Doihara, Kenji, Box No. 26, Docheff, Ivan Vol. 2 to Dolezalek, Alexander, 2nd Release of Name Files, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁶⁶¹ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 21-22, op. cit.*, p. 15928

⁶⁶² Doihara would initially deny this when questioned by Lord Lytton of the Lytton Commission (1931-1932), established to investigate the reasons behind Japan's invasion of Manchuria, admitting only that he had visited Pu-Yi at the end of October, and that at that time the former emperor was receiving threatening letters. Doihara further denied any involvement with Pu-yi coming to Manchuria – "Record of Interview with General Doihara at Changchun, 3/5/32, 12.30 p.m.", Box 23, Vladimir D. Pastuhov Papers, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Stanford, California 94305-6010, pp. 3-5

the time of the meeting. Further, Doihara understood this was likely the reason behind the meeting, and that this would be understood by the abdicated Chinese emperor. Doihara denied categorically that Pu-yi was forced to return to Manchuria, stating Itagaki had expressly forbidden threats or cajolery.⁶⁶³

Based in the Special Service Organ, Mukden, which Doihara would concurrently lead while in his nominal civilian position as Mayor, Doihara effectively reorganised the city's government to his purpose; finally instigating an incident in Tientsin with the Special Service Organ there so that Pu-yi would leave the city and cooperate.⁶⁶⁴ The Kwantung Army would not by this time tolerate Foreign Ministry interference in its attempt to use Pu-yi as a figurehead for a new regime, Doihara actually declaring to the Consulate-General in Tientsin that Manchuria had only come into Japanese hands through the Kwantung Army, and were Tokyo to interfere, the *Kantōgun* would secede; even warning of "political troubles" that would beset Tokyo were this to occur.⁶⁶⁵

Itagaki would acknowledge only that he had been responsible for the travel expenses of Doihara's sojourn to see Pu-yi.⁶⁶⁶ When asked as to whether Itagaki had given any advice to Doihara prior to his departure for Tientsin, Itagaki stated he had only done so as a friend, not being required to do so in terms of responsibility. Asked as to why Doihara had been specifically chosen for this assignment, Itagaki stated that Doihara's role as Mayor had been recently passed to a Chinese, leaving him free to undertake the operation primarily related to information and intelligence-collection in the Tientsin-Peiping area, including the locating of Chang Hsiao-liang's remaining forces north of the Great Wall.⁶⁶⁷ Itagaki would deny knowledge of an earlier operation involving a Japanese named Uezumi, who had been sent to Tientsin to contact the Battalion Commander there to bring Pu-yi to Yingkou.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 15726-15728

⁶⁶⁴ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 458

⁶⁶⁵ Yoshihashi, *op. cit.*, p. 210

⁶⁶⁶ *IMTFE - Proceedings Oct. 6-8, op. cit.*, pp. 30376-30377

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 30375-30381

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 30375-30376

Doihara's receiving "instruction" from Itagaki regarding Pu-yi seems to demonstrate Honjō being more a figurehead in terms of political strategy in the Kwantung Army, Itagaki in his intelligence role being the real power in this area.⁶⁶⁹ Furthermore, when pushed concerning his own methodology, and whether this mirrored that of the Kwantung Army, Doihara stated, "I do not know what method the Kwantung Army used, however, it is my motto that whatever the order I receive I see to it that purpose is accomplished."⁶⁷⁰

The Self-Government Guidance Board

Doihara, the Kwantung Army (and by extension the Mukden Special Service Agency), acknowledging direct annexation was impossible, now sought to install in Manchuria the vision of the *Manshū Seinen Renmei*, that of a racially harmonious state, sympathetic to Japan, as the best compromise. The newly-formed state, consisting of China's four northeastern provinces and Mongolia, was to be nominally a Chinese regime, although foreign relations, defence, transportation and communications were to be entrusted to the Japanese.⁶⁷¹ The Manchurian Youth League on 20 October resolved to cooperate with the Kwantung Army, refuting any right of the League of Nations or the Nanjing Nationalist government to intervene in the establishment of a new state in Manchuria. The *Kantōgun* welcomed this support, at this time still unable to gain formal Japanese involvement, including that of the South Manchurian Railway.⁶⁷²

The Kwantung Army, supported by key officers, including Ishiwara and Itagaki, would establish the Self Government Guidance Board on 10 November. Along with Chinese and Manchurians, members of the Board included Kasagi Ryōmei and Nakano Koitsu, organisers of the MYL. Ishiwara before the IMTFE initially stated the Board came under command of the Kwantung Army, going further to suggest Itagaki was political advisor to the Board, and that anything done by the Board had to be sanctioned by the

⁶⁶⁹ Yoshihashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 209

⁶⁷⁰ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 21-22, op. cit.*, pp. 15727-15729

⁶⁷¹ Ogata, *op. cit.*, pp. 76

⁶⁷² Yamamuro, S., *Manchuria Under Japanese Dominion*, translated by Fogel, J.A. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006) p. 65

Kantōgun, but later retracted this, stating Itagaki had almost no connection and had not been the Board's political advisor; and further that the *Kantōgun*'s policy was not to interfere in its activities, but that naturally the Board would go to the *Kantōgun* on questions related to the preservation of peace and order. Almost half of the Board's membership of approximately one hundred and twenty are however thought to have been Japanese. When asked as to how such an organisation was established so rapidly following the Manchurian Incident, Ishiwara stated that an organisation of this type had been researched by Nakano and Kasagi for some time prior, and ultimately the *Yūhōkai* (Majestic Peak Society, another *Tetsudō*-based association) and the *Manshū Seinen Renmei* had amalgamated to form the Self-Government Guidance Board.⁶⁷³

Doihara was well aware that the establishment of Manchukuo would circumvent the sovereignty of China guaranteed in the Nine Power Agreement.⁶⁷⁴ As Doihara took up his position as head of the Special Service Section in Harbin in 1932, he proclaimed: "The independence of Manchuria and Manchukuo is inevitable, for this is the policy resolved upon. In spite of everything that the League of Nations can say, neither Chiang Kai-shek nor Chang Hsiao-liang will succeed in changing the situation."⁶⁷⁵

The tenure of the Self Government Guidance Board would be short-lived. In January and February 1932 the *Kantōgun* held staff conferences wherein the future state of Manchukuo and its governance would be discussed. The Chinese governors of the provinces of Fengtien, Heilungjiang and Kirin would subsequently form a Supreme Administrative Council to coordinate and formulate a plan for the establishment of a new state in Manchuria, and in time a Northeastern Administrative Council would be established to assume supreme authority over the above three provinces and the special district of Mukden. Initially, the form of the new state served as a point of contention, but in time it was decided Pu-yi was to be installed as

⁶⁷³ *IMTFE - Proceedings May 15-16, op. cit.*, pp. 22246-22252

⁶⁷⁴ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 21-22, op. cit.*, pp. 15728-15729

⁶⁷⁵ "Current Biography, Vol. 3, No. 3 – Doihara, Kenji", March 1942, Folder Doihara, Kenji, Box No. 26, Docheff, Ivan Vol. 2 to Dolezalek, Alexander, 2nd Release of Name Files, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 2

head of state, in line with the Kwantung Army's decision. Itagaki Seishirō would convince Pu-yi to accept the title of Regent.⁶⁷⁶ The Northeastern Administrative Council would issue a declaration of independence from China on 18 February 1932. On 29 February the All-Manchuria Convention would be held in Mukden, wherein a resolution was adopted accepting Pu-yi as provisional head of state, and the emperor was inaugurated on 9 March, the same day as principal government ministers were appointed. Finally, other nations were informed of the establishment of Manchukuo, and letters were exchanged between Pu-yi and Commander of the Kwantung Army, Honjō Shigeru, on 10 March (this despite their having been signed on 9 March).⁶⁷⁷ The puppet state of Manchukuo was thus established, and the usurpation of remaining Chinese national assets, including the seizure of maritime customs (again with sizable assistance from military intelligence officers and others in “plain clothes”) would rapidly follow.⁶⁷⁸

This third attempt at an independent Manchuria was, in contrast to the attempts in 1912 and 1916, led by experienced intelligence officers, including Doihara, and aided by the substantial intelligence network in place. Through its Secret Service Organs, Japan held the knowledge of whom to approach to meet their intended aims. In their establishment of what would become Manchukuo, these men first sought to establish local governments representing legitimate regional concerns, then “persuaded” these to declare their independence, both from Chiang and China. Secondly, Pu-yi, China's last emperor; was also “persuaded” by Doihara Kenji to serve as nominal head of state. At the local level, Chinese concerns were given effective autonomy. Within the overarching Manchukuo government however Japanese control would be instigated and all pervasive.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁶ Ogata, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-130

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 130

⁶⁷⁸ Shanghai Office of the Inspectorate General of Customs, “The Seizure of the Chinese Maritime Customs Establishment in Manchuria”, 21 July 1932, Box 23, Vladimir D. Pastuhov Papers, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Stanford, California 94305-6010

⁶⁷⁹ Weland, *op. cit.*, pp. 457-458

The puppet state of Manchukuo

Five months following the Mukden Incident, on 18 February 1932 the Japanese had established the “independent” state of Manchukuo, with Beijing’s last emperor, Henry Pu-yi enthroned as puppet head-of-state in March that year. Of the twenty-six officers it is claimed were involved in the Manchurian Incident, either implicitly or complicity, including the subsequent establishment of the puppet state, eleven were involved in intelligence, nine of these predominantly involved in Chinese affairs. Of the ten officers most deeply involved, eight were of intelligence with seven of these primarily connected with China.⁶⁸⁰

The government of Manchukuo was forced to accept Japanese “advisors”, Pu-yi as head of state having “requested” this assistance in a letter to the Commander of the Kwantung Army. These advisors were attached at all levels of government, including within the Privy Council. No activity was to be undertaken however without the approval of these advisors, the lead advisor to be in constant communication with the Kwantung Army and their respective supreme advisors. Japan would, however, seek to obfuscate the true nature of its control from outward nations.⁶⁸¹ A central government was established in Hsinking, the capital, and Manchuria’s former three provinces were expanded to nine, each with its own provincial government. Smaller city and district governments were established, but an executive head led all of these governments. No city or county councils existed to assist these leaders.⁶⁸² The substantial latitude allowed successively lower level officials in their interpretation of laws and directives eventually led to inconsistency and confusion across Manchuria.⁶⁸³

Members of the former Self-Government Guidance Board had anticipated employment as “Japanese” officials within the Manchukuo

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 446

⁶⁸¹ Ogata, *op. cit.*, p. 123

⁶⁸² Stewart, John, Rev., “Manchuria Under the Japanese” - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 2

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*

Government. In time, however, few would be in the new central government of Manchukuo, selections having been undertaken, tellingly, by Wachi Takaji, now a staff officer of the Kwantung Army, from a list drafted by Matsuki Tamotsu (Kyō) of the *Tetsudō*'s Research Department⁶⁸⁴, the architect of the new administrative system to be put in place as the Manchukuo government.⁶⁸⁵

Of consequence is the calibre of Japanese officials employed. One British consul based in Manchuria stated that the Kwantung Army was "...making the serious mistake of trying to run Manchuria with the scum of Japan...". A great number of disenfranchised Japanese from the homeland were thus able to gain employment in Manchuria. In time, things would improve in this respect, but only in so far as these same undesirable public servants left for Northern China as "opportunities" arose there, leaving behind a "...more cultured, courteous and reasonable type..." of Japanese official.⁶⁸⁶ Chinese employed by the Japanese in the Manchurian administration were predominantly motivated by salary and were often unreliable. The Japanese puppet emperor and those employed in the Manchurian government would be held in low regard by the local populace, and for this reason administrative positions attracted only applicants of low credibility. Few Japanese could speak Chinese well although they might understand it. This would often lead to unfair treatment of local Chinese, particularly in areas such as policing.⁶⁸⁷ Interpreters were used prolifically, these often Korean. This in itself created problems for both the Chinese and Japanese. With a growing number of Koreans placed in positions of authority by the Japanese, already existent animosity between local Chinese and Koreans was aggravated.⁶⁸⁸ This led to an increasingly inefficient administration, exacerbated by the Japanese custom, both in government and business, of transferring officials after only one or two years to different roles. This, in turn, led to both a lack of continuity in terms of expertise, relationships established by those in a particular role prior to departure, but also in record keeping, worsened by

⁶⁸⁴ Fogel, *op. cit.*, p. 136

⁶⁸⁵ Yamamuro, *op. cit.*, p. 131

⁶⁸⁶ Stewart, John, Rev., RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 3

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4

“government by telephone”. With both Chinese and Japanese officials avoiding committing anything to paper, responsibility could often be avoided by officials simply by stating particular files could not be located, or even that telephone communications had been unclear.⁶⁸⁹ All of this combined meant a lack of specialisation in any role, a factor in the inadequacy and inefficiency in both Japanese governance of occupied territories, and, as importantly, its intelligence services.

Manchukuo was now part of greater Japan, and used as a buffer state, both politically and militarily, between Japan and Russia. Japanese officers and “advisors” were throughout the government of Manchukuo. Additionally, three provinces had Japanese governors, other provinces having Chinese governors with Japanese vice governors.⁶⁹⁰ The *Mantetsu*, which had once called itself more than just a railway company, being rather “the carrier of the light of civilization into Manchuria”, in addition to its railway enterprise had also been involved in coal mining, railway workshops, hotels, warehouses, wharves and harbours, hospitals, shipping and dockyards, factories and other industrial concerns, as well as joint stock companies. Before its renunciation of its Manchurian extraterritoriality, the *Mantetsu* also administered the Railway Zone and all primary and secondary schools within, maintained a Geological Research Institution, and furthermore conducted farming and agricultural experiments. Thus was the *Mantetsu* inextricably entwined with the development of Manchuria in all areas.⁶⁹¹ The *Kokusai Unyu* (International Express), established 1926, operated as a subsidiary company of the *Mantetsu*. Handling express and shipping throughout North China and Manchuria, it further served as an important intelligence channel for the

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4

⁶⁹⁰ “Japanese Intelligence and Propaganda in the Administration of Manchuria”, 3 December 1945 - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, pp. 1-3

⁶⁹¹ “South Manchuria Railway Company”, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, pp. 3-4

Japanese Army, despite penetration by Soviet agents.⁶⁹² Following the establishment of Manchukuo, however, the Kwantung Army forced the SMR to divest many of its ventures, leaving it only with control of the railways, and by 1933 the *Kantōgun* had forced the SMR into becoming little more than an influential research unit of the *Kantōgun* for the economic development of Manchuria.⁶⁹³

Manchuria was thus essentially run by the semi-independent Kwantung Army in the name of Imperial Japan. Little to no pretence existed that economic and security improvements were for the benefit of the local populace. The government installed following the Manchurian Incident was autocratic, with Chinese (often of the former regime) only nominally placed in positions of authority, including the roles of Emperor and Prime Minister. Importantly, deputies and other direct “subordinates” were the actual decision-makers, and were always Japanese. Government departments always had a Japanese military advisor attached.⁶⁹⁴ An organisational chart of the Manchurian Foreign Office demonstrates the pervasiveness of Japanese’ in important Manchukuoan governmental organs (see Appendix A).

It should be noted, however, that none of this could have been accomplished without the length of experience Japan had in the region, nor without the extraordinary amount of planning undertaken by the intelligence services, both formal and informal. As Japan opened new fronts, and sought to transpose its Manchurian success elsewhere, Japan would underestimate what had been required, and non-commensurate experience and planning would undermine later efforts in China and Southeast Asia.

Manchukuo’s Intelligence apparatus

Directly beneath the puppet emperor was the Council of State Affairs. Acting as central administrative authority, puppet intelligence functions emanated

⁶⁹² Untitled, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁶⁹³ Myers, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-32

⁶⁹⁴ Stewart, John, Rev., RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 2

from here. Beneath the Council, the General Affairs Board held substantial power. The Manchukuo Government in Hsinking maintained an intelligence organisation similar to that of the Japanese, and Japanese in fact staffed key positions within. IJN Captain Matao Okino, a key source in our understanding of Japanese Intelligence through the period, thought it amusing that “here and there, particularly in positions of authority, Japanese names could be seen”.⁶⁹⁵ It is estimated that 100,000 “advisers” were employed in the Manchukuoan intelligence system, these for the most part recruited by the *Kempei Tai*.⁶⁹⁶

The General Affairs Board, directly beneath the Council of State, held much of the power of the Manchukuo government, controlled the Intelligence Division, and was itself led, if by proxy, by the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army.⁶⁹⁷ Rokuzō Takebe was head of the General Affairs Board, and was furthermore concurrently head of the Police Affairs Department.⁶⁹⁸ Rokuzō was thus in command of intelligence in Manchukuo, as demonstrated in the chart below. As such, the highest authority in Manchukuo, both administratively and in terms of intelligence, was the commanding officer of the *Kantōgun*, concurrently Japanese ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary for Manchukuo.⁶⁹⁹ The Chinese system of government in Manchuria before Japan’s occupation of it had been non-invasive. Under the Japanese system, however, bureaucracy expanded exponentially, with forms and permits now required for issues and activities beyond the comprehension

⁶⁹⁵ Memorandum for Lieutenant Commander Peter Belin “Okino, Matao, Captain, IJN – interview with, on 16 Jul 1945” 17 July 1945, Folder Okino, Mateo Capt. I.J.N., Box No. 4, Individuals (A to Z) and Capt. Matao Okino (I.J.N.), Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 7

⁶⁹⁶ Lamont-Brown, R., *Kempei Tai: Japan’s Dreaded Military Police* (Stroud, England: Sutton Publishing, 1998) p. 66

⁶⁹⁷ “Japanese Intelligence and Propaganda in the Administration of Manchuria”, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 3

⁶⁹⁸ “List of Officials”, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁶⁹⁹ “Government - Administration”, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

of the local population. Consequently, blackmail and evasion ensued, as did spying in response. Despite discontent in Manchuria, this was low level, with nothing that would eventuate in revolt against the Japanese.⁷⁰⁰

The following diagrams show the organisation of, and further the lines of control for intelligence, policing and propaganda, within the government of Manchukuo:

⁷⁰⁰ Stewart, John, Rev., RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9

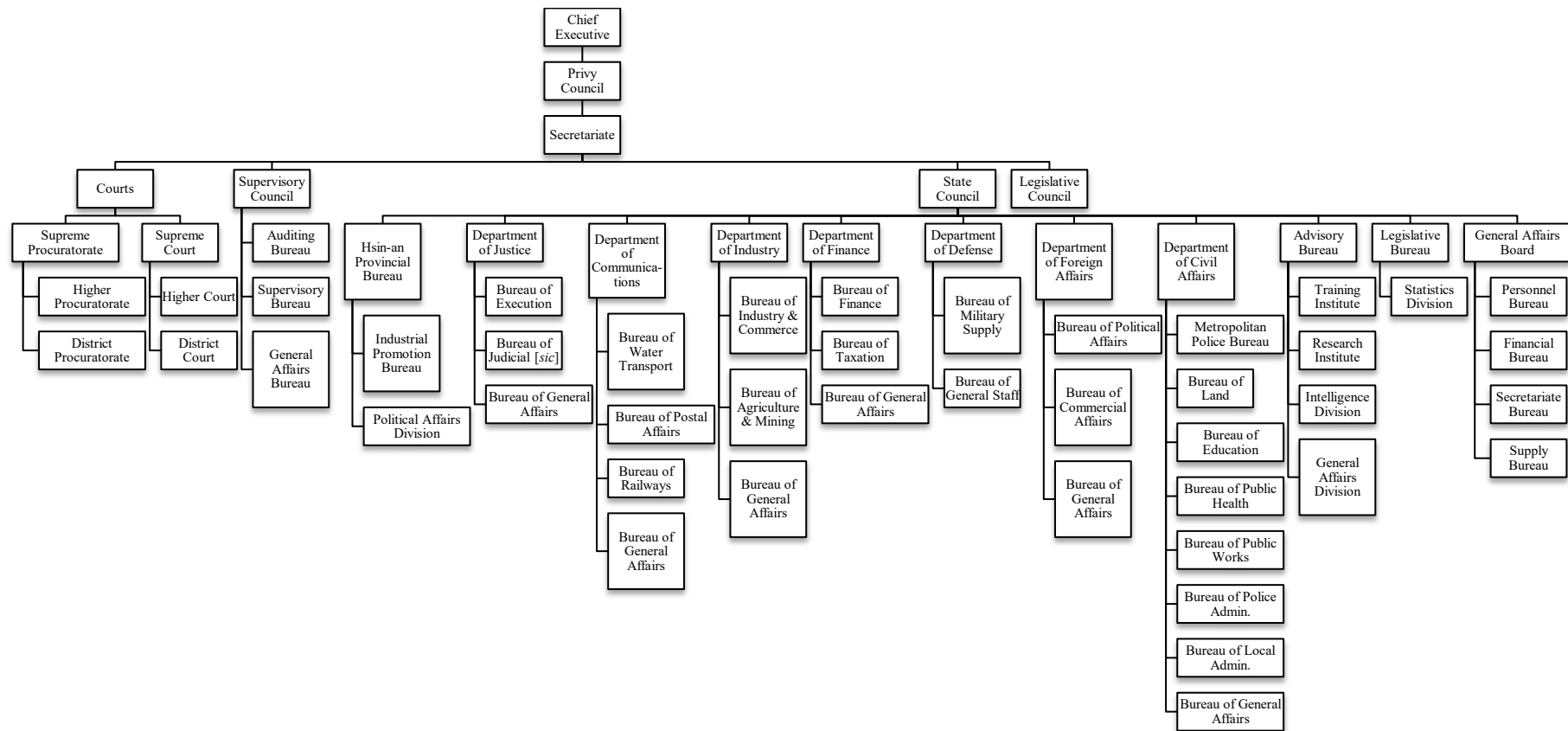


Figure 3. Organisation of the Manchukuo Government⁷⁰¹

⁷⁰¹ Hsieh, C., Minister for Foreign Affairs, “Department of Foreign Affairs: The State of Manchuria”, Appendix, 12 March 1932, Box 26, Vladimir D. Pastuhov Papers, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Stanford, California 94305-6010

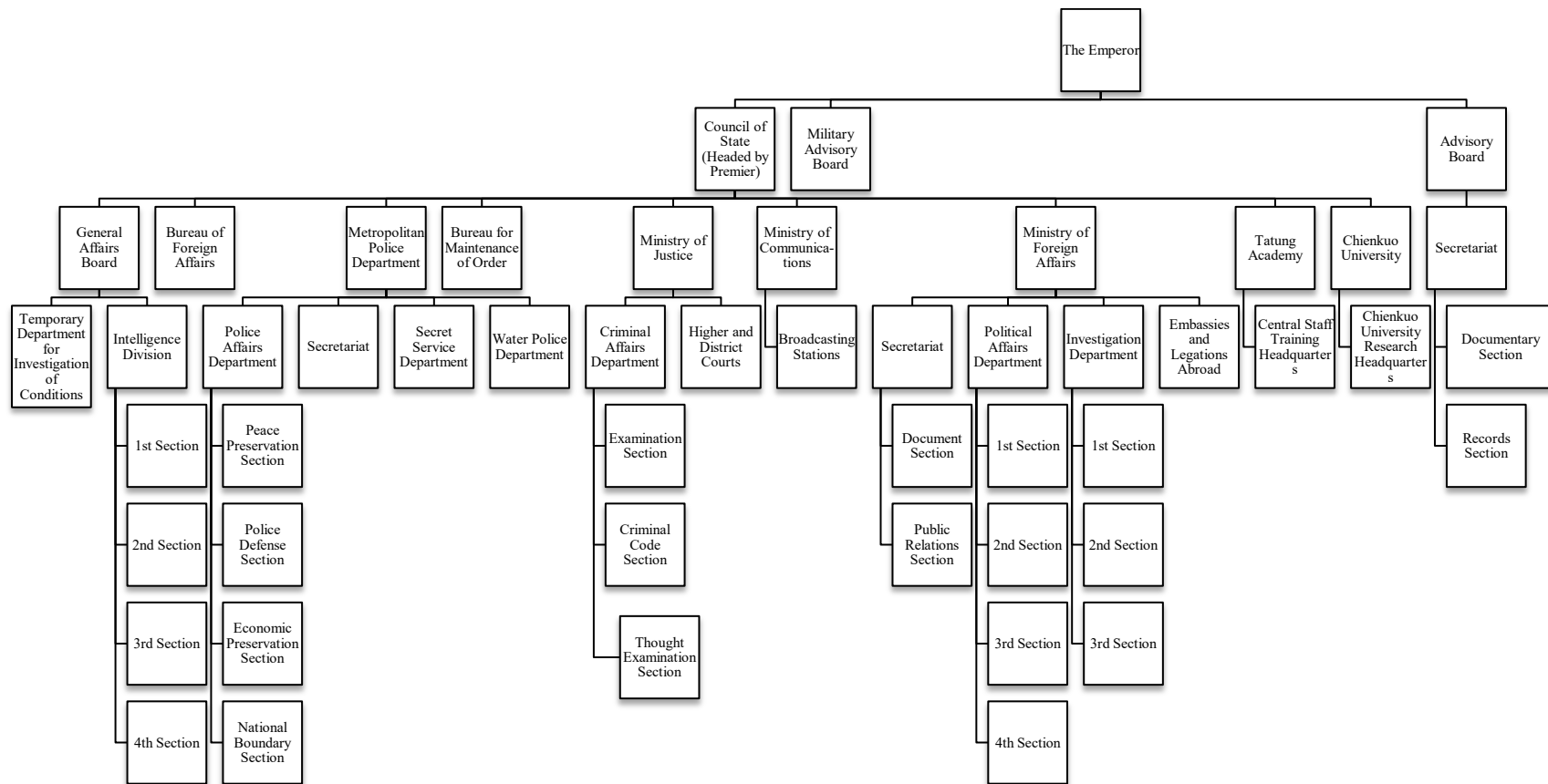


Figure 4. Lines of control for intelligence, policing, and propaganda in the government of Manchukuo (thought accurate through 1942)⁷⁰²

⁷⁰² “Japanese Intelligence and Propaganda in the Administration of Manchuria”, 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 3

The US Military identifies a “Public Peace Ministry” (alternatively, called the Special Security Bureau; likely one and the same as the Bureau for Maintenance of Order identified above), as most active of the three principal Manchukuoan Governmental agencies that would eventually become involved in counter-intelligence and counter-sabotage activities. This Ministry is said to have maintained the Police Affairs Bureau, tasked with general policing and non-military intelligence; its Special Security Section being responsible for counter-intelligence and counter-sabotage activities, with the same structure mirrored in provincial administrations.⁷⁰³ The disparity between these sources is minimal however, especially so given Rokuzō Takebe’s concurrent leadership of both agencies primarily responsible for intelligence in Manchukuo, and the Ministry being administratively responsible, but not necessarily the client in terms of intelligence products.

Other lesser intelligence organs of the Manchukuoan Government included the Manchukuo Railway Police and the Supreme Procurator’s Office. The Manchukuo Railway Police, operating as an organ of the Manchukuo Ministry of Communication, was responsible for police authority over railroads and their installations. The Public Peace Ministry held no jurisdiction in this area. As Communist sabotage activities were primarily directed at these facilities, the railway police began their own counter-intelligence and counter-sabotage operations, working in cohesion with the Special Security Section (or Bureau).⁷⁰⁴ The Supreme Procurator’s Office of Manchukuo advised on counter-intelligence and counter-sabotage matters, having considerable experience in questioning those suspected of political offences, including conspiracy or intelligence activities against the Manchukuoan Government. The Office was further able to assist in locating and detaining suspects.⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰³ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit*, p. 111

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 113

The Concordia Association

Formerly, the Japanese had been fearful of creating mass parties, rather utilising patriotic societies (that were rather more limited) to aid in domestic and foreign concerns; leadership being drawn from an élite few.⁷⁰⁶ In order to unite the local populace under the same (ultimately pro-Japanese) banner, the Japanese introduced a political expedient in the Concordia Association (in Chinese, *Hsieh Ho Hui*); formed from the former *Manshū Seinen Renmei*.⁷⁰⁷ The Concordia Association, a populist political “party” whose membership would include essentially all government officials and any and all others able to be persuaded (including a majority of teachers, large business representatives, and a substantial proportion of the general population). Membership included a right to wear the Association’s uniform (quasi-military in appearance), and many did so, although it should be noted that the cost of this uniform was significantly less than normal Chinese clothing.⁷⁰⁸ Furthermore, wearing the uniform offered a substantial level of obfuscation against attention, given the number wearing exactly the same and the appearance of conformity it must have conveyed.⁷⁰⁹

Established 27 February 1932 by the Kwantung Army, the Concordia Association was staffed initially by rejected military officers. Originally it was tasked with price controls and regimenting and documenting all farming activities in Manchuria, completing this task by 1935. In its dealings with large firms, price controls were put in place so as to strangle independent firms, which subsequently had to cease business. When this occurred, the government was always available to purchase these operations at a substantially reduced price. Finally, middleman activities were eliminated.⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁶ Norman, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-6

⁷⁰⁷ Duara, P., *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern (State & Society in East Asia)* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003) pp. 62-63

⁷⁰⁸ Stewart, John, Rev., RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3

⁷¹⁰ “Administration”, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

The Concordia Association, in the absence of any parliament, was meant to operate as intermediary between the people and the Government. The Concordia Association operated in one direction only however, serving as the mouthpiece of the Government. In time, positions within the Government and the Concordia Association became interchangeable, in effect making the Association an organ of the Government, belying its *prima facie* role as intermediary between ruler and ruled.⁷¹¹

The Concordia Association sought to instill a sense of determination in the population, but also concurrently aimed at a unification of identity of the races of Manchukuo.⁷¹² Notably, the Japanese sought a “...suitable arrangement of races...” not to be confused with racial equality, and tempered only by a claimed desire for mutual co-prosperity, although this last point was dependent on an “...understanding of the special characteristics of the races which should be put to the best advantage and preserved, so that harmony may be attained”.⁷¹³ Thus was Japanese colonisation and subsequent imperialism sought and justified.

A stated aim of the Concordia Association was to unify the various races resident in Manchukuo toward the common aim of establishing an ideal state. Membership in time consisted of officials, scholars, merchants, lawyers, workers and peasantry. Leadership of the association rested with the Premier of Manchukuo. Central headquarters was located in Hsinking, and oversaw provincial headquarters, and the metropolitan headquarters in Hsinking. A training and education system was established by the association in 1936, eventuating in the establishment of seventy schools, and by 1941 membership was 1,877,902, with the Association having 3,581 sub-branches. These sub-branches operated as frontline units of the Association, operating as the primary organ of guidance in their districts. Although the Japanese

⁷¹¹ Stewart, John, Rev., RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 3

⁷¹² Untitled, 31 August 1944 - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁷¹³ “Propaganda, racial”, 2 October 1942 - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

denied the Concordia Association operated as an organ of government, it was conceded “the relationship between the two is well unified through their members which concurrently belong to both”.⁷¹⁴

Concordia Association branches and sub-branches exercised control over the population of Manchukuo through the use of the *hōkō* system (known in Manchukuo as “*pao chia*”), under which the head of each household, and each group of households, is responsible for the loyalty and activities of those within. *Hsien*, similar to counties, cities, towns and villages, were divided into a set number of households, these known as “*pao*”, “*chia*” and “*pi*”. With the establishment of the Farm Household Association in 1943 this state “spy-hostage” system was extended across all of Manchuria.⁷¹⁵ It was reported as late as December 1943 that branches of the Concordia Association would be established at the village level charged with their guidance.⁷¹⁶

The Concordia Association would ultimately be the primary instrument of thought control in Manchukuo, further responsible for total war principles of mobilisation, production, and information.⁷¹⁷ Its first figurehead was Chang Ching-Wei (Zhang Jinghui), the Chinese warlord installed as Manchukuo’s first Premier, under whom the central headquarters located in Hsinking nominally operated. Tellingly, Rokuzō Takebe, concurrently president of the Manchukuo General Affairs Board and also head of Police Affairs, in fact also led the association’s central headquarters.⁷¹⁸ In later years, the Concordia Association was led by a Japanese general, dropping all pretence of civil administration or purpose.⁷¹⁹ Thus, it may be seen that the Concordia Association operated as an extended organ of Japanese administration, under Japanese control in like manner to all other

⁷¹⁴ “Concordia Association (Hsieh-ho-hui)”, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁷¹⁵ “Japanese Intelligence and Propaganda in the Administration of Manchuria”, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 10

⁷¹⁶ Untitled, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*

⁷¹⁷ “Japanese Intelligence and Propaganda in the Administration of Manchuria”, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 10

⁷¹⁸ The source here incorrectly refers to Rokuzō Takeda, not Rokuzō Takebe - *Ibid.*, p. 10

⁷¹⁹ *Ibid.*

governmental institutions of the Manchukuo Government, with a Japanese “second-in-command”, and ultimately as an extension of internal intelligence operations given Rokuzō Takebe’s contemporaneous roles.

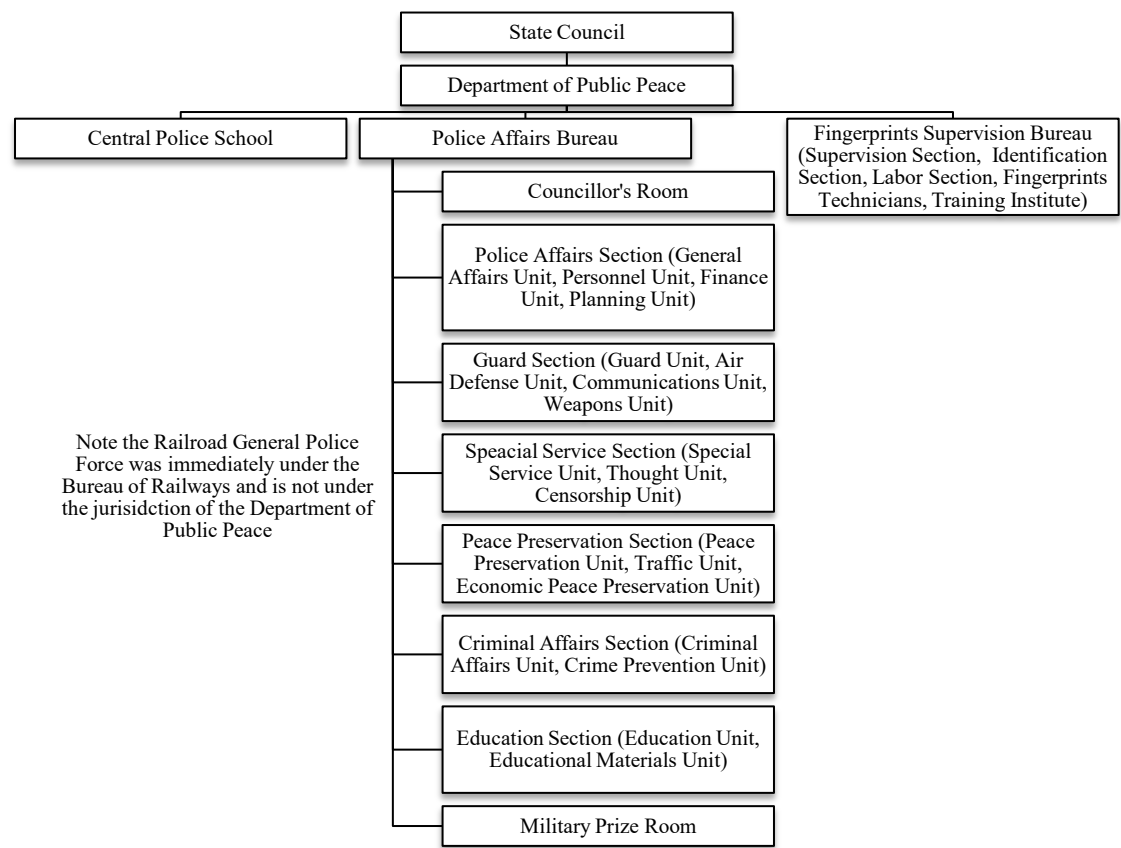


Figure 5. Central Police Administration in Hsinking, Manchukuo, as of December 1940⁷²⁰

⁷²⁰ “Central Police Administration in Hsinking, Manchukuo as of December 1940” - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

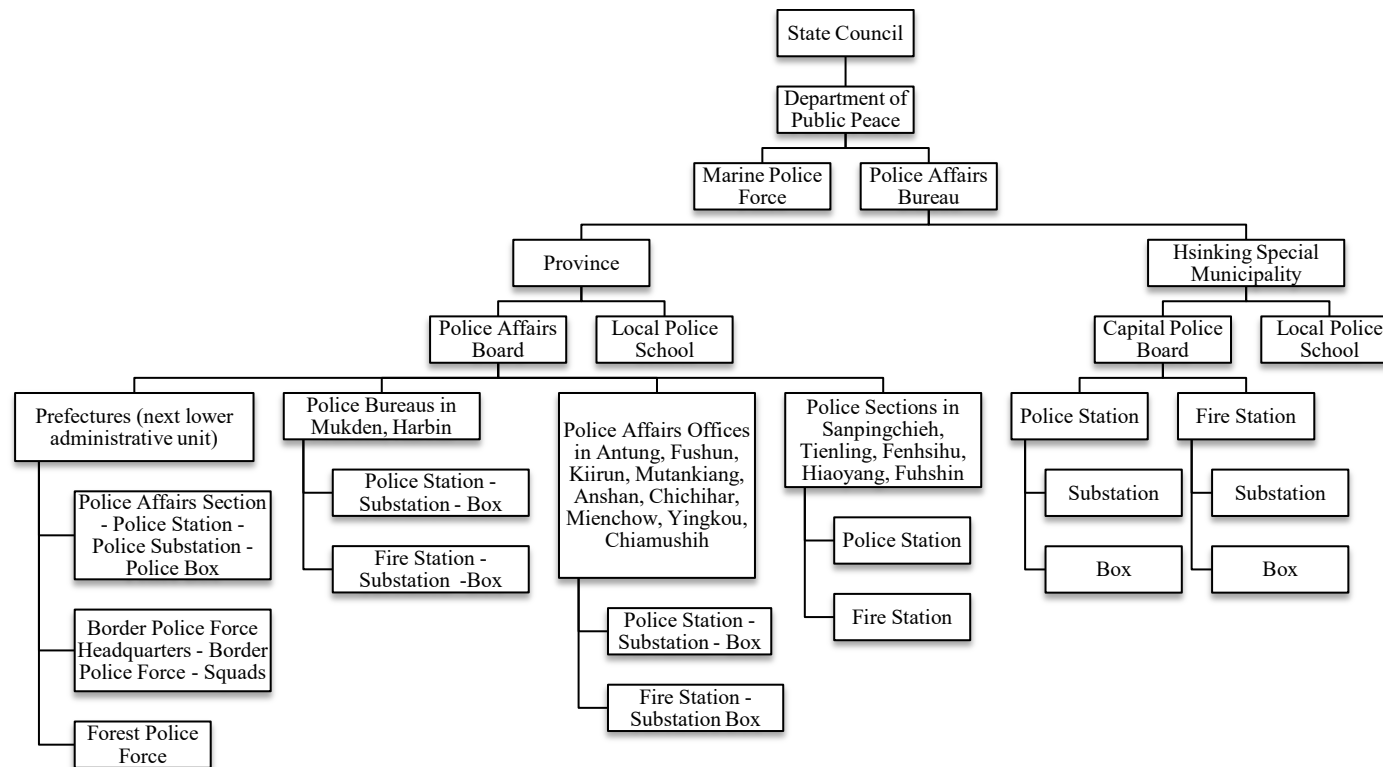


Figure 6. Local Police Administration in Manchukuo as of December 1940⁷²¹

⁷²¹ "Local Police Administration in Manchukuo as of December 1940" - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

The Manchukuo Army

Following the Manchurian Incident and the establishment of Manchukuo, from 1932 the commander of the Kwantung Army would be a role of increasing importance, serving concurrently as ambassador to Manchukuo. The position of commander would come to be held by such important figures as former Inspector-General of Military Education, Mutō Nobuyoshi; former Supreme War Councillor Hishikari Takashi; former War Minister Minami Jirō; and former Vice Chief of Staff Ueda Kenkichi. The post of Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army would come to be held by lieutenant generals with hopes of one day becoming Vice Minister of War or the Vice Chief of General Staff, and even the role of Vice Chief of General Staff of the Kwantung Army would come to be held by Major Generals. The post of Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army came to be held by such luminaries of Japan's military history as Okamura Yasuji, Itagaki Seishirō, Imamura Hitoshi and Ishiwara Kanji. From the Manchurian Incident to the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Kwantung Army would be essential in formulating Japan's foreign and China policy.⁷²²

Supreme command of the Manchukuo National Army was in the hands of the puppet emperor Pu-yi, this being in line with the constitutional law of Manchukuo. According to a memorandum exchanged between General Honjō, commanding officer of the Kwantung Army and the emperor, dated 10 March 1932, and also the Japan-Manchukuo Protocol, Japan and Manchukuo were to cooperate in their national defense, Japan holding the right to station its troops in Manchuria, but there was no provision within stating command could be delegated to Japan.

At the completion of the protocol, however, the secret Defensive Military Treaty was signed between Manchukuo and the Japanese military authorities, including Lieutenant General Kuniaki Koiso, then Vice Chief of Staff, Kwantung Army; Rear Admiral Kobayashi, Chief of the Naval Mission in Manchukuo; and Minister of Military Administration Chang. In the treaty, Japan was empowered to command Manchukuoan forces in cases of invasion

⁷²² Kitaoka, *op. cit.*, p. 350

by an enemy, or “cooperative fighting actions in order to maintain public peace” (for example, in the case of suppressing bandits). Thus, delegation of command could ostensibly not occur during peacetime, but in most instances of battle, however minor, delegation of command to Japanese commanders was, in fact, possible. Only with the abolition of extraterritorial rights in December 1937 was the first clause of the Defensive Military Treaty made public. The second provision, that of right of command, was not.⁷²³

From the beginning of Japan’s occupation of Manchuria Chinese warlords were employed as both military and political leaders. These included Chang Ching-hui, Chang Ju-peng, Yu Shen-cheng and Yu Chih-shan. Proving themselves to be inefficient however, following the seizure of Jehol province in 1933 the National Army of Manchuria underwent reorganisation.⁷²⁴

The National Military Service Law was essentially to rid Manchuria of the private soldiery that had existed previously under Manchurian warlords, and to raise their quality. However, the Manchukuo Army was established for purposes of public peace only, not for purposes of national defence in the truest sense as might be required in a conflict with Soviet Russia, for example. This is demonstrable through its lack of provision for a reserve corps, and, further, its static number of around 80,000 men.⁷²⁵

The Japanese would only begin to conscript an army in Manchukuo in 1941-1942, somewhat late considering the broadening of Japan’s wartime fronts. Interestingly, the Japanese sought for these forces only Chinese of “good character” and of, relatively speaking, better education. This was counter-intuitive for the Chinese, who thought “...you did not use good iron to make nails and you did not use good men to make soldiers.” This was a mistake on the part of the Japanese, as anti-Japanese sentiment was highest amongst educated Chinese. At the very least, a loyal force could not to be developed in this manner. Were the Japanese to have conscripted from the

⁷²³ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 12-15*, International Military Tribunal for the Far East records, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, California 94305-6010, pp. 37110-37112

⁷²⁴ “Administration”, undated, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*

⁷²⁵ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 12-15, op. cit.*, pp. 37112-37113

lower classes, insofar as they were not required to turn on their own, these would likely have served better.⁷²⁶

Were a detachment of the Manchukuo Army sent from Manchuria to North China or Mongolia, Chinese troops were intermixed with Japanese and Koreans. As each nationality kept watch over one another, their fighting capacity was not diminished. There was no detachment comprised entirely of Manchus.⁷²⁷ In terms of intelligence, the commanding officer of an intelligence section in Manchukuo (both with the army and otherwise) was always a military officer. Furthermore, all top positions in intelligence were given only to Japanese both born and raised in Japan.⁷²⁸ Expatriate Japanese, if only for a short term, were not considered suitable and career prospects for them were dim. This would lead to substantial dissension within the ranks, and further an increased propensity for corruption as Japanese themselves offered freedom for a bribe, or even simply to discredit direct superiors.⁷²⁹

The *Kempei Tai* in Manchuria

The *Kempei Tai* (Japanese *gendarmérie*) of the Japanese homeland was known as the “Imperially Appointed Gendarmerie” (*Chokurei Kempei*).⁷³⁰ Here, the *Kempei Tai* operated under Military Administration, under command of the *Kempei Shireikan* [contextually translated as Provost-Marshal], and, in turn, under command of the War Ministry.⁷³¹ The *Kempei*

⁷²⁶ Stewart, John, Rev., RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 7

⁷²⁷ “Counter-Intelligence Abroad”, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁷²⁸ “Administration”, undated, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁰ “Report from Captured Personnel and Material Branch Military Intelligence Service, US War Department”, undated, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 2

⁷³¹ Interrogation of Major Kamizumi, Item 1955, S.E.A.T.I.C. Intelligence Bulletin No. 211, 6 October 1945, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section

Tai in Japan proper did however take orders from different authorities, this dependent on the area in which they were stationed. The *gendarmerie*, during peacetime at least, was responsible to the War Minister for military duties, to the Minister for Home Affairs in relation to work with the civil police, and to the Minister for Justice when duties related to the administration of law.⁷³² In the “fortress zones” of Korea, Formosa, Karafuto and Manchuria however, *Kempei Tai* units were primarily under command of the respective commander-in-chief, but could also be called upon to assist civil police when necessary.⁷³³

Laws passed in 1919 and 1937 established volunteer auxiliaries to the *Kempei Tai* in Korea and Manchuria from the native population. Personnel so employed could hold rank up to the equivalent of sergeant major and came under direct command of the *Kempei Tai* unit in their area. Auxiliary units were also drawn from formations to suit current needs.⁷³⁴ Military police auxiliaries employed within Manchukuo were thus under command of the commanding officer, Kwantung Army. These auxiliaries were divided into four classes, corresponding to those of regular military police, and were employed until 31 March two years after induction (but could serve voluntarily until 45 years of age).⁷³⁵

Duties of the *Kempei Tai* in the field included:

- i) Preservation of military secrets
- ii) Investigation of enemy agents
- iii) Defence against enemy propaganda

(SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 19

⁷³² “Japanese Military Police”, 25 July 1944, Folder Military Police (*Kempei Tai*), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 1

⁷³³ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁷³⁵ “Administration: Police”, 9 December 1945 - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

- iv) Gathering of information pertinent to peace and order
- v) Inspection and control of correspondence and opinion
- vi) Repression of hostile inhabitants
- vii) Dealing with regulation infringements and general lawlessness
- viii) Supervision of canteens, movement and civilians in military employ
- ix) Supervision of hotels, post offices and depots
- x) Other emergency duties as required⁷³⁶

As the *Kempei Tai* was the only police force in the Kwantung Army, itself holding responsibilities surpassing those normally vested in an army, the Kwantung Army *Kempei Tai* acted outside its normal army-related duties and directed much of its attention to general intelligence duties.⁷³⁷ It did, however, respect the autonomous counterintelligence and counter-sabotage operations of Manchukuoan organisations.⁷³⁸ When a unit or soldier (or civilian employee) was requested to assist the *Kempei Tai*, they were to comply insofar as their own duties were not hampered. Detachment Commanders were able to, depending on conditions, request auxiliary *gendarmes* from their senior ranking commander, who in turn was to comply in as far as conditions allowed.⁷³⁹ Thus, the *Kempei Tai* operated primarily, when involved in intelligence duties, as a counterintelligence unit only. Positive intelligence was to remain the jurisdiction of military field formations.

In addition to that done by the *Kempei Tai*, further counterintelligence was undertaken by Kwantung Army and Manchukuoan “public peace agencies”, but only in reaction to Soviet and Chinese intelligence and

⁷³⁶ “Military Police: Duties of Military Police”, undated, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁷³⁷ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, p. 111

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 111

⁷³⁹ “Military Police”, undated, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

sabotage operations.⁷⁴⁰ No planning had been undertaken before Japan's occupation and the subsequent establishment of Manchukuo. Numerous agencies therefore began counterintelligence and counter-sabotage operations, but only reactively.⁷⁴¹ Little coordination existed initially between these agencies, between the Kwantung Army and Manchukuoan Government, or even between governmental agencies themselves. At times, these agencies even worked at cross-purposes.⁷⁴² This would be indicative of what would follow in China, an all-pervasive, but not necessarily well-delineated or funded network, hampering the system overall (examined in Chapter 8).

Strategic Reorientation of the Kwantung Army

The resources available to the military in their advantageous position in mainland Asia (regarding scope of activity and their governance role) allowed the collation of important documents and information not available to the Foreign Ministry. This gave the IJA a far broader understanding of Chinese affairs than the Foreign Ministry from then on, and essentially allowed the militarists to forge ahead with their own plans on the mainland.⁷⁴³ Japanese foreign policy concerning the Manchurian Incident of 1931 and Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1938 had, in fact, been decisions of Imperial Japan's leading military clique.⁷⁴⁴

Due to the militarist's, and in particular the IJA's, stranglehold over important information and documentation (allowing greater influence and direction over foreign policy), the Foreign Ministry attempted to improve its own information-gathering means to equal the military:

...instead of the dual diplomacy originating from the separate activities of the militarists and the petty hand-to-mouth diplomatic procedures of the Foreign Ministry, public opinion demanded that a properly worked

⁷⁴⁰ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, p. 110

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*

⁷⁴³ TNA: WO 203/6319, Interrogation of Consul-General Minoda Fujio, *op. cit.*, p. 24

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24

out foreign policy, based on the best sources of information, should be formulated.⁷⁴⁵

The Investigation Bureau of the Foreign Ministry was established in 1933 toward this end, but was not involved in the day-to-day activities of the Foreign Ministry. Rather, its activities mirrored those of the Royal Institute of International Affairs of England, being more of an encyclopedic and bibliographic nature. The function of the Investigation Bureau included the collation, translation, printing and indexing of all foreign and domestic books, theses and documents.⁷⁴⁶ The Investigation Bureau thus proved itself to be one of the modern era's greatest exponents of open source information-gathering, and yet due to internal rivalry, and the absence of a dedicated analytical core, this would eventually be but a well-stocked library of information. The Directors of the Political, Commercial and Treaties and Information Bureaus were not welcoming of the Investigation Bureau's intervention, and its influence was limited as a result.⁷⁴⁷

Following the Manchurian Incident, Japan became increasingly apprehensive of Soviet action, particularly so following their territorial absorption of the Russian-owned Chinese Eastern Railway (CER). Muted Soviet reaction came in 1932, with the suggestion of a transfer of the CER to Japan, and a subsequent proposal, made through Kōki Hirota, then Japanese Ambassador, of a non-aggression pact between the two states.⁷⁴⁸ This allayed Japanese concerns regarding immediate Soviet military intervention, and the Kwantung Army began to reopen its Special Service Agencies as it expanded and consolidated its territorial gains up to the disputed border with the USSR.⁷⁴⁹

Guerrilla sabotage activities were undertaken against the Japanese following Japan's annexation of Manchuria, but these were only small in scale. Guerrilla groups were only ever small detachments, not forming any army of reputable size. By 1935 Heilungjiang province is thought to have had

⁷⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24

⁷⁴⁸ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, pp. 26-27

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27

only 3,150 Chinese “volunteers” active against the Japanese, engaging in skirmishes and attacking transportation and buildings. According to one report, during 1935 some 2,016 Manchukuoans (Japanese) were killed, with another 1,089 wounded.⁷⁵⁰ Numbers of these resistance fighters were thought to be almost 30,000 throughout Manchuria by 1936, yet these groups were nonetheless only loosely organised.⁷⁵¹

There are mixed reports regarding the efficacy of Chinese secret societies in efforts against the Japanese. What is likely, however, is that they were more effective in keeping the Chinese population in fear of collaboration with the Japanese than they were in hampering Japanese rule over the territory.⁷⁵² Other forms of resistance took place bureaucratically and administratively, with Chinese employees operating at minimal capacity or efficiency. The Japanese, for example, had difficulty collecting money for electricity. Chinese clerks, either willingly or following bribes from those engaged in active resistance against the Japanese, simply signed that money had been received. Bookkeeping was scarce or disposed of.⁷⁵³ Although the Chinese government was, according to available evidence, slow to organise underground intelligence in Manchuria, undoubtedly there were many ethnic Chinese within Manchukuo keeping the government of Chiang Kai-Shek informed. Nevertheless, Central Government efforts were not nearly so effectual nor active as those of the Chinese communists or the Soviets in haranguing the Japanese.⁷⁵⁴

Throughout 1933 and 1934, the Kwantung Army was trying to finalise operations against guerrilla resistance, and during this period Soviet defences were strengthened. Consequently, cross-border espionage became increasingly difficult through 1934 as the Soviets sought to bolster their border security, including increases in border garrisons and the forced

⁷⁵⁰ “Intelligence Aspects of Resistance to the Japanese in Manchuria”, 30 November 1945 - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, pp. 1-2

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3

removal of inhabitants from border areas. These border garrison units were not of the military, but rather of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD). In 1932 only two or three of these units, consisting of between one and two thousand men, were present; by 1934 this number had increased to eighteen or nineteen.⁷⁵⁵ Furthermore, with the removal of border inhabitants came their replacement with armed *kolkhoz* (collective) farmers. These were organised into divisions, modelled on Cossack units previously employed by the Tsars in frontier protection.⁷⁵⁶

In 1935 and 1936 there were rumours of Yen'an Government attempts to contact, influence and organise Manchurian bandits with Russian assistance. Efforts were also made by the Soviets throughout Japan's occupation to gather information and spread propaganda. These anti-Manchu and anti-Japanese overtures, mixed with Marxist doctrine, found some hold on the peasant classes, with, by 1945, many crossing into the USSR for military training. Punishment for communist sympathies was harsh, however, and, overall, communism would gain little influence over the population of Manchuria.⁷⁵⁷

The Japanese were certain there was some form of cooperation between Soviet and Yen'an communists.⁷⁵⁸ Russia, it was thought, was training selected Chinese agents for communications and espionage work inside Manchuria.⁷⁵⁹ Furthermore, the Japanese were convinced that Manchurian "general underground workers" were being trained by the Soviets to become the leadership of a "General Resistance Movement" (*Sō Hankōji*), acting as a flank for the Yen'an Communists. Soviet Russia was however also known to aid the Chungking Government in its own efforts against the Japanese.⁷⁶⁰

The activities of Soviet Russia, specifically actions of its diplomats, were of particular concern in Manchuria. Efforts to utilise White Russians

⁷⁵⁵ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, pp. 32-33

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33

⁷⁵⁷ "Intelligence Aspects of Resistance to the Japanese in Manchuria", RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 5

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

against such operations met with minimal success, and the Japanese were rightly concerned that the Soviets were, in turn, using the local ethnically Russian population against them. This was especially so as a younger generation came of age with little of the fearful experience their parents had experienced, and with perhaps no little respect for the achievements of their familial homeland. The Japanese were especially concerned with the intelligentsia of this generation, these suspected of leading opposition groups, and no small number were subsequently imprisoned or executed.⁷⁶¹

The *Tokumu Kikan* (Special Service)

Following the establishment of Manchukuo, a Special Service Department, to be differentiated from the Special Service Organs, was formed in order produce plans to guide the puppet regime. Ishiware clarified that the duties of the Department differed entirely to those of the Special Service Organs.⁷⁶² This would foreshadow moves later in China, moving all but tactically related intelligence officers more toward political governance, and in so doing effectively diluting the intelligence corp.

Observation of Soviet territory was initially the domain of Kwantung Army military units who maintained observation posts. Following the intelligence stalemate that ensued in 1934 with Russia, the Kwantung Army's 2nd Department consulted with its 1st Department (Operations) in order to determine how these posts' efficacy and saturation might be increased.⁷⁶³ Subsequently, the 2nd Department absorbed their operation as part of its intelligence functions. These observation points were thereafter organised into "Soviet Territory Observation Teams", tasked with surveying Soviet territory both day and night, recording even the most minute of movements, and forwarding daily reports to the headquarters to which they were attached.

⁷⁶¹ "Japanese Intelligence and Propaganda in the Administration of Manchuria", RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 7

⁷⁶² *IMTFE - Proceedings May 15-16, op. cit.*, pp. 22189-221

⁷⁶³ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, pp. 40-41

Posts were manned with squad-sized units, and equipped with suitable telescopes for both day and night operations.⁷⁶⁴

Army commands operating in frontline areas were directed to provide specialised instruction to observation personnel, and their staff intelligence officer was to supervise and systematise the observation activities under their jurisdiction. This involved the designation of areas to be surveyed, prescribing reporting outlines and ensuring direct communications existed between observation posts and headquarters. This, in turn, was to be supervised by the Kwantung Army's 2nd Department (Intelligence). Observation teams were often staffed with personnel of inferior quality, and there were cases where requisite observation equipment was not available to particular units. Nevertheless, improvements in the intelligence observation system in Manchuria did provide limited success.⁷⁶⁵

Following Soviet Russia's effective closure of the border, Japanese elementary espionage methodology became increasingly difficult. Conversely, with the official transfer of Special Service Agencies, formerly under the jurisdiction of the 2nd Department, Tokyo, to Kwantung Army command in 1932, the latter's 2nd Department became increasingly involved in direction of Japan's intelligence activities in Manchuria.⁷⁶⁶ The IJA in this way differed from the IJN in that particular field formations were allowed their own intelligence organisations. Kwantung Army intelligence would now be predominantly staffed with former attachés, or by those transferred from the Russian Section in Tokyo.⁷⁶⁷

Up until the Manchurian Incident of 18 September 1931, the Japanese had only one division with a small intelligence section in Manchuria. Neither of the above sections had been particularly active against the USSR before the "Incident".⁷⁶⁸ Higher level policy related to combatting espionage continued to emanate from Tokyo, with Japan's primary counter-intelligence interests in Manchuria being: i) Soviet activity, ii) Yen'an Communist activity against Manchukuo, iii) Korean activities in Manchukuo, iv) Mongolian conditions in

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41-42

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33

⁷⁶⁷ Barnhart, *op. cit.*, pp. 428-9

⁷⁶⁸ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, pp. 11-12

Manchukuo, and v) the purported underground organisation operated by the Chunking Government in both Manchukuo and North China.⁷⁶⁹

The *Tokumu Kikan* in Manchuria are thought to have been organised only in the years preceding the Manchurian Incident of 1931, and were responsible for the groundwork of future operations. *Tokumu Kikan* were tasked with the investigation of affairs in Manchuria, the collection of information in regard to the USSR and Outer Mongolia, and to assist local armies in *bōryaku* (infiltration of subversive agents and sabotage) during periods of active operations.⁷⁷⁰ The scope of activities undertaken by the *Tokumu Kikan* was broad, including the collection of military, topographical and economic intelligence, but also involved dissemination of propaganda, training of indigenous agents and agencies, and the subversion of local officials. As such, the *Tokumu Kikan* served as the undercover predecessor of all future Special Service Organs Imperial Japan would later utilise in future campaigns.⁷⁷¹ It is also thought these *Tokumu Kikan* were responsible for counter-intelligence duties through both the civil and military police and the Concordia Association. Non-Japanese agents were employed for civil duties, while the *Kempei Tai* were engaged in combatting elements deemed dangerous to the Japanese cause.⁷⁷² *Tokumu Kikan* involvement in counter-intelligence duties appears to have been advisory, in terms of identifying targets of concern, these located through their own positive operations.

From 1932, the primary focus of Japanese Intelligence once more lay on the USSR; of primary concern its military forces and the geography of its territory in the Far East. The Japanese conception of intelligence was of the broadest sense; including not only espionage, communications interception, interrogation and observation, but also counter-espionage, sabotage, counter-

⁷⁶⁹ “Japanese Intelligence and Propaganda in the Administration of Manchuria”, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 8

⁷⁷⁰ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6312, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 232, 17 May 1946, Item 2139, Interrogation of Colonel Masatoshi Yano, pp. 24-25

⁷⁷¹ “Tokumu Kikan in Manchuria”, February 1945 - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁷⁷² “Japanese Intelligence and Propaganda in the Administration of Manchuria”, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 7

sabotage and propaganda.⁷⁷³ Before the Manchurian Incident, information sought on the USSR had been readily available, relatively speaking. The border at that time had been particularly porous, the area between Japan and the USSR predominantly held by Chinese armies. Soviet border control had been lacking, and contact and movement across the undesignated frontier border region had been simple.⁷⁷⁴ During the early 1930s White Russians were resident in the border areas, willing and able to act as agents, and consulate offices of the Manchukuoan Government in cities within the USSR were readily accessible. Activities of the Japanese during this period remained somewhat elementary, involving primarily espionage and use of local residents as agents.⁷⁷⁵

Through 1933-1934, Special Service Agencies were established in Hailar and Chiamussu, and Japan's former agencies in Heiho and Manchouli were reopened. These would now come under direct command of the Kwantung Army. Personnel attached to each agency varied from approximately twenty in border area agencies to more than one hundred in Harbin. Personnel for these agencies were drawn from i) soldiers, ii) IJA civilians attached to Kwantung Army Headquarters, and iii) other civilians, including Koreans, Manchurians, Chinese and White Russians.⁷⁷⁶

Between 1935 and 1940, agencies were opened in Sanho, Tungan, Mutanchiang and Wangyehmiao, while those at Manchouli and Suifenhö were closed. During a major reorganisation of Japan's intelligence network in 1940, new agencies would be established at Mukden, Dairen, Yenchi and Apaka, with branches in Manchouli (Hailar), Arshaan (Wangyehmiao), Hutou (Tungan), Suifenhö and Tungning (Mutanchiang) and Fuchin (Chiamussu). All of these Special Service Agencies were attached to Kwantung Army Headquarters, under the aegis of the Second Department.⁷⁷⁷ During active operations, branches of *Tokumu Kikan* came under command of local armies.⁷⁷⁸ Special Service staff were seconded to the Army for battlefield

⁷⁷³ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, p. 21

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15

⁷⁷⁸ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Colonel Masatoshi Yano, *op. cit.*, p. 25

intelligence during the military aspect of their campaigns, while others continued in their clandestine operations. *Tokumu Kikan* officers would in time, following the success of any particular operation and subsequent occupation, be assigned official status and participate in active rule over a geographical region.⁷⁷⁹ Thus did an element of dilution in expertise become problematic. Not only had *tokumu kikan* staff been required to undertake nearly all forms of intelligence, including counter-intelligence, political intelligence and tactical intelligence in the first place, but now these officers, after minimal experience, could find themselves stationed at the end of an operation rather than returned to their operational unit where their expertise might best be utilised. This systemic weakness would remain in the Japanese intelligence service to the end of the Pacific conflict.

The Harbin Agency was the oldest, most experienced and largest of all Special Service Agencies in relation to anti-Soviet activities, with the most diversified personnel, and covering all intelligence areas. It was subsequently deemed the parent agency, and had served as the basis for expansion as new Special Service Agencies had been established according to requirements. Nevertheless, the not inconsequential assets of the Harbin Agency were never taken fully advantage of through the 1930s, and it remained of equal standing with all other *Tokumu Kikan*, holding no authority.⁷⁸⁰ As such, effectively to the end of the 1930s the Harbin Agency, despite considerable assets and experience, would only be able to offer assistance if and when called for. Japanese intelligence in Manchuria thus would underutilise one of its greatest intelligence resources in Manchuria.

Staff known to have been employed in Harbin included Lieutenant-General Yanagida, Operational Commander in Harbin (later OC 33rd Division during Japan's Imphal operations in Burma). Following Yanagida's transfer, Major-General Doi took up operational command. Staff would include Colonel Nishiwara and Colonel Komatsubara Michitarō (for the latter, see Chapters 7 and 8).⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁹ "Tokumu Kikan in Manchuria", RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*

⁷⁸⁰ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, p. 49

⁷⁸¹ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Colonel Masatoshi Yano, *op. cit.*, p. 24

Employment of local agents

Initially, the Japanese were welcomed to Manchuria by the Russian population. The Japanese would install a regime that turned this sentiment against them. However, the Japanese established immigration bureaus, ostensibly to aid Russian immigrants, but staffed by Russian “turncoats” (many of whom were actually coerced to accept these positions). A great number of these were afterward forced to spy on the local Russian population.⁷⁸²

Japanese intelligence in Manchuria would utilise the knowledge of local agents against their own ethnic groups, Chinese middle-men against the Chinese population, Koreans against the Korean population. White Russians for their part were often forced to cooperate with the Japanese, their economic situation following Japan’s annexation having become dire. These agents were held in contempt by their respective populations, and despite some attempts to aid their own peoples, very often false information served a particular agent’s ulterior objective. Police involved in civil duties in annexed territory were also often corrupt.⁷⁸³ White Russians and Mongolians were also utilised in *bōryaku* operations, as both were anti-Soviet. Manchurians were not, but were likely used as agents for investigation of Manchurian affairs.⁷⁸⁴

White Russians were employed by the Harbin Special Service Agency for espionage purposes, while border area SSAs utilised local residents, including Koreans, Manchurians, and also, at times, White Russians. These agents were required to infiltrate into Soviet-held territory, and were assigned targets in accordance with their perceived ability.⁷⁸⁵ White Russian agents were generally found to be more competent and reliable, likely attributable to their anti-Communist bent, but were usually easily identified by their Soviet counterparts. Those who met with limited success were confounded by

⁷⁸² “Administration”, undated, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁴ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Colonel Masatoshi Yano, *op. cit.*, p. 25

⁷⁸⁵ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, pp. 27-28

documentation and dress difficulties, and further “...the peculiarities in language adopted by the Russians after the Revolution.”⁷⁸⁶

Special Service Agencies were on occasion able to employ Soviet deserters who, following questioning at the front, were sent to Harbin for deeper interrogation. The Japanese were through these elementary means able to form an appraisal of Soviet military affairs in the area, and also an understanding of the local geography.⁷⁸⁷

By 1936-1937 White Russian support for Japan had significantly waned. In an attempt to thwart pro-Russian and pro-American sympathies, the Japanese began providing special privileges to White Russians in commercial firms, but also police departments and the secret service. Nevertheless, White Russians tended to cooperate due to their economic plight, and whatever good will the Japanese hoped to gain from these agents was eroded rapidly by their always having an informer in any group, and their continuous efforts to promote rivalry and acrimony between different groups employed.⁷⁸⁸ Such ill will on the side of the White Russian population undoubtedly had some effect on the quality of information available to the Japanese prior to the Soviet border conflict at Nomonhan during 1939-1940 (Chapter 8).⁷⁸⁹

Japan's only large-scale planned use of ethnic Koreans in subversive activities began in 1938, following the Soviet Union's forced removal of approximately 150,000 to 200,000 ethnic Koreans once resident in its Maritime Province to Central Asia.⁷⁹⁰ The Kwantung Army's 2nd Department sought to utilise subsequent Korean dissent, both within the Korean population remaining in the Far East, but also including those forcibly transferred to Central Asia. The 2nd Department's plan was named the “Li Hai-Tien Operation”, and called for Li Hai-Tien, after whom the operation

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28

⁷⁸⁸ “Field Organisation within the Country – White Russians – Decline of Jap. Influence in Manchuria”, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁷⁸⁹ “Intelligence Aspects of Resistance to the Japanese in Manchuria”, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 4

⁷⁹⁰ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, p. 99

was named, to infiltrate Soviet territory and convince ethnic Koreans, both in the Far East and in Central Asia, to rise against the Soviet Union in concert with Japanese military operations.⁷⁹¹ Although many Koreans did not support this plan, feeling that the cause of minorities in the Soviet Far East was already lost, the 2nd Department nevertheless provided support, despite lacking confidence in its chances of success, offering funding and protection of participant's families. Ultimately the plan failed, Li Hai-Tien himself captured and rumoured to have switched allegiance.⁷⁹²

Employment of elementary espionage techniques had only been possible during the early 1930s, due to the porous nature of Japan's border with the USSR.⁷⁹³ Following the effective closure of the border, the infiltration of agents was no longer effective, especially so following the formation of a Soviet counter-espionage network in Manchuria proper. Korean and Manchurian agents employed by the Japanese were found susceptible to turning by the Soviet Union, while others simply abandoned their duties. Not uncommonly, many would enter border zones, only to return sometime later with manufactured information.⁷⁹⁴

Efforts of the SSAs to infiltrate agents thus met with very limited success, and on occasion it was found necessary to employ agents known to be working for both sides. The interrogation of Soviet fugitives undertaken by the SSAs did, however, uncover important information. For example, General Ryushkov, Chief of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs, after fleeing the USSR was apprehended by the Hunchun SSA and later cooperated with the same.⁷⁹⁵ Ryushkov's capture would allow an opportunity to identify areas more suitable for exploitation in regard to propaganda, but his defection only came in 1939.⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 99-100

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 35

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45

⁷⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90

Open source intelligence and propaganda

Only between 1935 and 1936 was the importance of publications as a source of data for intelligence purposes realised. Previously only a few analysts had been employed in the Harbin SSA for this purpose, but as Soviet publications (especially newspapers of the Far East) were found to be particularly useful in furnishing information, the Document Intelligence Division was founded.⁷⁹⁷ “Scores” of White Russian and Japanese personnel were assigned to this division by the Kwantung Army’s 2nd Department, and tasked with analysis of publications, documentation and messages. All forms of documentation or publication, including that handwritten, were forwarded by all intelligence agencies to the Document Intelligence Division.⁷⁹⁸

The Harbin SSA’s Documents Intelligence Division analysed information collated and was able to determine changes in command (through addresses), and the disposition of units and arrival of reinforcements (including their place of origin, derived from messages to their homes). Other information collected from these interceptions included details related to the industrial and economic situation of the Russian Far East. When evaluated statistically, valuable conclusions were often reached.⁷⁹⁹

The Document Intelligence Division of the Harbin SSA, through its assembly of fragmentary information, was able to significantly enhance the Kwantung Army’s higher intelligence echelon’s estimates. An example includes the development of a file including 4,000 Soviet Far East officers, allowing headquarters to make estimations on the disposition and organisation of the vast majority of Soviet units in the area. Notably, however, only on occasion was information thus derived crosschecked by the Division against testimony of those who had fled the USSR and sent to it by ASSAs on the frontline.⁸⁰⁰

The Division was organised into five branches: i) the Military Intelligence Branch, charged with organisation, equipment, unit designation

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44

(including names of commanders) and disposition of troops; ii) the Geography Branch; iii) Economic Affairs, tasked with the industrial and economic situation of the Russian Far East; iv) the Radio Broadcast Monitoring Branch, supplementing data sourced from publications with that derived from radio broadcasting; and v) the Communications Branch, collecting information from wireless plain language communications. Documental information became increasingly difficult to source over time, leading to greater focus on communications, but nevertheless continued to be received at times through agents and deserters, and on one occasion from a mail plane forced to land in 1938.⁸⁰¹

The IJA General Staff in Tokyo and Kwantung Army Headquarters had long understood the need for anti-Soviet propaganda. Neither, however, had undertaken any propaganda campaign before hostilities between the two nations began in 1939. Only the Harbin Special Service Agency was involved in anti-Soviet propaganda work during the majority of the 1930s.⁸⁰² In this endeavour the Harbin Agency was aided by White Russians who provided drafts and delivered final products across the border.⁸⁰³ The Harbin Agency nevertheless received no guidance from the IJA General Staff and its efforts were rather simplistic. Soviet border controls during 1933-1934 made difficult not only espionage but also propaganda efforts. Soviet removal of local inhabitants along the frontier regions, subsequent natural alienation and suspected indoctrination exacerbated the need for effective propaganda on the part of Japan and Manchukuo, yet to 1937 Japan would persist with its simplistic propaganda techniques, as it had with its espionage efforts, even as movement of agents and propaganda activities were curtailed by the Soviets.⁸⁰⁴

Only in 1937 did the IJA General Staff in Tokyo take interest in anti-Soviet propaganda and create the 11th Section within its 2nd Department, directing it to develop a propaganda plan and research propaganda techniques. At the same time, both Kwantung Army Headquarters and the Harbin Special

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 87-90

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 87

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88

Agency undertook a mirror approach. The joint efforts of these branches produced publications aimed at developing discontent within Russia, rather than setting up an ideological argument against communism. This was in line with 2nd Department policy.⁸⁰⁵ Ryushkov, taken to Tokyo for questioning by the IJA General Staff following his capture in 1939, provided information regarding Soviet conditions useful for propaganda purposes, and later personally developed anti-Stalin publications. For many months Ryushkov's efforts formed the foundation of Japan's anti-Soviet and anti-Communist propaganda.⁸⁰⁶ None of the above was ever fully implemented in any depth however.⁸⁰⁷ Despite Russia being of primary strategic concern to Japan, sizeable resources had only been allocated to this late in the 1930s. Efforts undertaken, doubtless at considerable financial and staffing cost, also undoubtedly lacked efficiency, given the overlap in duties by the various sections involved in the same task. With subsequent planning never executed, all had been for nothing.

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89

7 **Developments in Japanese Intelligence following the establishment of Manchukuo**

Intelligence in China following the establishment of Manchukuo

Although the establishment of Manchukuo had been an arguably successful exercise, control of China's eastern provinces would prove far easier than over China proper. Control of the sea and the passes over the Great Wall meant that Manchukuo could sever all communications with China.⁸⁰⁸ China's response to Japan's annexation of Manchuria in 1931 was dual-natured. On one side, passive resistance ensued, while, on the other, an appeal was made to the League of Nations. Nonetheless, China at this time sought territorial and national unity, Manchuria falling outside the scope of this initial ambition. Japan had in the face of the League of Nation's Lytton Report, and China's lack of focused opposition, established the puppet state of Manchukuo, later annexing the province of Jehol in March 1933, and finally invading Chinese territory south of the Great Wall during April-May 1933. China was forced to sign the Tangku Truce document on 31 May 1933, a consequence of which was the establishment of a Demilitarised Zone between the Great Wall and Beijing, to be subsequently taken advantage of by the Japanese for the drug trade, the fomenting of northern China separatist groups, and ultimately as a staging post for the later Japanese invasion of the Chinese heartland.⁸⁰⁹

Doihara Kenji, during testimony before the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, stated his first connection with the *tokumu kikan* had been 18 August 1931, denying he had been Resident Official of the Japanese Special Service organisation in Mukden for several years earlier.

⁸⁰⁸ "Background and Modern History", undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 5

⁸⁰⁹ "Background and Modern History", undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, pp. 4-5

Furthermore, Doihara stated that but for a six-month tenure in Manchuria in 1929 (not withstanding transit through in 1911), Doihara had not set foot in Manchuria until 1931. Doihara did however acknowledge his presence in China for eighteen years prior, but again denied any connection with the Japanese special service. Rather, Doihara stated that during this time he had acted as aide to Lieutenant-General Banzai, in turn advisor to Yuan Shih-kai, Ti Huang and Fong Yui-sheng.⁸¹⁰ This does little to assuage suspicions that Doihara had for some time been involved in political intelligence operations.

During his time in Manchuria in 1929, Doihara had acted as aide to Matsui Nanao, at that time the Japanese military advisor to Chang Tso-lin.⁸¹¹ Doihara stated that his most important role after joining the Special Service organ in Mukden was the investigation of Captain Nakamura's death, but this was but one duty within his new role. Other duties included investigation of and liaison with Chinese forces, investigation involving determining strength, training and communications, and also the condition of the civilian population. On arriving in Manchuria in August 1931, Doihara had first travelled through Shanghai, Hankou, Beijing, Tientsin and Mukden, this purportedly on the advice of the Chief of Staff who thought it best Doihara determine the conditions in China before taking up his position in Mukden.⁸¹²

Doihara and the municipal administration of Mukden were responsible for the monopolisation of opium and the issue of lottery tickets in order to finance its operation. This plan was not viewed favourably by the Foreign Ministry, but Kwantung Army Headquarters was more positive about it. A telegram from Consul-General Hayashi in Mukden to Foreign Minister Shidehara of 13 October 1931 read:

According to reliable sources we are notified that the municipal administrative office has planned a monopolisation of opium and the issue of lottery tickets for the purpose of raising their funds, and has asked the headquarters of the army for their approval. We are also informed that though the headquarters of the army had no objections to

⁸¹⁰ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 21-22, op. cit.*, pp. 15721-15722

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15723

⁸¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 15723-15726

the plan they instructed the office to state the stipulations clearly and to get the approval of the headquarters before the plans are put into operation, and also to report the stipulations to the Consulate and to the police station. Not only are the monopolisation of opium and the issuing of lottery tickets naturally unfavourable from the viewpoint of international relations, and so forth, in general, but they are the materialisation of a part of the plans of the army marked secret 781 of October 2. Therefore regarding this matter we ask you to call upon the top army to immediately check this movement and in consideration of the delicate situation kindly take special care to preserve absolute secrecy from army as to the receipt of this telegram and the contents of the above mentioned official letter.⁸¹³

Before the IMTFE, General Tanaka stated the opium trade in Manchuria had been controlled by the various special service organs operating there before its being handed over to the Opium Control Board in 1935, with Doihara leading the Mukden Special Service organ at the time.⁸¹⁴ It should be noted that the Opium Control Board was in fact put in effect in January 1933, but its organisation was only finalised in April 1935 during the reorganisation of the Manchukuo Government.⁸¹⁵

Before this handover, profits made through the opium trade had likely helped maintain secret service operations.⁸¹⁶ The transfer of the opium trade as a monopoly to the Opium Control Board in 1935, this move driven by then Commanding Officer, Kwantung Army, Minami Jirō; his then Chief of Staff, Itagaki; and his future Chief of Staff, Tōjō Hideki, meant profits totalling around ¥20,000,000 now went to the Manchukuo Government.⁸¹⁷ This likely would have been of little consequence to the Special Service organisations at that time, with Manchukuo now operating as an independent state and, in all probability, officially financing these institutions.

⁸¹³ *IMTFE - Proceedings Oct. 6-8, op. cit.*, 30362-30364

⁸¹⁴ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 21-22, op. cit.*, pp. 15855-15858

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 15927-15928

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15857

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15857-15858

Japanese Intelligence in Mongolia

The Kwantung Army had already sent agents into Mongolia during the winter of 1929, in an attempt to draw Prince De and other Mongolian princes to the Japanese cause.⁸¹⁸ From 1933, following the Manchurian Incident and subsequent annexation of Manchuria, the Kwantung Army took advantage of friction between Mongolia and Nanjing over Mongolian autonomy to further these efforts. Tada, commander of the Japanese occupation force in North China, would publish the North China Autonomy Statement in September 1935, and Doihara Kenji was sent to Tianjin to aid and implement Japanese machinations in Mongolia. Other Japanese intelligence officers involved included the Kwantung Army's strategic directors Tanaka Ryūkichi and Ishimoto Torazō, Mitsuo Ishida and Seishirō Itagaki. Support would be provided both in terms of materiel and "advisory" support, continuing Japan's tried and tested methodology.⁸¹⁹

The Kwantung Army would adopt a divide-and-rule policy in Mongolia, initially supporting three separate regimes in Southern Chahar, Northern Shanxi and the Unified Mongolian Autonomous Government, the last-mentioned established following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 7 July 1937 with the assistance of the head of the Japanese intelligence bureau in Guisui, Kuwahara He.⁸²⁰ Kanai Shōji; economist, bacteriologist, "racial psychologist", former employee of the South Manchurian Railway and a strong advocate of the establishment of Manchukuo, was installed as its top advisor by Kwantung Army HQ. Such was Kanai's authority, Doihara Kenji is said to have been influenced by this man.⁸²¹

Kwantung Army machinations in Mongolia were yet again undertaken against opposition from Tokyo. Just before its operations in North Shanxi and South Chahar, the *Kantōgun*, through Hideki Tōjō, the Kwantung Army's Chief of Staff, had presented a plan to Tokyo for control over the region through a *Dai Tokumu Kikan* (Grand Special Services Agency). Both the War

⁸¹⁸ Lu, *op. cit.*, p. 151

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 151-153

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 156

⁸²¹ Boyle, J.H., *China and Japan at War, 1937-1945: The Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972) pp. 128

Ministry and the Cabinet of Konoye Fumimaro, who did not wish to see the region separated from China proper, opposed this plan, but ultimately the *Kantōgun* prevailed, having presented Tokyo with a *fait accompli* with their advance and subsequent establishment of sympathetic regimes.⁸²²

By 1937 these regimes would be combined under Japanese military authority with the establishment of the Mongolian Border Region Unified Committee, Japan now controlling finance, industry, and communications as it did in Manchuria. Initially this Committee contained four specialised sub-committees (general affairs, communications, finance and industry). Each of these had attached to them one or two Japanese advisors who would again hold real power. To extend this dominance, in August 1938 these four departments would be expanded into six departments (civil service, communications, industry, finance, general affairs and security), with Japanese officers holding key positions within security, communications and civil service while exercising control over all departments. Furthermore, the Unified Committee at this time came to hold executive power over its constituent regimes.⁸²³

Kanai's machinations would ultimately lead to the establishment Mongolian Border Region Unified Autonomous Government (MBRUAG), Kanai being in command of both political and military power, with Japanese military officers in all key positions in the regime.⁸²⁴

North China Autonomous Council

In spring 1935, influenced by the reports of Doihara, the Japanese thought it possible to instigate an autonomy movement in northern China, detaching the provinces of Chahar, Suiyan, Shansi, Hopei and Shantung from the Nanjing government. The subsequent He-Umezu Agreement, signed on 6 July 1935, effectively suppressed *Kuomintang* and other political movements in Hopei

⁸²² *Ibid.*, pp. 130-132

⁸²³ Lu, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161

province.⁸²⁵ Thereafter, under the East Hopei Autonomous Council, the province would operate effectively as another Japanese puppet-state.

In June 1935, following the detention of some Japanese officers by the Chinese (known as the North Chahar Incident), some of whom had been Special Service personnel, the Kwantung Army brought pressure on the Chinese authorities, including the stationing of troops on the border of Chahar province.⁸²⁶ General Chin Te-chun was sent by Nanjing to negotiate with then Major General Doihara, whose terms included dismissal of the officers involved; a pledge that such would not occur again; unfettered access within the province for Japanese; the dissolution of *Kuomintang* institutions in the province; the cessation of Chinese immigration; and, finally, the establishment of an East Chahar demilitarised zone, this area to be maintained by a police force only.⁸²⁷

Doihara would go to Tientsin in November 1935. As head of the Kwantung Army's Special Service Section, Doihara sought to instigate a *coup de main* in northern China, separating China's five northern provinces and delivering them to Japan.⁸²⁸ To pressure the Chinese authorities the Kwantung Army stationed four divisions from Chinchow, Manchuria to Shanhakuan, and on the night of 15 November the North China Garrison headquarters demanded 15,000 beds from the Tientsin authorities to house its troops. Doihara would on 18 November demand that a North China Autonomous Council be established on or before 20 November. Were the Chinese not to acquiesce, four Japanese divisions would enter Shantung, with another five entering Hopei. Unknown to Doihara, however, Foreign Minister Kōki Hirota had been undertaking discussions with Chiang Kai-Shek (toward greater cooperation between China and Japan, and to form a united front in the face of Communism), and Chiang on 19 November informed his negotiating party to stop talks with Doihara.⁸²⁹

⁸²⁵ "Japanese Personalities in the News – General Doihara Kenji", 19 September 1945, Folder Doihara, Kenji, Box No. 26, Docheff, Ivan Vol. 2 to Dolezalek, Alexander, 2nd Release of Name Files, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 2

⁸²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3

On 20 November Colonel Takahashi, the military attaché, informed a United Press agent that Doihara was in North China only in a private capacity.⁸³⁰ Takahashi went further the next day, stating Doihara held no authority to negotiate with Chinese officials. Nevertheless, Doihara pressed on, although in smaller scale. Yin Ju-keng, who had risen to authority over the demilitarised zone in East Hopei under Japanese auspices, declared autonomy for East Hopei on 24 November. On 27 November Doihara, against a backdrop of Japanese troop movements in the Peiping-Tientsin area, and a veiled threat of a full division coming from Manchuria, called on General Han Fu-chu of Shantung and General Fu Tso-yi of Suiyuan.⁸³¹ Japanese troops subsequently occupied the Fengtai railway, if temporarily, this likely to prevent rolling stock moving to the south. Finally, on 27 November General Sung telegraphed Nanjing, informing them he “could no longer control the growing demand of the people for autonomy”, and on Christmas day 1935 the East Hopei Autonomous Council was replaced with the East Hopei Anti-Communist Autonomous Government”.⁸³² Following his failure to separate China’s Five Northern Provinces and form a Japan-controlled "autonomous" territory, Doihara had saved face with the creation of the East Hopei puppet regime. From here, Doihara was able to operate a vast smuggling and narcotics operation, under his own agency. This illicit trade would be greatly detrimental to Nanjing Government revenues.⁸³³

Further unrest in Tokyo

Following the Manchurian Incident, there had been a rise in radical thought amongst young officers of Japan’s military⁸³⁴, and during the 1930s the IJA would suffer from a culture of insubordination (*gekokuujō*), characterised by senior officers’ manipulation by subordinates:

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*

⁸³² *Ibid.*

⁸³³ “Doihara, General Kenji”, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*

⁸³⁴ Weland, *op. cit.*, p. 446

In truth, there were two parallel sets of insubordination that together go some way to explain the phenomenon of ‘government by assassination’, and that led to the eclipse of parliamentary democracy within Japan: a culture of insubordination within the military, and a culture of insubordination on the part of the military relative to civilian authority.⁸³⁵

Military factions sought reform of Japan's political system. The *Kōdōha*, or Imperial Way faction, led by Generals Araki, Mazaki and Lieutenant General Yanagawa, called for direct imperial rule, and was vehemently against communism, leading to antagonism toward Soviet Russia without regard for other nations. In opposition, the other predominant faction within the military was the *Tōseiha* faction, or Control faction.⁸³⁶

In Japanese Intelligence also, factionalism was common. Assistant Military Attachés were at one time, for example, deemed “Isogai’s men” (Major-General Isogai Rensuke, former military attaché to China). In the North China Garrison, Major Senda Sadao, head of the East Hopei Anti-Communist Autonomous Government section of the North China Garrison; Lieutenant Colonel Hosoki Shigeru, head of the Special Service Organ in Tungchow, the regime’s capital; Lieutenant Colonel Jun Yokoyama, head the Special Service Organ in Shanhaikwan; and Lieutenant Colonel Wachi Takaji, a staff officer at this time with the North China Garrison, followed different predominant military figures, including Major General Ishiwara Kanji, Lieutenant General (and former Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army) Itagaki Seishirō, Major General Isogai Rensuke, or Lieutenant General Imai Kiyoshi, Vice Chief of the General Staff in Tokyo.⁸³⁷ In this manner, cliques would continue to form within the Japanese military, and as leading (and essentially radicalised) intelligence officers became more deeply embroiled in political factions and their ambitions, so too would their influence.

⁸³⁵ Tohmatsu, H. & Willmott, H. P., *A Gathering Darkness: The Coming of War to the Far East and the Pacific, 1921-1942* (Lanham: SR Books, 2004) p. 14

⁸³⁶ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 21-22, op. cit.*, pp. 15854-15855

⁸³⁷ “Wachi, Takaji - Japan”, 14 February 1945, Folder Wachi, Takaji, Box No. 134, Vukovic, Zoran to Waldheim, Kurt Vol. 1, 2nd Release of Name Files, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD.

Doihara himself was a member of the “Saga group”⁸³⁸, led by Generals Araki Sadao and Mazaki Jinzaburō, who had gained influence by 13 December 1931 with Araki’s appointment as Minister of War under the Inukai Cabinet. The Saga group had formed the nucleus of the later *Kōdōha*, whose numbers included Ishiwara Kanji and Itagaki Seishirō.⁸³⁹

In January 1934 Sadao Araki was dismissed from his position as War Minister, and, in response, in November 1934 a small number of low-ranking *Kōdōha* faction members attempted a coup d’état. Interestingly, this was circumvented by Tsuji Masanobu (later accredited with intelligence planning against Malaya – see Chapters 8 and 9), who was aligned with the *Tōseiha*; and Tsuji, himself a proponent of *gekokujo*, appears to have found favour for his role in this incident from Hideki Tōjō, an ardent opponent of insubordination⁸⁴⁰. Tsuji would, furthermore, be fortunate to attract the patronage of Itagaki Seishirō. All three officers would serve with the Kwantung Army during the 1930s, and both Itagaki and Tōjō would ultimately rise to roles of prominence (as War Minister and Prime Minister, respectively). In this way, key Japanese intelligence officers, and indeed Intelligence in the broader sense, were caught up in the politicisation of the IJA overall, while reaching the uppermost echelons of Imperial Japanese leadership.

Another abortive coup on 26 February 1936 (known as the February 26 Incident), during which two former prime ministers were killed, was also undertaken by *Kōdōha* sympathisers. Targets of the coup to be arrested included the Governor-General of Korea, Ugaki Kazushige; Koiso Kuniaki, commander of the Korean Army; and also Tatekawa Yoshitsugu (who had “failed” to circumvent the Manchurian Incident – see Chapter 5). The coup organisers sought too to secure the dismissal of Lieutenant Colonel Mutō Akira and Colonel Nemoto Hiroshi on suspicion of “factionalism” (Mutō, head of the Kwantung Army’s Intelligence Department at the time of the

⁸³⁸ Saga is a prefecture of Japan from which the faction emanated.

⁸³⁹ “Japanese Personalities in the News – General Doihara Kenji”, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 1

⁸⁴⁰ Toland, J., *The Rising Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Empire 1936-1945* (London: Cassell & Company, 1970) p. 60

Marco Polo Bridge Incident in 1937; Nemoto, one-time head of the China Sub-Section).⁸⁴¹

Ultimately, however, this last coup attempt was the last straw. As Chamberlin states:

The more thoughtful and far-sighted military leaders could scarcely fail to be impressed by the dangerous prospects of social chaos that would open up if sergeants and privates were to follow the example set by captains and lieutenants in disregarding the orders of their superiors and killing any Cabinet Ministers of whom they disapproved.⁸⁴²

Furthermore, troops involved had not immediately obeyed an Imperial order to lay down arms. In this, the coup had gone further than any other, and, arguably, a step too far. Although former instigators of coups in the past had been treated lightly, no longer would this be the case, with seventeen leaders being sentenced to death.⁸⁴³ The soldiers that had taken part were sent to Manchukuo, an intriguing choice given Manchuria and the Kwantung Army's history of insubordination.

Interestingly, the Kwantung Army had been in the dark regarding the affair in Tokyo. Tōjō Hideki had been commander of *Kempei* forces under the Kwantung Army at the time, and given the lack of credible information coming in about who held command in Tokyo, and despite laying outside the normal scope of *Kempei* duties, Tōjō had instituted a state of emergency and began investigations into local sympathy with the coup. Tōjō would be rewarded for his decision with promotion to Lieutenant General and Chief of Staff, Kwantung Army, replacing Itagaki Seishirō.⁸⁴⁴

Following the February 26 Incident, factionalism came essentially to a halt within the Japanese government. The IJA leadership would now seek to purge its ranks of dissidents, while the civilian leadership would agree to

⁸⁴¹ Weland, *op. cit.*, pp. 453-454

⁸⁴² Chamberlin, W.H., *Japan Over Asia* (Andover: The Chapel River Press, 1938) p. 223

⁸⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 223-224

⁸⁴⁴ Butow, R. J. C., *Tōjō and the Coming of the War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961) pp. 72-74

better finance the military, another point of ire.⁸⁴⁵ The IJA had throughout (and in spite of) its factional conflicts “...subordinated civilian authority to its will by the deliberate manipulation of the constitutional arrangement whereby the Cabinet ministers for the armed forces had to be serving officers.”⁸⁴⁶

Military cohesion would come at a time when differences in policy concerns, as pertained to China in particular, had considerably lessened. In terms of Japanese Intelligence, the intelligence corps had effectively been politicised and homegnised (along with the military as a whole), and its leadership had risen to the policy-maker level. The relative success with which Japan had attained her aims in Asia (in the establishment of puppet regimes), despite prolific factionalism, had, however, developed systemic complacency in terms of methodology and training; the system in place deemed satisfactory, and not requiring further improvement.

Later manifestations of Japan’s patriotic societies

Mass patriotic associations from the onset of the 20th century included the *Zaigogunkinkai* (The Society of Reservists), reactionary political societies including the *Kokuhonsha* (National Foundation Society), medial groups including the *Kokusuikai* and violent, terrorist organisations such as the *Dai Nippon Seisantō*, the *Hakuro-Kai* (White Wolf) and *Sekiseikai* (Single Heart).⁸⁴⁷ The *Kokuhonsha*, for example, was founded by Sadao Araki in 1924, its membership including prominent military figures and civilians. At one time led by Hiranuma Kiichiro, former president of the Privy Council, within the *Kokuhonsha* had existed a union of Japan’s *zaibatsu* and representatives of both the Home and Justice Ministries and Japanese militarists.⁸⁴⁸ For his part, Hirota Kōki held a long friendship with Tōyama

⁸⁴⁵ Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-224

⁸⁴⁶ Tohmatsu & Willmott, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15

⁸⁴⁷ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 208/3883, “Organisations and Societies in Japan”, British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee, p. 1

⁸⁴⁸ TNA: WO 208/3883, “Organisations and Societies in Japan”, *op. cit.*, p. 4

Mitsuru⁸⁴⁹, going some way to explain why he was never a target of the ultranationalists so intent on political purges.⁸⁵⁰

The *Tōa Keizai Chōsa Kyoku* (East Asia Economic Investigation Bureau – see Chapter 3) of the *Mantetsu* appears to have been the forerunner of the Ōkawa *Juku* (School), established in 1938 by Ōkawa Shūmei (involved deeply in the coups and insubordination that had plagued Tokyo during the decade), employed by the *Mantetsu*'s EAEIB from 1919, and its head from 1923.⁸⁵¹ Ōkawa Shūmei had always advocated Japan's expansion into the Asian mainland, and at the time of the Manchurian Incident had been Chairman of the Board of Directors of the East Asia Economic Investigation Bureau. Ōkawa had enthusiastically cooperated with the IJA in Japan's annexation of Manchuria and the setting up of Manchukuo.⁸⁵²

The East Asia Economic Investigation Bureau appears to have been detached from the *Mantetsu* circa 1927 (according to documents brought before the IMTFE) at Ōkawa's urging, eventually convincing the then president of the *Mantetsu*, Yamamoto Jōtarō, of the need for separation and its establishment as an independent foundation. The ground on which separation was sought lay in the difference in direction of the Research Bureau's investigations following changes in the *Mantetsu*'s management, and was required to ensure a sustained focus upon the expansion of Japanese economic interests in Manchuria and Mongolia.⁸⁵³ According to Ōkawa's testimony during interrogation, however, the suggestion and decision to separate was entirely Yamamoto's, based on the *Mantetsu*'s inability to financially support the bureau. Irrespectively, what eventuated was the establishment of a separate research organisation operating under the Ministry of Education (*Monbu Shō*), with Ōkawa as its director. Ōkawa claimed Yamamoto

⁸⁴⁹ Hirota denied this during interrogation on 13 November 1945, stating Tōyama was several years his senior and that the two were not on particularly intimate terms - Interrogation of Hirota Kōki, Interrogation No. 382, United States Strategic Bombing Survey Reports of Interrogations 1945, Hoover Institution Archives, p. 9

⁸⁵⁰ Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, p. 225

⁸⁵¹ Preliminary Interrogation of Ogawa, Shūmei, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2

⁸⁵² *IMTFE - Proceedings Jul. 1-8, 1947*, International Military Tribunal for the Far East records, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford, California 94305-6010, pp. 1974-1984

⁸⁵³ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 17-20, op. cit.*, p. 15593

provided ¥1,000,000 on the Bureau's separation to aid in its continued research.⁸⁵⁴

In 1937, following time spent in prison for his part in an attempted coup d'état earlier during the 1930s, Ōkawa would return to the Bureau, but only in an advisory capacity.⁸⁵⁵ In 1938 Ōkawa would separate from the Bureau upon its reabsorption into the *Mantetsu*, nonetheless retaining ties, and, indeed, becoming an attaché of the *Mantetsu* Tokyo office, drawing an allowance of approximately ¥1,000 per month.⁸⁵⁶

In April 1938, Ōkawa would found his completely independent *Tōa Keizai Chōsa Kyōkai Fuzoku Kenkyū Jō*, confusingly translated by Allied wartime interrogators as “Foreign Language Institute”, but colloquially known as the Ōkawa *Juku* (Ōkawa School). The *Mantetsu*'s East Asia Economic Investigation Bureau exercised no control over this institution, although instructors of the EAEIB, as well as its resources, including publications, reports and facilities, were available to Ōkawa.⁸⁵⁷

The *Tōa Keizai Chōsa Kyōkai Fuzoku Kenkyū Jō* further received ¥150,000 in funding for its establishment from the Military Affairs Department of the War Ministry through “Katchō” Iwakuro.⁸⁵⁸ Iwakuro Hideo, appearing to recognise the haphazard nature of Japanese intelligence to-date and its dependence on informal networks, namely the patriotic societies and expatriate Japanese, provided this initial support to Ōkawa as a source from which he could later draw.⁸⁵⁹ Later, the *Mantetsu* would provide a further ¥50,000 and the Foreign Ministry another ¥24,000. Notably, none of these benefactor organisations held any control over the school, and Allied intelligence did not believe any link existed between it and IGHQ, nor with

⁸⁵⁴ Preliminary Interrogation of Ogawa, Shūmei, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 8

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁶ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6312, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 232, 17 May 1946, Item 2145, Interrogation of Kuramochi Hiroshi, p. 38

⁸⁵⁷ Preliminary Interrogation of Ogawa, Shūmei, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 3

⁸⁵⁸ The interrogation report here states the name as Katcho Iwakuro. “Kachō” however is a corporate title, and misinterpretations and mistaken transliterations are not uncommon in these reports. The name should probably read Hideo Iwakuro, member of the *Sakurakai* along with Ōkawa, involved in the development of the Nakano School, and later head of the Iwakuro *Kikan*, one of Japan's best-known special service organs.

⁸⁵⁹ Mercado, S.C., *The Shadow Warriors of Nakano: A History of the Imperial Japanese Army's Elite Intelligence School* (Washington, D.C.: Brassy's Inc., 2002) p. 6

any patriotic society.⁸⁶⁰ In the formal sense, this may well have been the case, but to suggest informal links did not exist would be incorrect. A letter from the “East Asiatic Economic Investigation Bureau” to the Japanese Industrial Bureau dated 13 February 1940 and held by the Special Branch, stated the EAEIB were responsible for the collection of information on all of East Asia and requested copies of their reports be forwarded. Ōkawa Shūmei at the time led his own Bureau of a similar name, and the Special Branch were certain it was from the latter that the letter emanated.⁸⁶¹

Ōkawa’s original plan was to send into Asia “intelligent Japanese” to investigate the “real situation” in Asia “from the Japanese viewpoint”. These “officers” were to remain in various East Asian countries for a period of ten years, during which time they were to come to know in intricate detail the local economic, political, topographical and racial situation. Interestingly, Ōkawa himself did not believe Japan was ready yet to “lead” Asia, and these efforts were to ensure the Japan’s “training and knowledge were supreme” so that in ten to twenty years Japan might control all Asia.⁸⁶²

Students were chosen for the school from middle schools throughout Japan and were approximately seventeen years of age.⁸⁶³ Ōkawa supervised selection, and prospective students were subjected to a board of examination chaired by Ōkawa himself. The school provided a course of two years duration, students eventually being divided into eight classes, each destined to specialise in one particular nation: i) Turkey, ii) Arabia, iii) Persia, iv) India, v) Siam, vi) French Indo-China, vii) the Netherlands East Indies or viii) Afghanistan. Only the first four divisions were in place in the course of 1938 however, and, due to insufficient numbers, only five graduates were posted to their respective countries of specialisation.⁸⁶⁴ Japan’s entry into protracted warfare interfered with Ōkawa’s initial plans, and graduates were only ever despatched to India, Java, French Indo-China, Malaya and Siam (although one was en route to Afghanistan at the onset of hostilities).⁸⁶⁵

⁸⁶⁰ Preliminary Interrogation of Ogawa, Shūmei, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 3

⁸⁶¹ TNA: KV 3/253, Straits Settlements Police Special Branch, *op. cit.*, p. 15

⁸⁶² Preliminary Interrogation of Ogawa, Shūmei, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4

⁸⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 4

⁸⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Otsuka Toshio was a graduate of Ōkawa *Juku*, and later employed by *Hikari Kikan*, one of Japan's most noted special service agencies.⁸⁶⁶

Following his initial interview, Otsuka resided at the hostel situated at Suginami-ku, Saginomiya-cho 1 for the first year (between May 1938 and April 1939). There were only twenty students enrolled at this, the beginning of the school, yet by the end of this first year another hostel was specially built, in Shinagawa-ku near Meguro Station, to house these students, and another twenty enrolled for the following year. Food, clothing, stationary and textbooks were all provided *gratis*, with pupils attending school throughout the week, leave only granted on Sundays. Students rose at 5:30 am in summer, 6:00 am in winter, with Shinto prayers made prior to breakfast. Both smoking and drinking were prohibited.⁸⁶⁷

English and non-language subjects were compulsory within the Ōkawa *Juku*, with a secondary language also undertaken by students. Subjects and their duration taken at the Ōkawa *Juku* included English (two hourly periods three times per week), Economic Geography (four hours per week), History of Sino-Japanese Relations (four hours per week) and Japanese History (two hours per week). Secondary languages available to Otsuka's year included Malay, Thai, Hindustani and French; languages available to students commencing 1939 included Persian, French, Arabic, Turkish and perhaps Hindustani. Students were required to choose a language open to those of their year of enrolment.⁸⁶⁸ Other areas covered by the curriculum included Political Economy (perhaps one and the same as Economic Geography noted above), World History, Ethics, Geography (of the country in which they specialised), and for those destined for Islamic nations, study of Islam itself.⁸⁶⁹ Once courses had commenced at the school, students were kept segregated, and were unable to return home.⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁶ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6312, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 232, 17 May 1946, Item 2144, Interrogation of Otsuka Toshio, p. 33

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁹ Preliminary Interrogation of Ogawa, Shūmei, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 5

⁸⁷⁰ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6312, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 232, 17 May 1946, Item 2146, Interrogation of Kogure Yoshio, p. 39

Military officers attended the school to address its students. These included General Iwane Matsui (former head of the Harbin Special Services Agency), Colonel Sakurai (to speak of the war situation in China) Major Oseko and Lieutenant General Ogasawara. Although the subject matter of these talks could not be recalled, all were related to “Japanese Spirit”.⁸⁷¹

On five or more occasions, a Mukonoki of the Foreign Ministry came to the school, perhaps of the *Jōhō Bu*, always to present on “The Kuomintang and the Chinese Reds”. Mukonoki was a graduate of the *Takushoku Daigaku* (Colonisation University), whose pupils spent a portion of their course in China.⁸⁷² Well-known right-wing politicians also provided lectures occasionally, including Prince Konoye; Gotō Ryūnosuke (a Konoye acolyte); Shiratori Toshio, deputy and later ambassador to Italy; Arita Ichiro, former Foreign Minister and Sasakawa Ryōichi. Lectures were of course also personally given by Ōkawa Shūmei.⁸⁷³

Kogure Yoshio, a Japanese civilian interrogated in Bangkok, stated that upon graduation from the Ōkawa *Juku* students were recommended for posts by the military, through Ōkawa.⁸⁷⁴ Other placements were made through liaison with the Foreign Office and through the head offices of Japanese press agencies and commercial enterprises.⁸⁷⁵ Some graduates were employed in legations and consulates, although not strictly designated as Foreign Office personnel, but rather as attachés of a sort. Others were employed in branches of Mitsubishi and *Dainan Kōshi* (Great Southern Company).⁸⁷⁶

Kuramochi Hiroshi, principal representative of the *Mantetsu* in Saigon, was unaware of whether any private students had received any education at the Ōkawa *Juku*, although thought it not improbable. If these students had been military, Kuramochi stated under questioning, these would only have been non-commissioned officers (NCOs) as private students of the Tokyo and Osaka Language Schools were of rank Lieutenant and 2nd

⁸⁷¹ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Otsuka Toshio, *op. cit.*, p. 34

⁸⁷² *Ibid.*,

⁸⁷³ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Kogure Yoshio, *op. cit.*, p. 39

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷⁵ Preliminary Interrogation of Ogawa, Shūmei, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 5

⁸⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Lieutenant; military ranks of Captain and above received training at the Imperial University. NCOs would likely have received training in politics, economics and language of the country to which they were to be posted.⁸⁷⁷

Ōkawa denied that his educational facility was connected with the military *tokumu kikan*. To elucidate this point, he stated that no change had occurred in the school's curriculum, despite Japan's ongoing conflicts, and nor was there any change in the manner in which students were selected, and no increase in funding provided to them.⁸⁷⁸ The Ōkawa *Juku*, due to its not operating under the Ministry of Education, undertook no military training.⁸⁷⁹ Had it been, this would have been compulsory. No instruction was given in codes or signalling.⁸⁸⁰ Kuramochi did not believe that the school provided any special intelligence training, due to the age of the students (sixteen to seventeen), and the fact that training only extended for two years (and mainly in foreign languages).⁸⁸¹ Following graduation, however, and despite there being no particular training to enter *tokumu kikan* or other units abroad, students were in fact posted to these special service organisations, other intelligence units or as assistants to the Ministry of Greater East Asia. Graduates employed by the military (by design or through normal conscription) were made translators or interpreters, being too young and lacking sufficient education or training to have been assigned any special duties. Kuramochi did allow, however, for the possibility that over time some of these students would have received sufficient experience and developed the ability to perform special service activities, but these would have remained a minority.⁸⁸² Given Ōkawa's political leanings and history, it seems unlikely he was unaware of the role graduates of his school would play in the existing intelligence structure. That graduates of the Ōkawa *Juku* were not specialised for secret service work appears more a lack of recognition of what was required in these roles. Japan's history of topographical, geographical,

⁸⁷⁷ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Kuramochi Hiroshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37

⁸⁷⁸ Preliminary Interrogation of Ogawa, Shūmei, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 7

⁸⁷⁹ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Kuramochi Hiroshi, *op. cit.*, p. 35

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37

⁸⁸² *Ibid.*

political and economic studies of various countries had, at that time, amounted to intelligence in Japanese eyes.

Ōkawa stated under interrogation that he believed all *tokumu kikan* were military, the Foreign Ministry was uninvolved in their operation(s), and they were likely centralised under the authority of Lieutenant-General Arisue Seizō of the Second Department (Intelligence), IJA General Staff. Despite ostensibly not knowing to what degree *tokumu kikan* held a measure of independence, Ōkawa did however state *tokumu kikan* in the field were predominantly responsible for political activities, citing the examples of China and Manchuria, where they were responsible for liaison between puppet authorities and the political section of local IJA headquarters'.⁸⁸³ Ōkawa thus confirmed a knowledge of military intelligence supposedly outside the normal awareness of a Japanese civilian, especially so in his identification of Lieutenant General Seizō Arisue and General Doihara Kenji as those likely to know most regarding the *tokumu kikan*.⁸⁸⁴ This would appear to confirm a continuing relationship between Ōkawa and the military throughout the conflict, and despite Ōkawa's protestations.

As late as 1938, an informal intelligence education structure was still sought after; this despite its continued lack of specialised intelligence training. The differentiation between politically knowledgeable, if astute, agents, and formally trained, specialised intelligence officers was not yet fully grasped. To date, minimal efforts had been made by Japan as a nation to develop its human intelligence capability. Iwakuro Hideo would, however, later take steps to overcome this obvious inadequacy in the establishment of the Training Centre for Rear Duties Personnel, later to be known as the Nakano School.⁸⁸⁵

The Nakano School

During the 1930s, and particularly so following the reestablishment of Imperial General Headquarters in November 1937 (in accordance with

⁸⁸³ Preliminary Interrogation of Ogawa, Shūmei, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8

⁸⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8

⁸⁸⁵ Mercado, *op. cit.*, p. 7

Japanese war-time custom of only forming an Imperial General Headquarters immediately before the initiation of hostilities), the General Staff had assumed a number of “non-operational and policy-making powers”.⁸⁸⁶ However, as Barnhart states, the General Staff “did not adapt the wider perspective that these powers should have entailed...Instead, officers in both staffs retained their narrow, “operational” outlook. In no area was this failure to adapt new responsibilities more obvious than in intelligence gathering and analysis.”⁸⁸⁷

Characteristics endemic in Imperial Japan at the time hampered intelligence efforts and understanding, namely a tendency to fall foul of Japan’s own propaganda, even at the highest echelon, leading to an overemphasis on “the attack” at the expense of the “preparatory steps necessary for its most effective execution.”⁸⁸⁸ This was exacerbated by a belief in the divinity (and inherent superiority) of the Japanese, and the politicisation of information and intelligence products to best serve political ends.⁸⁸⁹

Iwakuro Hideo graduated from the Military Academy in 1918, and during his career had been a staff officer with the Kwantung Army General Staff, IJA General Staff and Ministry of War. From his position with the Military Administration Bureau in 1936, Iwakuro began promoting a more professional and systematic intelligence approach, and in time would be heeded, promoted to senior staff officer of the 2nd Department’s newly-formed 8th Section (Covert Operations) in October 1937.⁸⁹⁰

Kagesa Sadaaki, the section’s first head, was one of the IJA’s top China experts, having formerly led the 2nd Department’s (Intelligence) China Section, renowned for its political intrigues with Chinese warlords rather than as an analytical unit. This explains Kagesa’s later involvement in the

⁸⁸⁶ Barnhart, *op. cit.*, p. 429

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 429-30

⁸⁸⁸ The United States Strategic Bombing Survey (Pacific), Japanese Military and Naval Division, Japanese Intelligence Section, G-2, April 1946 (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1946) p. 3

⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁰ Mercado, *op. cit.*, p. 6

establishment of the puppet regime of Wang Ching-wei in China (see Chapter 8).⁸⁹¹

The organisation of 8th Section was as follows:

i) 4th Sub-Section

a. General Intelligence Appreciations

This sub-department, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Takeda, and assisted by Lieutenant Colonel Kadomatsu, was responsible for general intelligence appreciations on areas under their control based on reports from Departments 5 and 7 (see organisational chart below). These appreciations were subject to revision by the Section Chief's conference and the War Office prior to presentation to the coordinating conference of Imperial HQ

b. Political Matters

Headed by Lieutenant Colonel Kadomatsu; aided by Lieutenant Colonel Ozeki; initially the primary emphasis of this department lay in support of the Nanjing Government, yet from Spring 1941 the importance of the Burmese independence movement had been realised, Minami *Kikan* under Colonel Suzuki established to assist in its activities. The Military Attaché to Siam, Colonel Tamura, advised in July 1941 he had established contact with the Indian Independence League in Bangkok. The feasibility of support of Indian independence was thereafter researched (see Chapters 10 and 11).

c. News and Propaganda

⁸⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3

Headed by Lieutenant Colonel Tada, assisted by (then) Captain Fujiwara, this sub-sections primary duties included:

- 1) Plans for announcements on the war situation
- 2) Plans for propaganda to improve morale in troops overseas
- 3) Plans for announcements in relation to the Nanjing Government

ii) Special Section (*Beppan*)

Under command of Lieutenant Colonel Yabe, this section focused on intelligence derived from documents with emphasis being placed on political trends in Soviet Russia. This information was collected from publications including magazines and newspapers. Information in relation to activities of the Communist Party in Japan and foreign reaction to Japanese propaganda was also collected. Yabe was assisted by a Captain Endo and several civilian officials, some of whom were Communist turncoats.⁸⁹²

The Special Section (*Beppan*) worked elsewhere than the 4th Sub-Section due to its being an investigative section with no executive function. The News and Propaganda Sub-Section was a planning section; the Newspaper Section of the War Office and the News Department of Imperial HQ carried out executive functions. The General Affairs Section of the War Office held responsibility for announcements and political propaganda. 8th Section was primarily responsible for news and propaganda planning related to military operations, for this reason maintaining close liaison with press agents and the Cabinet Information Bureau (*Naikaku Jōhōkyoku*).⁸⁹³

Only in December 1937 did the IJA, in the face of growing problems in

⁸⁹² The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6314, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 234, Item 2151, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, pp. 4-5

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 5

China, seek to improve its counterintelligence capabilities with the creation of the *Yama Kikan* (Mountain Agency); beginning operations in spring 1937. Little is known of the agency, but its staff is thought to have employed agents, picked locks, intercepted mail, etc. more in line with a covert intelligence network. This agency was led for a short time by Akigusa Shun.⁸⁹⁴

Lieutenant Colonel Akigusa Shun had graduated from the Military Academy at the age of twenty in 1914, and was at one time attached to the Harbin *Tokumu Kikan*. Akigusa, returned to Tokyo to establish the Russian Section of IJA GHQ, for gathering intelligence on the USSR, and was later instrumental in the organisation of White Russians against the USSR.⁸⁹⁵ Akigusa spoke Russian and understood the culture well, and was even able to ingratiate himself with the Russian Fascist Party, supplying weapons and funding for training for small groups that would later infiltrate the Soviet border territory.⁸⁹⁶ While serving in the Harbin Special Service Agency under Major General Komatsubara Michitarō, Akigusa further organised the Bureau of Russian Émigré Affairs under the aegis of the *Kantōgun*, and was instrumental in forming the document exploitation programme of the Harbin *tokumu kikan*.⁸⁹⁷

Iwakuro Hideo saw a need to develop a training establishment and regime to develop specialists, recognizing Japan's "...swashbuckling, irregular approach to operations that ultimately harmed Japan's interest."⁸⁹⁸ Akigusa also realised the need for a more systematic approach, and the 4th Sub-Section (*Han*) at GHQ which he and Iwakuro helped establish would be the precursor of an intelligence school, established July 1938, for the training of agents in secret warfare. The School would in time be known by the site of its second headquarters (in Nakano, Tokyo) as the Nakano School.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁴ Mercado, *op. cit.*, p. 4

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5

⁸⁹⁶ Allen, L., "Intelligence Services during the Second World War: Part 2", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Oct., 1987) p. 554

⁸⁹⁷ Mercado, *op. cit.*, p. 5

⁸⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7

⁸⁹⁹ Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 554-5

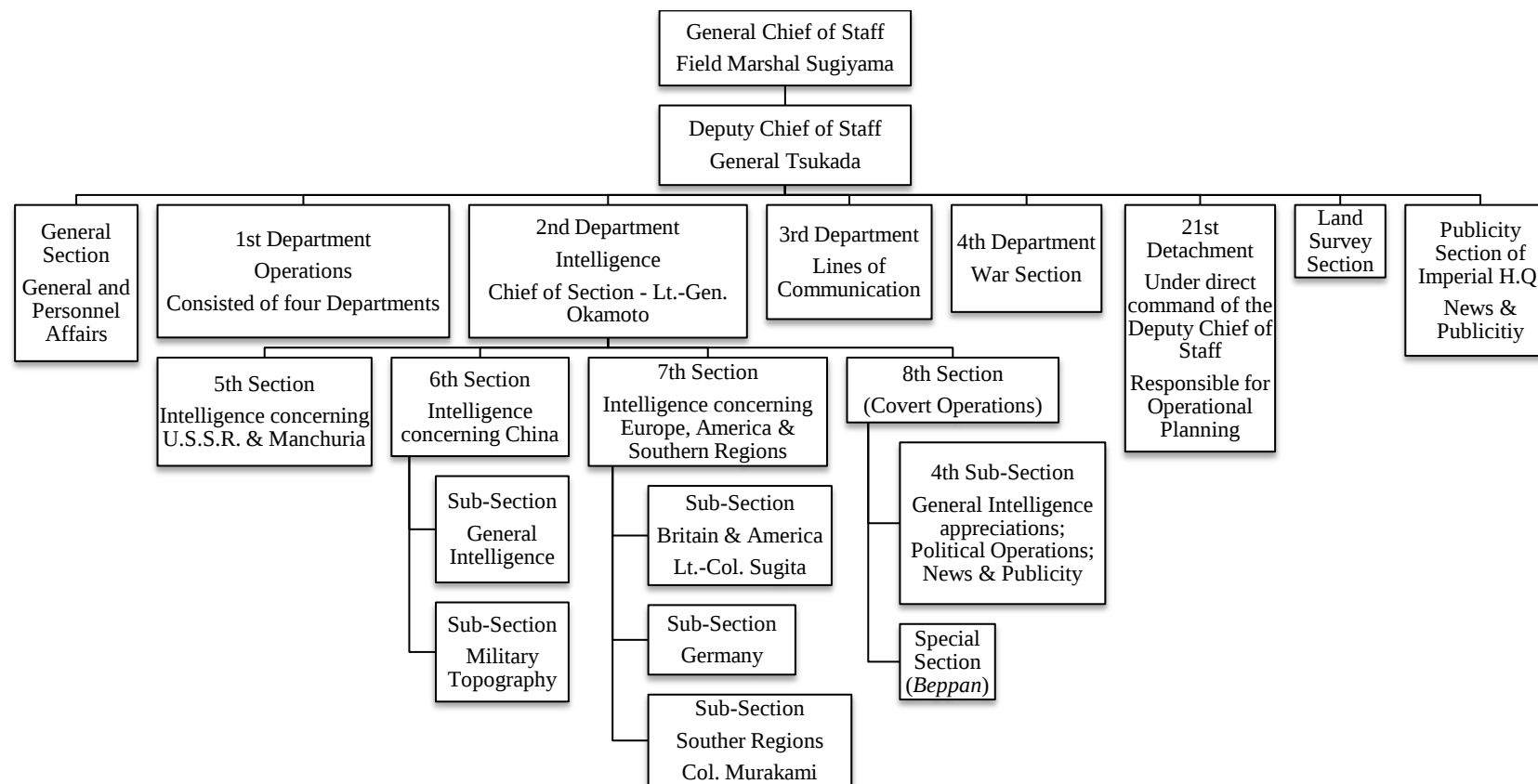


Figure 7. The position and function of 8th Section in Imperial HQ⁹⁰⁰

⁹⁰⁰ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 3

Interestingly (considering the Nakano School's establishment soon after the beginning of conflict with China), initially the school would be Soviet-focused, mirroring the line of expertise of Akigusa.⁹⁰¹ Regardless, Akigusa and Iwakuro would seek to replace the blind patriotic zeal and general “adventuress-ness” formerly required of intelligence staff and replace it with a more rational approach. Unfortunately, Akigusa himself would fall foul of the old intelligence ethos when in March 1940 he was required to transfer (in line with the Japanese culture of taking responsibility for the actions of one's staff) following a blunder of a subordinate of the “old school” (Ito Samata, who had been a classmate of several officers executed following the February 26 Incident of 1936, and was of like-mind and temperament). Colonel Akigusa would thereafter be in Berlin; head of the *Hoshi Kikan* (Star Agency),⁹⁰² and the school would lose a key founder and proponent of a more modern, systematised intelligence-training programme.

Only elite students would be chosen for Nakano; the School's first class would be only eighteen in number (from an initial recruitment of six hundred) having undergone rigorous examination.⁹⁰³ Furthermore, candidates had been taken only from reservists, regular army thought to be too unyielding, and many were of Japan's most prestigious universities. The curriculum too would diverge from former conceptions, going beyond tactical intelligence formerly thought sufficient within the intelligence system. Total War principles would now be employed, employing the precepts of the ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu and calling on the experience of Colonel Motojirō Akashi. Students were taught by such figures as Major Fujiwara Iwaichi (Chapter 10), of the IJA HQ 8th Section, in propaganda, and Lieutenant Colonel Yano Muraiji (Chapter 9), who would later head the 2nd Department (Intelligence) of the Southern Area Army⁹⁰⁴, regarding the United States.⁹⁰⁵

Students would learn unconventional warfare and intelligence techniques, including photography and propaganda (criminals were even employed to teach more surreptitious skills), as well as undertake a more

⁹⁰¹ Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 555

⁹⁰² Mercado, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-10

⁹⁰³ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, p. 10

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰⁵ Mercado, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-12

general education in political science and other subjects that would be of use to them, particularly so in terms of administration.⁹⁰⁶ Special duty training included propaganda (*senden*), counter-intelligence (*bōchō*), espionage (*chōhō*), language study (*gogaku*), stratagem (*bōryaku*) and the administration of occupied territory (*senryōchi kosei*), each a course in itself. The propaganda course included particular focus on a small camera, able to be concealed in the hand, and thus hidden from prying eyes. Skills in broadcasting and publishing were also taught. The course in counter-intelligence taught methods to reveal enemy espionage operations, and further how to develop a defensive system to thwart these activities. Further training was given in codes and cyphers and disguise. The course in espionage included wireless interception, telephone tapping, statistics, deduction, code decipherment and the clandestine opening of sealed documents.⁹⁰⁷ Importantly, special attention was given to the assessment of wartime potential, in terms of production or transport⁹⁰⁸, a skill formerly lacking and/or largely overlooked in Japanese intelligence planning.

Furthermore, individualism of a fashion was promoted, so as to rid graduates of rote-learnt militarism and to improve their ability to obfuscate themselves in the general population. Graduates of the school would be both professional and patriotic, but importantly were flexible in their thinking.⁹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, as Ford states, graduates would operate within “a hostile military culture”, one which held “...a scant regard for its endeavours, unless they involved covert actions such as espionage, sabotage and subversion”⁹¹⁰, in line with the military’s continued (and narrow) operational focus.

The Nakano School represented what had been required for some time: an improvement in intelligence operational abilities. Although Nakano graduates and their local effect would be impressive later in Southeast Asia, this, however, would remain too dilute, the School’s graduates too few, too

⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13

⁹⁰⁷ Maruyama, S., *The Nakano School: Memoirs of a Member of the Tokumu Kikan* (Tokyo: Heiwa Shobo Co., 1948) pp. 4-5

⁹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5

⁹⁰⁹ Mercado, *op. cit.*, p. 14

⁹¹⁰ Ford, D., “Strategic Culture and Japanese Military Intelligence during the Pacific War, 1941-45”, available at: <http://www.nisa-intelligence.nl/PDF-bestanden/NISAcongresFord.pdf>

thinly dispersed, and deployed too late. Meanwhile, in China, where hostilities had begun in 1937, an out-dated intelligence system and methodology had already been employed and was now entrenched (see Chapter 8).

8 Japanese Intelligence following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident

Wachi Takaji (see Chapters 5 and 6), a former Staff Officer of the Kwantung Army during the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, and instrumental in the formation of the Manchukuoan establishment, is suspected also of being having been connected with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 7 November 1937 (generally deemed the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War). Wachi, another China specialist, would in time come to lead his own Special Service Organ.⁹¹¹

In the years directly following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, many key (and controversial) intelligence figures would now find themselves in Tokyo. Seishirō Itagaki, for example, now Minister of War, would call Tōjō Hideki to Tokyo in 1938 to serve as Vice Minister.⁹¹² This was at a time the Japanese Cabinet was often changing. Between June 1937 and October 1941, there would be six Cabinets under five different Prime Ministers, including Kōki Hirota; Tōjō Hideki, former Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army; and Senjurō Hayashi, former General of the Chōsen Army that had assisted in the invasion of Manchuria following the Mukden Incident in 1931.

The General Staff (responsible for operational planning, including mobilisation and military organisation) required the consent of the Military Affairs Bureau of the War Ministry in order to execute any of its plans due to the latter's management of supply and expenditure. On examining the plans of the General Staff and perusing its finances and materiel, it was the War Ministry that initiated operational plans. The General Staff received none of the IJA budget, which had to be passed by the Diet.⁹¹³ In those instances when insufficient funding was available to undertake or complete operations, the Military Affairs Bureau of the War Ministry had to either: i) reduce its budgetary expenses, or ii) the General Staff was required to make a request of

⁹¹¹ Tucker, S., *Who's Who in Twentieth Century Warfare* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001) p. 1960

⁹¹² Kato, M., *The Lost War: A Japanese Reporter's Story* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1946) p. 127

⁹¹³ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 21-22, op. cit.*, pp. 15859-15860

the War Ministry, which in turn made a request to the government; the government (after drawing up an additional budget) provided this to the Diet; and if consented finance was made available to the War Ministry, whereby apportionment proceeded once more through the Military Affairs Bureau. The Military Affairs Bureau was, furthermore, the body responsible for preparing and issuing statements of policy.⁹¹⁴

Mutō Akira had been head of the Kwantung Army's Intelligence Section at the time of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, and is also thought to have been an instigator of the event. In October 1939 Lieutenant General Akira Mutō would become head of the Military Affairs Bureau of the War Ministry. Due to his proficiency, Mutō would retain the role through the fall of the Yonai Cabinet in July 1940, the succession of Lieutenant General Tōjō to the role of War Minister (replacing General Hata), and following Tōjō's appointment as Prime Minister in October 1941. Mutō retained this role until he assumed the command of the Imperial Guards Division in April 1942.⁹¹⁵

The IJA was now the impelling force behind Japanese politics, and according to testimony before the IMTFE, IJA policy would now emanate predominantly from Mutō as head of the Military Affairs Bureau.⁹¹⁶ Following the demise of the short-lived Abe Cabinet in January 1940, the Military Affairs Bureau would follow a policy consistent with the aims of the Tri-Partite Alliance, namely that it would pursue the establishment of a New Order in East Asia parallel to the New Order sought in Europe by the respective fascist powers.⁹¹⁷ Factional politics had effectively come to a close in the Japanese government, and both the General Staff and the War Ministry would now be able to operate in cohesion toward Japan's imperial aims.

Key intelligence players were now in powerful positions in Tokyo, but their roles and influence had changed. Increasingly those who had been previously in Intelligence began to hold Operational commands. Following the 26 February Incident, Doihara Kenji for his part had been recalled to Tokyo to take command of the 1st Division. Doihara would prove himself a

⁹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 15860-15862

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15863

⁹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 15863-15864

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15869-15870

better intelligence officer than operations officer, however. Following the onset of hostilities with China, while commanding officer of the 14th Division, Doihara was severely defeated when the Chinese broke the dykes of the Yellow River in Honan, killing a large proportion of his troops.⁹¹⁸ Failures thus continued to plague Japan's intelligence "prodigy". Amleto Vespa, an Italian at one time employed by Chang Tso-lin and later by the Japanese Secret Service, held Doihara in less esteem than his colleagues: "He delights in showing his greatness by his hectoring manner. No one can deny that he has done well in many of his undertakings but the fact remains that he has many failures to his discredit, so much so that one would imagine they were the mistakes of a simple corporal rather than a Colonel in the Japanese Intelligence Service".⁹¹⁹ Such failures would not dull Doihara's advancement however, prestige a very powerful factor in governing relationships, and he would later be appointed Inspector-General of Military Training, one of the IJA's top positions, and concurrently Supreme War Councillor.⁹²⁰

Despite the apparent amalgamation of factions in government, rivalries in the establishment would continue, this being a hallmark of Japanese politics of the time, both in terms of government and military leadership. Many officers from the intelligence corp had now risen to such rank as to develop policy, and had been given operational commands despite this not being their fort  . As the 1930s came to a close, even those who found themselves sidelined outside Tokyo would later find themselves in positions of considerable power (see Chapter 8).

Nomonhan

According to the affidavit of Matsuura Kusuo, one time staff officer of the Kwantung Army attached to its 2nd Department, it was the duty of intelligence officers within the Kwantung Army to collect the requisite information for operational planning, this information being forwarded to the Commander-in-

⁹¹⁸ "Doihara, General Kenji", RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*

⁹¹⁹ Vespa, A., *Secret Agent of Japan: A handbook to Japanese Imperialism* (London: V. Gollancz Limited, 1938) p. 43

⁹²⁰ "Biographic Report Doihara, Kenji", RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*

Chief for reference purposes.⁹²¹ Intelligence officers were not consulted regarding operational planning, and were never made aware of pre-existing or future operational plans. No conferences occurred to discuss operational planning with the Intelligence Department; any liaison with the latter by operations staff was solely to alter collection areas and distribution in the case of Army reorganisation.⁹²² As late as 1939, the continued attitude toward intelligence within the military can be seen in the thoughts of Prince Kannin, head of the IJA General Staff at the time of what would become known as the “Nomonhan Incident”: “to rate the foe too highly tends to breed defeatism and cowardice and to erode friendly forces’ morale.”⁹²³ As Ford states: “The most prestigious careers in the military [still] dealt with operations. Intelligence lacked glamour, and was a job more suited for the cowardly and overcautious. Neither characteristic befitted Japanese military traditions which called for a constant show of bravery”.⁹²⁴

On 13 May 1939, Komatsubara Michitarō, formerly of the Harbin Special Service Agency, and now head of the Kwantung Army’s 23rd Division, advised *Kantōgun* HQ of an ensuing skirmish between the Manchukuo Army and Outer Mongolian Cavalry. Without knowledge of whether this might be a minor confrontation or something larger, Komatsubara sent reinforcements according to *Kantōgun* guidelines, which allowed incursions into Soviet territory “...temporarily, or to decoy Soviet soldiers and get them into Manchurian territory.”⁹²⁵ These reinforcements would be annihilated, and while Komatsubara prepared for a counterstrike, the *Kantōgun* received information from two different sources that should have forewarned of what was to come. Firstly, Colonel Doi Akio, then military attaché in the USSR, warned Headquarters that the Soviet Union would no longer countenance border incursions and would respond.⁹²⁶ Colonel Isomura Takesuke, of Kwantung Army Intelligence, then warned that greater Soviet

⁹²¹ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 12-15, op. cit.*, p. 37131

⁹²² *Ibid.*, pp. 37131-37132

⁹²³ Coox, *op. cit.*, p. 1027

⁹²⁴ Ford, D., *Britain’s Secret War Against Japan* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006) p. 179

⁹²⁵ Barnhart, *op. cit.*, p. 436

⁹²⁶ *Ibid.*

forces were available in the Nomonhan area than were thought by Komatsubara.⁹²⁷ Despite receiving credible intelligence, Ueda Kenkichi, commander of the Kwantung Army, ordered the attack in opposition to the military authorities in Tokyo, even avoiding the use of telegraph to issue the order, knowing Tokyo monitored communications in Manchuria. Subsequently, Japanese forces were thoroughly defeated by a Soviet force even larger than that known to Kwantung Army Intelligence.⁹²⁸

Later, Doi from Moscow would warn of Russian movements, while the 2nd Department in Tokyo and Kwantung Army Intelligence both learnt of an imminent Soviet offensive, the scope of which would be badly estimated (partially due to a lack of aerial reconnaissance due to bad weather, but also against a backdrop of historical passivity on the part of the Soviets).⁹²⁹ Russia would at the onset of hostilities have four times the force known to Japanese intelligence, leading to a humiliating defeat.⁹³⁰ Japan's defeat at Nomonhan, led by a former key intelligence officer (now posted arguably outside his area of expertise, as had Doihara been in Honan, as an operational commander), and ordered by a commanding general in opposition to Tokyo, demonstrates poor coordination between operations and intelligence, continued maverick behaviour by field units, and cognitive bias within Japan's military intelligence.

Throughout the Nomonhan Incident deficiencies related to methodology came to light. On one occasion, information was sourced from by the Harbin Agency from a contact in the Soviet Consul-General in Harbin. Initially, both the Intelligence Department of the Kwantung Army and the IJA General Staff in Tokyo thought the information of considerable import, but as the Nomonhan Incident unfolded, they were given reason to believe the information was purposely deceptive. Despite this, information continued to be sought from the same source in the hope some credible information might be derived.⁹³¹

This development was unknown to the Operations Department of the

⁹²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 436-437

⁹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 437

⁹³¹ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit*, pp. 49-50

Kwantung Army, who had in the meantime sourced a copy of the original information from the Harbin Agency (notably marked at the highest security classification). Unaware of its dubious credibility, the Operations Department thought it an interception of the Harbin Agency. The Intelligence Section for its part knew nothing of Operations obtaining their own copy from the Harbin Agency, and had not notified the 1st Department of its being inauthentic.⁹³² Intelligence had thus evaluated its information without informing Operations, the latter acting on this despite its lacking substance. The 2nd Department only later recognised this defect in its handling of information, and the overall circumstances pointed at further organisational deficiency.⁹³³

Japanese intelligence also suffered considerably from cognitive bias. As Coox states: “The Japanese Army did not ignore intelligence; it tended to twist reality to fit its preconceptions and could not or would not accept evidence to the contrary.”⁹³⁴ For example, Doi’s warning was summarily dismissed by the Kwantung Army Operations Department; negative views would “...not be allowed to dampen the field army’s ardent resolve...”⁹³⁵

Despite improvements in the Kwantung Army’s intelligence service by August 1939, several further flaws were identified, in particular in regard to methodology and organisation. Both modernisation and systemisation had not reached a requisite level of efficacy, and the degree to which different intelligence agencies had systematised varied markedly.⁹³⁶ The Kwantung Army Headquarter’s 2nd Department had over time taken complete control of all Special Service Agencies, including administration, and consequently its own operation had become overwhelmingly complex.⁹³⁷ The Department’s efficiency and efficacy had subsequently suffered, some functions at times left wanting. Rather than becoming a staff of policy and planning, the Department served as an administrative organ. In addition, the Department’s role of information evaluation had suffered, leading to sub-par intelligence estimates. This would in turn lead to a loss in confidence in the 2nd

⁹³² *Ibid.*, p. 50

⁹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51

⁹³⁴ Coox, *op. cit.*, p. 1086

⁹³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹³⁶ *Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, Volume X, op. cit.*, p. 47

⁹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48

Department by the 1st Department within the Kwantung Army. From this point on, the Operations Department would increasingly make independent intelligence estimates, yet lacked the requisite scope of information collection and collation available only to the 2nd Department.⁹³⁸ Sources utilised by Operations were often unverified. The 2nd Department could not in the short term circumvent this turn of events.⁹³⁹

The organisation of all intelligence echelons was found to be weak, with the 2nd Department, having been drawn too intricately into the working of the Special Service Agencies, unable to perform its normal duties or systematically organise and employ all agencies.⁹⁴⁰ The Special Service Agencies were found to have the most pronounced organisational weakness. Eight of these had been in place at time of the Nomonhan Incident, in Wangyehmiao, Mutanchiang, Sanho, Heiho, Chiamussu, Tungan, Hailar and Harbin. Overall, these were found to be somewhat unbalanced, and cooperation and liaison between these SSAs lacked structure.⁹⁴¹

All SSA remained under direct command of the Commanding Officer, Kwantung Army, operating under the 2nd Department. During the Nomonhan Incident, the 2nd Department, completely occupied with the present affair as it unfolded, was unable to organise and employ the SSAs throughout Manchuria.⁹⁴² The investment of too much responsibility in the 2nd Department had therefore led to a weakening of the Kwantung Army's overall intelligence system by the end of the 1930s.

Many Special Service Agencies had further dedicated their time and resources toward peacetime intelligence, and as such as the Nomonhan Incident ensued few were capable of garnering intelligence from the front. The Harbin SSA formed two battlefield intelligence teams in July, although these were thought troublesome as they lacked technical preparation, organisation, equipment and communications training. These two also lacked an efficient methodology in relation to treatment of materials gained from the

⁹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 47

⁹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49

⁹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 49

front.⁹⁴³

In December 1939 the IJA General Staff formed the “Nomonhan Incident Research Committee” in Hsinking. The Committee included staff of both the IJA General Staff and Kwantung Army Headquarters, and sought to examine the reasons for Japan’s defeat. The Committee further sought improvement in all aspects of the Army, and in relation to intelligence the Special Intelligence Service Sub-committee was formed to analyse Japanese’ intelligence activities during the Incident, recommend improvements, and examine Japanese intelligence requirements for both peacetime and times of war.⁹⁴⁴

This Sub-committee examined improvements in the intelligence system made since the Manchurian Incident, and reviewed its operation through the Nomonhan Incident. The Sub-committee identified numerous causes of concern and failure, but the primary cause was deemed the Operations’ staff officers’ lack of confidence in the intelligence estimates of Intelligence staff officers. Operations staff thus arbitrarily developed their own estimates on limited sources. These estimates and consequent decisions were often made at critical moments, and decisions were at times based solely “...on the friendly situation...”⁹⁴⁵ This was in some part attributed to Operations’ staff’s propensity to act independently, noting their influence within military headquarters, yet nevertheless the primary cause for operations’ staff coming to their own conclusion was thought to be their lack of confidence in those intelligence estimates provided.⁹⁴⁶

Intelligence officers were also found to be so deeply involved in peacetime intelligence concerns in relation to the USSR that no wartime intelligence planning and preparation was undertaken.⁹⁴⁷ Those wartime intelligence teams forwarded by the Harbin SSA were only formed following the onset of hostilities, and when on station were ineffective due to a lack of communications units. This information was thought useful and was to be acted upon in accordance with the Sub-committee’s recommendations.

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 52

⁹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53

⁹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54

⁹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 54

Although the Sub-committee acknowledged prior modernisation and systemisation had improved Japan's intelligence system as a whole, improved methods were not, during the Incident, adequately or effectively employed, and further systemisation, particularly in regard to communications, was necessary.⁹⁴⁸

It was the conclusion of the Sub-committee that improvements in Japan's intelligence system were required in peacetime for periods of conflict. Most importantly, intelligence estimates must once more earn and deserve Operations' officers' confidence. Organisational and methodological improvements were recommended, so too an increase in financing. As a consequence of this analysis and these recommendations, Kwantung Army Headquarters, the IJA General Staff and the War Ministry all made efforts toward improving the Japanese intelligence network in Manchuria.⁹⁴⁹

The Kwantung Army Intelligence Group

Kwantung Army Headquarters began implementation of the Intelligence Sub-committee's recommendations in April 1940. Japanese divisions had increased from two at the time of the Manchurian Incident to approximately nine through the Nomonhan Incident, and non-divisional troop numbers, a "preponderant part of over-all strength", had also increased during the same period. Numbers in intelligence personnel had not increased correspondingly however, and deficiencies, both operational and organisational, continued.⁹⁵⁰

One of the aims of the intelligence system's reorganisation was to separate the policy and planning echelon from the operational. Another was to develop an intermediate headquarters under which all SSAs would operate. The policy and planning level, the 2nd Department, had its personnel increased, although fundamentally was unchanged. Rather, a decentralisation of power was sought. The 2nd Department would retain supervisory power over the SSAs, but operational duties would be delegated.⁹⁵¹

⁹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55

⁹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57

⁹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58

Initially, the operating echelon was reorganised with the establishment of the Kwantung Army Intelligence Group (KAIG). Formed around the Harbin SSA, the former head of this agency now became head of the KAIG, and all SSAs now came under its operational and administrative control.⁹⁵² Henceforth, the 2nd Department would hold only supervisory duties, freeing it of administrative and operational tasks it had taken upon itself, and allowing focus on its primary role of information evaluation and the preparation of intelligence estimates.⁹⁵³ In terms of efficiency and effectiveness, this was a step in the right direction, but ultimately direction from Tokyo would remain absent as the intelligence structure further decentralised.

KAIG's organisational structure held two main elements: a headquarters staff, including a sizeable intelligence department; and the SSAs themselves, which were re-designated "field branches".⁹⁵⁴ There were now eleven main branches and six sub-branches, including those newly established.⁹⁵⁵

In KAIG headquarters, the Intelligence Department, its primary element, held five divisions and two schools. The five divisions were: i) Espionage; ii) Documents; iii) Communications; iv) Propaganda; and v) Research (into intelligence technique). The schools were the Espionage Training School and Interpreter Training School. Staff consisted of ten intelligence officers, below the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, approximately one hundred and fifty NCOs and an unknown number of IJA-*gunzoku* (civilian attachés or non-career personnel), White Russians and other employees.⁹⁵⁶ Field branches held no uniform structure due to their local requirements, but predominantly held one head, one deputy head, and between one and three intelligence officers.⁹⁵⁷ The Kwantung Army's 2nd Department, now able to undertake its primary function following its having relinquished command of the SSAs, was able to focus on tactical command intelligence sections and the three major intelligence agencies now acting as intermediary commands.

⁹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 58

⁹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61

⁹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61

⁹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62

Further, the Department sought improvement in systemisation, revising its Peacetime Intelligence Service Regulations, creating Wartime Intelligence Regulations and forming procedures for intelligence disposition.⁹⁵⁸

The revision of Peacetime Intelligence Service Regulations was to reflect supervisory and operational direction changes that had occurred through the recent reorganisation. As a result of the Intelligence Subcommittee's recommendation, wartime regulations were formulated in March 1941; later being incorporated into the Kwantung Army's emergency mobilisation plan that same year. Thereafter, in wartime, "field intelligence units", inspiration taken from those formed by the Harbin Agency during the Nomonhan Incident, were to be established and assigned to each frontline army formation.⁹⁵⁹

In regard to information analysis, 2nd Department had come to the conclusion that sound appraisals could only be reached following the collation of countless fragments of information and subsequent systematic evaluation. The Department's Intelligence Section would henceforth be re-designated the "Evaluation Division", emphasising its primary duty, consisting of one staff officer, one field officer with staff training, approximately six or six officers of lower rank with intelligence training and about ten civilian employees with experience in these matters.⁹⁶⁰ This Division operated under strict supervision of the head of the 2nd Department.⁹⁶¹ Only in 1940, then, did Japan's premier field formation's intelligence apparatus organise and commit to deep information analysis, a precursor to a requisite analytical core in any modern intelligence system. Despite credible adjustments and reorganisation, this would occur too late to have any credible effect on other field formations in China (below), already heavily embroiled in their own conflict, and only six months before Japan's first moves southward into French Indo-China (see Chapter 9).

⁹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69

⁹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69

⁹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70

The *tokumu kikan* in China

Work undertaken by the *tokumu kikan* in Manchuria was presumably mirrored by work later undertaken in China.⁹⁶² Imperial Japan had been at war with China since 1937, however, and its intelligence system, such as it was, was already deployed, and this would have little time to benefit from improvements made following the Nomonhan Incident.

The Japanese Government had announced on 16 January 1938 that it would no longer deal with the Nationalist Government, but would rather seek to establish a new Government of China. This served to halt all those activities aimed at peace overtures with the government of Chiang Kai-shek.⁹⁶³ Doihara Kanji would once more return to China, forming the Doihara *Kikan* in Shanghai in July 1938 to hasten the establishment of a new Central Government in line with the Japanese Government's announcement. At this time, Japan had already established the Provisional Government of Chung Hwa Min Kuo in Beijing and the New Government of Chung Hwa Min Kuo (Wei Hsin) in Nanjing, although both operated only as organs of local administration. Neither was intended by Japan to rule China in entirety.⁹⁶⁴

The Doihara *Kikan* sought to establish a Supreme Central Government to act above those already established, and through this to govern all of China.⁹⁶⁵ Notably, the Doihara *Kikan* held no connection with the IJA stationed within China, working directly under orders of Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo (representative of the continuing dual command structure in relation to the *tokumu kikan*, but also likely due to Doihara's high profile). It is thought Doihara sought to have Tang Shao-yi head the Supreme Central Government, aided by, amongst others, Wu Pei-fu, the formerly prominent Chinese warlord (Chapter 4). Shanghai would be headquarters of

⁹⁶² "Administration – Intelligence – Tokumu Kikan", February 1945 - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁹⁶³ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 17

⁹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

the Doihara *Kikan* due to Tang Shao-yi's residing in the French Concession there.⁹⁶⁶

Tang Shao-yi had been sent in 1911 by Yuan Shih-kai to negotiate peace with the revolutionary army of Sun Yat-sen in the Wuchang uprising. Following Yuan's election as President after agreement between the North and South in 1912, Tang was made Prime Minister of the Coalition Government, later joining the Nationalist Government in another important position. Tang had been member of the military clique of the North (despite not being a military man himself) that had opposed the Nationalist Party (as had Wu Pei-fu). Doihara had hoped for much from Tang Shao-yi, yet Chiang Kai-Shek's Blue Shirt Organisation in Shanghai came to know of his plans and assassinated Tang in his home in the French Concession. Thus, only two months after its establishment, the central individual of Doihara's machinations was lost to the *Doihara Kikan*.⁹⁶⁷

Following the fall of Hankou in October 1938, the Japanese decided to install Wu Pei-fu as chief executive of occupied China. In Tokyo, the Cabinet's China Affairs Board had appropriated a great sum from the Chinese Maritime Customs Revenues of both North and Central China, and these funds were to be made available for the inducement of Wu to form a government with pro-Japanese sympathies.⁹⁶⁸ Wu would ultimately reject Japanese advances, even those of Doihara Kenji who was later sent.⁹⁶⁹ In response to Doihara, Wu is said to have retorted:

When as you Japanese have repeatedly done, you have violated our territorial and administrative integrity, it is obviously useless for me to talk to you about moral law. But you have no qualifications even to warrant my speaking to you about the way of force. I am compelled to speak to you about the ways of robbers and highwaymen. But even

⁹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18

⁹⁶⁸ *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 12-15, op. cit.*, pp. 37391-37395

⁹⁶⁹ "Japanese Personalities in the News – General Doihara Kenji", RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 3

they are guided by principles which I do not discover in you. What is the good of my talking to you at all?⁹⁷⁰

In December 1937, Chun Li-shi, member of the CC Society and Research and Statistics Bureau, Chiang Kai-shek's intelligence and security apparatus, separated himself from his previous associations and approached the *Kempei Tai* in Shanghai under an alias. Disgruntled with Chiang's revised policy toward the Communists and attitude regarding the Japanese, Li provided political intelligence on occasion, accepting financial reward at times.⁹⁷¹ Li would later be joined by Ting Mo-tsun, previously head of the Third Section of the Research and Statistics Bureau, who had severed ties with Chungking for reasons not unlike those of Li.⁹⁷²

The Doihara *Kikan* had continued in its activities despite the death of Tang Shao-yi, establishing *Kōsaku Rosen* ("channels of activity") committees and activities to form a solution for the development of a Supreme Central Government. Only the activities of Ting Mo-tsun were thought to be of any use to Doihara.⁹⁷³ Ting Mo-tsun is thought to have advised Doihara that the solution to the China problem lay not in the destruction of the Nationalist Party, and advised, rather, the recognition of the Nationalist Government by the Japanese in return for structural change. It was Tang's suggestion that the government of Chiang Kai-shek be represented to the people as against Sun Yat-sen's ideals, with the hope of solution laying in cooperation with Japan and the reform of the Nationalist Government.⁹⁷⁴ Doihara, unable to openly oppose the policy of the Japanese Government, agreed in principle with the suggestions of Tang, advising Tang to initiate propaganda calling for the Nationalist Party's reformation, but outside areas of Japanese control and the foreign concessions.⁹⁷⁵ Doihara was nevertheless transferred before his being able to develop and form a Supreme Central Government, although his support of Tang would be of assistance in the later regime under Wang Ching-

⁹⁷⁰ "Biographic Report Doihara, Kenji", RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*

⁹⁷¹ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 13

⁹⁷² *Ibid.*

⁹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 18

⁹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

wei, former Vice President of the Nationalist Government (below).⁹⁷⁶ One of Chiang Kai-Shek's greatest rivals, Wang notably lacked "Japanophobic tendencies".⁹⁷⁷ Ting Mo-tsun would cooperate with the later puppet regime of Wang Ching-wei in investigation and statistical duties.⁹⁷⁸

The *Take* (Bamboo) *Kikan* was established in spring 1939, following the disbandment of the Doihara *Kikan* in March of that year. Lieutenant Colonel Kawamoto Yoshitarō would lead the *Take Kikan*, whose aim was to establish a connection between Wu Pei-fu and Wang Ching-wei. Wu, as a militarist, would in the end be unwilling to accept a subordinate position under Wang. The Japanese thought Wu might obstruct Wang's activities, but after his death in December 1939, this concern and the work of the *Kikan* were ended.⁹⁷⁹

Ume Kikan and the puppet regime of Wang Ching-wei

In April 1938 Nishi Yoshiaki, manager of the Nanjing branch of the South Manchurian Railway, made contact with a former member of the Asiatic Section of the Nationalist Government's Foreign Ministry.⁹⁸⁰ Tao Tao-ning made clear his desire to serve as intermediary in peace negotiations with the Government in Chungking. Tao had been known to Nishi in Nanjing, and after some consideration Nishi made contact with Colonel Kagesa Sadaaki (Chapter 7), now head of the Administration Section of the Military Affairs Department of the War Office. Kagesa Sadaaki had been first head of the IJA's only recently formed 8th Section in Tokyo, concerned with the development of operations to break Chinese resistance as Japan found its forces in China increasingly bogged down. Kagesa, tellingly, had formerly been head of the 2nd Department's China Section, involved so heavily in

⁹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁷ Crowley, J.B., *Japan's Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy 1930-1938* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1966) p. 166

⁹⁷⁸ Marks, T.A., *Counterrevolution in China: Wang Sheng and the Kuomintang* (Portland; London: Frank Cass, 1996) p. 185

⁹⁷⁹ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 20

⁹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18

political intrigue.⁹⁸¹ Tao, for his part, made contact with Kao Tsung-wu, Director of the Asiatic Department of the Foreign Ministry of the Nationalist Government, a friend and former superior.⁹⁸² As a result, Kao Tsung-wu met with Colonel Kagesa, Colonel Usui, head of 8th Section IGHQ, and, amongst others, Lieutenant-Colonel Imai, head of the Chinese Affairs Section in Tokyo. Following Wang's return to China, Lieutenant Colonel Imai went to Hong Kong, where it is believed further talks were held.⁹⁸³

During these secret negotiations in Hong Kong, it was announced by the Japanese Government on 3 November 1938 it would recognise the Nationalist Government were it to be reorganised in entirety, its policies revised and its future activities integrated with the "New East Asia Order".⁹⁸⁴ This was the first official use of the term, and bore the hallmarks of General Doihara's thought.⁹⁸⁵ Further, this was an apparent complete turnaround from the Japanese Government's announcement in January of the same year, largely influenced by these talks in Tokyo and Hong Kong.⁹⁸⁶ Doihara too is thought to have been in south China in 1939 to persuade Wang to preside over a puppet government in China.⁹⁸⁷

Policy for the adjustment of Sino-Japanese relations was discussed with the Emperor present on 30 November 1938, with Prime Minister Konoye, announcing his three-point peace plan for China 22 December that same year.⁹⁸⁸ This policy called for i) a "Good Neighbour" policy; ii) a common front against Communism; and iii) economic collaboration.⁹⁸⁹ Wang Ching-wei advocated adoption of these proposals, apparently with substantial support, but the policy was not adopted. Wang departed for Hanoi, where an attempt was made on his life. Leaving for Hong Kong, the Japanese

⁹⁸¹ Mercado, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3

⁹⁸² TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 19

⁹⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁷ "Current Biography, Vol. 3, No. 3 – Doihara, Kenji", March 1942, Folder Doihara, Kenji, Box No. 26, Docheff, Ivan Vol. 2 to Dolezalek, Alexander, 2nd Release of Name Files, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 2

⁹⁸⁸ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 19

⁹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

intercepted Wang's ship en route and he was escorted to Shanghai, where Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi (see also Chapter 9), head of the Shanghai *Kempei Tai*, and Kagesa Sadaaki sought to speak with him. Kagesa at this time told Hayashi that Wang Ching-wei's Japanese sympathies were uncertain, and Hidezumi was asked to keep a close eye on him.⁹⁹⁰

Hayashi, surprised at the revelation, sought explanation as to the type of government Japan planned for China, were Wang Ching-wei to be amenable. Kagesa responded "a *bōryaku* Government", meaning a government of "expediency, strategy, intrigue."⁹⁹¹ A Five Ministers' Conference would decide 6 June 1939 on the establishment of a New Central Government in China. At this time, Wang Ching-wei was in Japan, brought by Kagesa Sadaaki on order of the conference, where he spoke with key figures including War Minister Itagaki, Prime Minister Hiranuma and Prince Konoye.⁹⁹² Japan was to install yet another puppet regime, providing only an illusion of autonomy. Hayashi Hidezumi himself was of the conclusion the Japanese never intended to establish a Central Government with Wang Ching-wei as permanent head, but, rather, sought to use Wang for his propaganda value. Although Japan would acquiesce to Wang's requirements, this would be done in the hope Nationalist Government resistance would fall into political entropy. Wang would, in fact, later be made to sign an agreement regarding the Japanese occupation of Northern China for a period of time following cessation of hostilities, and also Japan's interests in Hainan and control of railways.⁹⁹³ As had occurred earlier in China, particularly during the 1910s and 1920s, Japan would stipulate that Japanese "advisors" were to be once more posted throughout China, undermining Wang's intention to reinstall a Nationalist government.

Not long after Wang Ching-wei's arrival in Shanghai, an agreement was reached with Ting Mo-tsun and Li Shi-chun.⁹⁹⁴ These individuals would operate under Wang, seeking to remove opposition elements, while drawing

⁹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹² *IMTFE - Proceedings Jan. 12-15, op. cit.*, pp. 37382-37385

⁹⁹³ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20

⁹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13

as many influential Chinese as possible to his cause. The Japanese, for their part, formed the *Ume Kikan* under Colonel Kagesa Sadaaki. This *Kikan* was to aid the political activities of Wang and act as liaison between the Japanese and him.⁹⁹⁵

Hayashi Hidezumi and the *Kempei Tai* were tasked with Wang Ching-wei's security, Wang having to reside in an area of the International Settlement outside IJA control.⁹⁹⁶ Hidezumi's selection was attributed to his amicable understanding with the Settlement Police. Although Wang was surrounded by guards to protect him against assassination, Hayashi actively sought the removal of "Chungking terrorists", and in this protective role came to work alongside both Li Shi-chun and Ting Mo-tsun.⁹⁹⁷ This cooperation was found to be most useful, as these two as previous Chungking agents were better able in identifying their former compatriots.⁹⁹⁸

Japan thus sought to repeat its old methodology in China, putting in place a puppet regime, ostensibly self-determining, but actually "advised" at all levels by Japanese. In this, Japan sought to replicate what had been *prima facie* a success in the establishment of Manchukuo. However, what the Japanese would fail to understand, and indeed fail to adapt to, was that China was entirely unique, and had been essentially a power vacuum for some time. Furthermore, Japan had not had the same capability in China, in terms of saturation on the ground, as it had in Manchuria.

Continuance of the old intelligence regime in China

A rapid conclusion to the hostilities in China was desired by Prince Konoye, and during his first Cabinet the Prime Minister sought to "rehabilitate" those of the *Kōdōha* faction, who had despite their radicalism and militancy nevertheless sought conciliation with China following the annexation of Manchuria. With Itagaki Seishirō as War Minister, Konoye would mistakenly believe he could guide Itagaki, completely underestimating the influence over

⁹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14

Itagaki exerted by the new Vice-Minister of War, Tōjō Hideki. Konoye thought the combination of younger generation generals, recently returned from the mainland, would assist in closing the conflict, but the opposite would eventuate, with Itagaki and Tōjō refusing to cooperate in peace overtures.⁹⁹⁹

Wachi Takaji, a formerly prominent radical, would again hold an important intelligence post in China. Wachi had at one time served General Mazaki, and in 1933, when Wachi held the rank of Colonel, he became Chief of the *Dai Nikka* (2nd Department) and had as one of his subordinates Colonel Tsuji Masanobu.¹⁰⁰⁰ Both Kagesa Sadaaki and Wachi Takaji had been leading members of the *Sakurakai* alongside Colonel Shigetō Chiaki (later Lieutenant General), Lieutenant Colonel Hashimoto Kingorō and Captain Chō Isamu (later Lieutenant General).¹⁰⁰¹ All had, despite their involvement in the political machinations of 1936, found themselves promoted and/or in positions of power.

Wachi Takaji was reported to be a former close associate of both Satomi Hajime and former Kwantung Army Intelligence Chief Lieutenant General Yanagida.¹⁰⁰² Satomi Hajime (Ryōsaku) led the private *Hung Chi Shan Tang*, a Shanghai-based company, believed to be the dominant opium trader in Japanese-occupied central China until early 1944.¹⁰⁰³ Hajime was known to be a one-time associate of Kodama Yoshio, a private supporter of Japanese military intelligence through his surreptitious economic enterprises.¹⁰⁰⁴

Wachi, while on the Tientsin Army staff, had been responsible for political stratagems for the invasion of North China following the Manchurian

⁹⁹⁹ Storry, R., “Konoye Fumimaro: ‘The Last of the Fujiwara’” in Nish, I., Ed., *The Collected Writings of Richard Storry* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) p. 106

¹⁰⁰⁰ “Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army, Attention: ISR”, 21 September 1962, Folder Wachi, Takaji, Box No. 134, Vukovic, Zoran to Waldheim, Kurt Vol. 1, 2nd Release of Name Files, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 6

¹⁰⁰¹ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 4

¹⁰⁰² “Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army, Attention: ISR”, 21 September 1962, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 5

¹⁰⁰³ Yoshida, R., “Japan Profited as Opium Dealer in Wartime China”, *Japan Times*, 30 August 2007, available at: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2007/08/30/national/japan-profited-as-opium-dealer-in-wartime-china/#.VSdRYiiOtUQ>

¹⁰⁰⁴ “Jap. Intel. Service”, 11 May 1957, Folder Wachi, Takaji, Box No. 134, Vukovic, Zoran to Waldheim, Kurt Vol. 1, 2nd Release of Name Files, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD.

Incident.¹⁰⁰⁵ Following his promotion to Major General, Wachi and, alongside him Tsuji, were posted to the front at Hankou. Wachi and Tsuji thereafter sought complete Japanese military domination of China, potentially dividing the country into two states, the North China Provisional Government and the Taidō Puppet Regime.¹⁰⁰⁶ Together, they vehemently opposed the formation of the Wang Ching-wei Puppet Government, and, due to their insubordinate activity, Tōjō was forced to send officers Haruke and Sakata in 1939 to oversee Chinese Expeditionary Headquarters Force (CEFHQ). However, these two representatives over time came to sympathise with Wachi and Tsuji, and became involved in their exploitative efforts.¹⁰⁰⁷ Only by 1943 had Hideki Tōjō transferred many Staff Officers of CEFHQ to other fronts and theatres, replacing them with graduates of the Nakano Special Military Officer's School. These replacements nevertheless lacked experience, and were generally thought to be inferior.¹⁰⁰⁸

According to a report dated 7 March 1952, Wachi Takaji was at one time involved with the Doihara *Kikan*.¹⁰⁰⁹ Takaji had been charged with bringing over the Kwangsi Army to the Japanese side. The Doihara *Kikan* had at the time been undertaking the operation meant to settle the conflict with China through the establishment of a new central government in China under Tang Shao-yi.¹⁰¹⁰

The *Ran* (Orchid) *Kikan*, under Colonel Wachi, was formed following the disbandment of the *Doihara Kikan*, and is thought to have operated in Hankou, Shanghai and Hong Kong.¹⁰¹¹ Wachi Takaji had served in China for many years, was fluent in the Chinese language, and claimed to be on good

¹⁰⁰⁵ "Wachi, Takaji – Maj. Gen.", 24 March 1945, Folder Wachi, Takaji, Box No. 134, Vukovic, Zoran to Waldheim, Kurt Vol. 1, 2nd Release of Name Files, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD.

¹⁰⁰⁶ "Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army, Attention: ISR", 21 September 1962, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 6

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6

¹⁰⁰⁸ Japanese Intelligence Organisations in China (WWII) (2 of 2), Strategic Services Unit, 4 June 1946, Box No. 5, Japanese Intelligence Organisations in China (WWII) to Nazis in South America, Vol. 3, First Release of Subject Files Under the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Disclosure Acts, 1934-2002, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group 263, National Archives at College Park, MD, Section II, p. 7

¹⁰⁰⁹ "Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army, Attention: ISR", 21 September 1962, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2

¹⁰¹¹ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 21

terms with many high-ranking figures in the Chinese Nationalist regime at Chungking. For these reasons, not by reason of any intelligence experience, Wachi (likely a Major General at this time) was ordered to form the *Ran Kikan* in 1938, which he led until 1942. The *Ran Kikan* was charged with political operations aimed at subverting the Chungking Government, and obtaining military information related to the same.¹⁰¹² During a previous posting to Kwangsi, Wachi had formed relationships with the leaders of the “Kwangsi Clique”, Li Tsung-jen and Pai Chung-hsi, and it was these individuals who Wachi was to primarily seek the defection of. In actual fact, it appears these two never held Wachi in high esteem, and the latter's efforts failed.¹⁰¹³

Compared with the *Ume Kikan*, *Ran Kikan* produced few reports. Wachi, for his part, despite his comparatively high office and responsibility (and indeed, former postings), was thought generally incompetent in intelligence work, and the *Ran Kikan* would remain small throughout its existence, and provided few tangible results. For example, on one occasion a number of clandestine radio operators were detained by Japanese security forces. A few days later, Wachi contacted the relevant authority (this via unsecured phone line, and despite there being only a short distance between the two) and advised that these men actually belonged to the *Ran Kikan*. When asked to identify the men, Wachi was unable to do so, and not knowing which of his subordinates was overseeing these radio operations was forced to call in all of his commanding officers.¹⁰¹⁴ Later, when Wachi went to Hankou, as he would on several occasions, he would place a sign identifying his “Wachi *Butai* (Unit) HQ”. Nevertheless, it was said some of his civilian subordinates, forming the majority of the *kikan*, were quite capable.¹⁰¹⁵

According to one source, Wachi was unable to elucidate, even to himself, what results were sought from any particular operation.¹⁰¹⁶ He was nonetheless enthusiastic in his work, approving the activities of his

¹⁰¹² “Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army, Attention: ISR”, 21 September 1962, RG 263, NACP, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3

¹⁰¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 3

¹⁰¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹⁶ *Ibid.*

subordinates, but would often forget the details of a particular operation or the reason for its existence. The sheer number of activities under the auspices of Wachi did not help, and few of the intelligence operations undertaken under his leadership came to credible fruition.¹⁰¹⁷ According to this source, Wachi was consistently looking at the broader picture, but was impatient and did not recognise “ordinary” intelligence as a meaningful outcome. As a result, many of the *Ran Kikan*’s successes were in spite of Wachi himself, but this did little to dissuade the confidence held in him by General Headquarters, Tokyo.¹⁰¹⁸ In fact, Wachi would hold predominantly operational roles from 1942 onward, and at the end of the war was Assistant Chief of Staff of the *Nampōsōgun* (Southern Area Army).¹⁰¹⁹ Wachi thus demonstrates the continued importance of connections in Japanese leadership. Despite questionable performance in the intelligence field, Wachi would nevertheless be promoted. This proclivity within the Japanese leadership culture would significantly disadvantage military and intelligence efforts.

Japanese Military Intelligence in China

Within China, the Imperial Japanese China Expeditionary Forces (CEF), operating beneath Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo (IGHQ), operated at the same level as the (later) Southern Area Army in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and the Kwantung Army in Manchuria. Its 2nd Department (Intelligence) was responsible for strategic information collection and intelligence coordination of forces under its command (including the collation of intelligence forwarded to it by commanders in China’s North, South and Central areas) for use by its commanding officer in the formulation of war plans and dissemination to IGHQ.¹⁰²⁰ The *Dai Honei* (Imperial General Headquarters) operated as *Saikō Gunrei Kikan* (supreme military command), issuing only the broadest direction for intelligence, often holding itself above intelligence matters, intelligence being delegated to the IJA (Imperial

¹⁰¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4

¹⁰¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4

¹⁰¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6

¹⁰²⁰ Japanese Intelligence Organisations in China (WWII), RG 263, NACP *op. cit.*, p. 3

Japanese Army) and IJN (Imperial Japanese Navy) General Staffs and counterpart Ministries.¹⁰²¹

The General Staff in Tokyo prescribed intelligence sections only down to army level, but only in relation to “staff” officers, these in turn were left to their own devices in terms of developing their own sections.¹⁰²² As a result, little uniformity existed across field-formation intelligence organisations.¹⁰²³ The near autonomy granted to area armies meant that a great deal of disparity appeared between intelligence apparatus of these field formations, including in terms of size and methodology. Intelligence officers attached to units below army level were themselves limited in their function to the collection of information.¹⁰²⁴

The intelligence apparatus of the China Expeditionary Forces included the following main sections: i) field or combat intelligence within its armies, ii) sabotage and fifth column, iii) espionage, iv) counter-espionage, v) policing and peace preservation, and vi) economic control through government monopolies.¹⁰²⁵ Responsibility for each of these functions lay not with headquarters’ chief of intelligence, but, rather, remained predominantly the responsibility of army commanders and their respective sections of intelligence staff. Notably, each army commander was neither required nor obligated to report to headquarters each and every detail of intelligence operations within their area of operations. Armies operating within a particular area would therefore operate their own intelligence organisations.¹⁰²⁶

Beneath the CEF operated the North China Expeditionary Force and the Central China Expeditionary Force. The North China Expeditionary Force’s 2nd Section (Intelligence) served primarily as an office through which intelligence streamed, at irregular intervals, to supreme headquarters, Nanjing.

¹⁰²¹ Memorandum “Japanese Intelligence Services, Information regarding” 18 June 1945, Folder Okino, Mateo Capt. I.J.N., Box No. 4, Individuals (A to Z) and Capt. Matao Okino (I.J.N.), Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 1

¹⁰²² The United States Strategic Bombing Survey (Pacific), *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7

¹⁰²³ *Ibid.*, p. 7

¹⁰²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2

¹⁰²⁵ Japanese Intelligence Organisations in China (WWII), RG 263, NACP *op. cit.*, p. 3

¹⁰²⁶ *Ibid.*

Its role in direction, instruction and supervision of intelligence activities of those organisations in its jurisdiction (themselves only loosely connected) was minor.¹⁰²⁷

The Central China Expeditionary Force Headquarters' 2nd Section was located in Nanjing, acting in a supervisory role over those intelligence sections in formations under its command. Its scope of activity was limited, Area Army intelligence departments relaying information only on concerns deemed to be of particular importance to higher formation Headquarters. More often than not, an army Commanding General utilised information without relaying the same to CEFHQ.¹⁰²⁸

IGHQ tables of organisation did not initially call for intelligence staff below army level, but soon after hostilities ensued, a need for an intelligence officer at division level was found. Not staff officers, but rather "attached" individuals, these men served in a different manner in different armies, all generally undertaking the following: i) consolidation of lower unit reports on enemy strength and disposition and forwarding these to army, ii) prisoner of war interrogations, reports forwarded to higher authorities, iii) examination and translation of captured documents, results forwarded to higher authorities, iv) examination of enemy material, with that thought important forwarded to higher authorities, v) situational maps revised daily, changes sent by dispatch to higher headquarters for transmission to Tokyo, and finally vi) patrols (although division level had no specialist patrol units, men were drawn from front-line units to perform this role). Although a division was the lowest level that contained an intelligence section, from platoon up, reports were to be made to divisions on, amongst other things, enemy sightings. Principal sources of information in these lower formations were patrols, observation posts and locals. Although captured men and documents were to be sent to division, this would often not occur.¹⁰²⁹

Frontline information of China's formations was derived from intelligence representatives present in each unit. Area Armies would maintain an intelligence section, Armies an intelligence unit, and within each, Army

¹⁰²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6

¹⁰²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15

¹⁰²⁹ The United States Strategic Bombing Survey (Pacific), *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14

divisions and battalions would have their own units.¹⁰³⁰ Reports were made to the unit commander, who would pass this information to the intelligence representative, who, in turn, would report this through his lines. Hence, reports would be collated by progressively larger units, and would finally reach General Headquarters, which would assemble all available reports and develop a situational appreciation. As such, intelligence representatives and officers had no direct liaison with General Headquarters.¹⁰³¹ For the most part, staff intelligence work was undertaken at Area Army HQ, with IJA GHQ Intelligence doing little more than dissemination and filing. Only in exceptional cases would this differ, as in the case of islands of operation cut off from Area Armies.¹⁰³²

Only at Army level was a full-time intelligence officer employed. Below Army division level, personnel were tasked with intelligence duties as only part of their broader functions. Notably, toward the latter part of the conflict, even full-time intelligence officers were undertaking other duties due to a lack of personnel.¹⁰³³ Brigades and regiments did not contain designated intelligence formations, intelligence activity being undertaken by the service units themselves. For this reason, it is understandable that of primary concern to these units was information related to immediate tactical combat conditions, this information being relayed to their immediate superior formation.¹⁰³⁴ Other information of a non-tactical basis was no doubt collected but was incidental; reporting on the same was likely to be *ad hoc* at best.

Military Intelligence departments thus operated essentially as clearing houses for subordinate units. Furthermore, those tasked with information-collection received only the broadest direction from upper echelon Intelligence departments, and reporting was consequently subjective, information relay dependent on the relative importance placed on it by the

¹⁰³⁰ Interrogation of Lieutenant-General Arisue Seizo, I.J.A., Interrogation No. 238, United States Strategic Bombing Survey Reports of Interrogations 1945, Hoover Institution Archives, p. 5

¹⁰³¹ Interrogation of Lieutenant-General Arisue Seizo, *op. cit.*, p. 5

¹⁰³² The United States Strategic Bombing Survey (Pacific), *op. cit.*, p. 11

¹⁰³³ Interrogation of Lieutenant-General Arisue Seizo, *op. cit.*, p. 5

¹⁰³⁴ Japanese Intelligence Organisations in China (WWII), RG 263, NACP *op. cit.*, p. 19

officer involved. Furthermore, priority continued to be placed on tactical and operational concerns. Although understandable, given the frontline nature of these activities, and further the part-time aspect of these duties (undertaken by rank and file, rather than specialised intelligence officers) below division level, nevertheless it would seem that field formations would be ill-equipped to aid in either positive or negative intelligence activities outside the immediate operational field, were this required.

Puppet armies

The Japanese organised puppet armies to aid in their occupation of China. The number of puppet troops in February 1944, according to British intelligence sources, numbered 627,200, including 299,800 regulars and irregulars, including militias such as the Peace Preservation Corps (discussed below). Chinese Communist sources believed there to be 900,000 puppet troops in 1945, 410,000 thought to have been regulars.¹⁰³⁵

Peace Preservation Corps were armed forces charged with military responsibilities for maintaining order, including combatting guerrilla forces (this in contrast to Pacification units who are thought to have dealt primarily with subversive elements, be they anti-Japanese, Communist, or other)¹⁰³⁶. The commander of the local Peace Preservation Corps in each province was concurrently the Provincial Governor, and each puppet intelligence unit reported, through its head, to puppet civil authorities.¹⁰³⁷ In this manner, both civil and military intelligence units were directed through the same channel. Conversely, those intelligence units not part of the Peace Preservation Corps,

¹⁰³⁵ Jowett, P.S., *Rays of the Rising Sun: Armed Forces of Japan's Asian Allies 1931-45, Vol. I, China and Manchukuo* (Solihull: Helion & Company Ltd., 2004) p. 72

¹⁰³⁶ "Peace Preservation – Pacification – Distinction between", Puppet Intelligence Study, Box No. 10, Japanese Activities in the Far East – China, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

¹⁰³⁷ "Memorandum – "Intelligence Organisations in Occupied China – Interview with Lieutenant S.H. Hitch of FE concerning", 21 July 1945, Puppet Intelligence Study, Box No. 10, Japanese Activities in the Far East – China, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 3

but in other puppet armies, came under direct control of the Japanese Expeditionary Force in China, as did the army as a whole. These intelligence units came under direct command of the regular Japanese intelligence service of the Japanese army, under which it operated.¹⁰³⁸

Puppet army intelligence units were answerable to their respective army commanders, yet units always had attached a Japanese official (more often an officer, but sometimes a civilian), ostensibly operating under direction of the Intelligence unit, but in actual fact the unit was under the Japanese officer's command. A subordinate, usually second-in-command, often accompanied these officers. But for information secretly delivered by puppet agents to puppet intelligence chiefs (or other superior puppet officers), all information was made available to these Japanese commanders.¹⁰³⁹ Nevertheless, as the puppet intelligence chief, and the puppet army itself, answered to the Japanese at a different level, presumably such intelligence made its way to Japanese hands simply at a later time.

As such, although theoretically the puppet army intelligence organisation was structurally separate and operated independently of that of the Japanese, it was however controlled by the Japanese, and was required to operate in Japan's interest. Puppet intelligence products were provided to the Japanese commander, who, again, *when appropriate*, would forward this to their superiors.¹⁰⁴⁰ Of consequence, Japanese "liaison officers", although obviously intelligence officers, were not solely employed in this role. Rather, these men acted also as the local Japanese representative in the area, and as such were also charged with investigation of economic data, taxation and other functions. In addition, these officials employed their own agents, predominantly Chinese, who reported directly to them.¹⁰⁴¹

In relation to information gathered by these puppet units, puppet commanders held considerable influence over their areas of jurisdiction, and due to a history of Chinese loyalty to their respective commanders, puppet commanders were essentially left alone by their Japanese overseers insofar as

¹⁰³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4

nothing overly serious was committed against Japan's interests.¹⁰⁴² Many puppets were thus involved in selfish criminal enterprise at the expense of local populations.¹⁰⁴³ Dissemination of information by the puppet apparatus was, furthermore, made on a particularly informal basis, based on personal communication between puppet commanders.¹⁰⁴⁴ Information thus gathered by these units and relayed to Japanese leadership was likely of minimal consequence, taking into account questionable loyalty, meeting minimum requirements to maintain Japanese support and patronage. Such inherent systemic weakness likely exacerbated, even created, the need for Japanese commanders to develop their own agent networks. Japanese officers were consequently spread rather thin in their intelligence functionality and effectiveness.

Training

Quality in intelligence staff was lacking. When asked as to how officers were selected for intelligence duties, Lieutenant-General Arisue Seizo, head of the 2nd Department, Army General Staff, IGHQ from August 1942 until the end of the Pacific conflict, stated it was safe to say only second-class officers were chosen, or, rather, "...the dregs were thrown into the intelligence service. There was no way of choosing."¹⁰⁴⁵

Low-level intelligence staff, both officers and civilian, were selected according to their previous military service (in particular, intelligence), language ability and residence in the locale of operations. No specialist training was provided. They were to learn through experience.¹⁰⁴⁶ No particular class or type of officer then received training solely and specifically

¹⁰⁴² Jowett, *op. cit.*, p. 69

¹⁰⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁴ "Memorandum – "Intelligence Organisations in Occupied China – Interview with Lieutenant S.H. Hitch of FE concerning", 21 July 1945, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 4

¹⁰⁴⁵ Interrogation of Lieutenant-General Arisue Seizo, *op. cit.*, p. 7

¹⁰⁴⁶ Japanese Intelligence Organisations in China (WWII), RG 263, NACP *op. cit.*, p. 16

for intelligence work; language officers, or those who had spent some time stationed overseas, “naturally” fell into intelligence duties.¹⁰⁴⁷

Furthermore, intensive training for intelligence staff that would hold higher position in China was essentially non-existent for the greater part of the conflict.¹⁰⁴⁸ Arisue felt the lack of basic intelligence training was due to Japan’s relatively successful operations in China early on, intelligence not being of primary concern in this accomplishment. Consequently, the sentiment amongst General Staff officers was that intelligence was not essential, this despite heavy losses incurred during these campaigns. This complacency continued until the onset of hostilities with the US, when Japan found itself in a war without an obvious front line, being fought predominantly in the air and at sea, where the IJA found itself without lines of communication and no intelligence planning.¹⁰⁴⁹ Although the Nakano School, established in July 1938, had trained credible intelligence personnel educated in elements of intelligence outside the immediate tactical field, only a small number of graduates were available to the Japanese throughout the conflict, these being primarily sent to theatres outside China.¹⁰⁵⁰

Up to the Pacific conflict then little heed was paid to recruitment of Special Service personnel in China. Expatriate Japanese resident in China for some time were often employed on the assumption that their time spent in country somehow best qualified them for the work involved. Officers of IJA units stationed in China were also inducted despite their having no experience, training nor even aptitude for the duties involved. Such recruitment required no particular amendment prior to the China Incident (Marco Polo Bridge Incident) of 1937, up to which time the duties of the Special Service revolved around clandestine operations and information collection.¹⁰⁵¹ Practical experience served as mentor, with missions of small scale being followed by

¹⁰⁴⁷ Memorandum for Lieutenant Commander Peter Belin “Okino, Matao, Captain, IJN – interview with, on 16 Jul 1945” 17 July 1945, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 6

¹⁰⁴⁸ Interrogation of Lieutenant-General Arisue Seizo, *op. cit.*, p. 7

¹⁰⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7

¹⁰⁵⁰ Mercado, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-23

¹⁰⁵¹ S.E.A.T.I.C. General Ground Bulletin No. 133, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, 1940- 1947, Record Group 226, Entry 210, Box 244, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 16

those that were progressively larger and more complex.¹⁰⁵² Agents employed were predominantly Chinese, chosen for their contacts, intelligence, local area knowledge and reliability and trustworthiness, and were mentored by senior agents through field missions of increasing importance.¹⁰⁵³

Training for intelligence officers who would hold higher position was non-existent, and promotions within Intelligence, at least before 1943, were only offered after substantial service with the IJA. Activities of these officers were thus often not in accordance with any formal plan, but rather in line with the individual interests of the intelligence officer involved. This “policy” goes some way in explaining the disparate nature of different special service units (*kikan*), formed for a specific purpose and dissolved following completion or failure.¹⁰⁵⁴

Special Service Organs

Separate to standard Army intelligence organisations were the *kikan* (or Special Service Organisations, alternatively referred to as agencies), created by higher echelon Army Headquarters to perform particular duties and/or missions.

The IJN had first sought to form a Special Service Department in China around 1929 following the Beijing Government’s removal to Nanjing. The IJA are thought to have established their own SSD a few years before.¹⁰⁵⁵ In advance of the Manchurian Incident of 1931, Japanese intelligence in China had revolved around Foreign Ministry embassies and consulates, with military intelligence reliant on Attachés and Assistant Attachés. In order to avoid posting further Attachés to China, an action that would draw ire from

¹⁰⁵² “Naval Attaché to United States of America, Chungking, Interrogation of Japanese Naval Prisoner of War, Captain Okino, Matao”, 12 June 1944, Folder Okino, Mateo Capt. I.J.N., Box No. 4, Individuals (A to Z) and Capt. Matao Okino (I.J.N.), Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 10

¹⁰⁵³ Interrogation of Captain Okino Matao, I.J.N., S.E.A.T.I.C. Consolidated Interrogation Report, No. 75, 9 November 1944, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, 1940- 1947, Record Group 226, Entry 210, Box 244, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 13

¹⁰⁵⁴ Japanese Intelligence Organisations in China (WWII), RG 263, NACP *op. cit.*, p. 16

¹⁰⁵⁵ “Naval Attaché to United States of America, Chungking, Interrogation of Japanese Naval Prisoner of War, Captain Okino, Matao”, 12 June 1944, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 6

the then Chinese Government, Japan created the position of *Chūzai Bukan* (Resident Officer), and posted these *Chūzai Bukan* to important Chinese cities.¹⁰⁵⁶

From 1929 to 1937 the IJA SSD came under effective control of the *Sampō* (General Staff) in Tokyo due to their main activities being related to espionage and counter-espionage, that which the General Staff had always been (at least nominally) responsible, as opposed to the work of the *Rikugunshō* (War Office) which functioned in cooperation with governments, in economic affairs, etc.¹⁰⁵⁷ The function of espionage and counter-espionage generally came under the heading of *gunrei* (military command), whereas duties involved with economic concerns and cooperation with governments falling under *gunsei* (military administration).¹⁰⁵⁸

Reorganisation in the Japanese Special Service organisation occurred throughout the conflict with China, but only over the span of months or even years. Around 1930 a sister organisation to the *Rikugun Chūzai Bukan Fu* (Army Resident Officer Department) was formed, the *Tokumu Kikan* [Department], whose duties mirrored those of the *Rikugun Chūzai Bukan Fu*.¹⁰⁵⁹ *Tokumu Kikan* (a term also used to identify individual units) operated in area of less importance and further afield, and were notably established and abolished as present conditions dictated. For this reason, *tokumu kikan* detachments often did not operate under “code” names, such as “*kiku*” (chrysanthemum) or “*matsu*” (pine) as did other IJA SSD formations.¹⁰⁶⁰

In China, and before the Pacific conflict, all *kikan*, be they strategic or tactical, were named according to their commanders, as were IJA units.¹⁰⁶¹ Such a system created some difficulty were a commanding officer to be changed (or killed), including some inherent cost. Once hostilities had broken out in the Pacific, *kikan* began utilising the names of either trees or flowers,

¹⁰⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵⁹ The term *Tokumu Kikan* is here used as an overarching departmental title rather than as a descriptive term used to identify individual Special Service units operating beneath.

¹⁰⁶⁰ “Naval Attaché to United States of America, Chungking, Interrogation of Japanese Naval Prisoner of War, Captain Okino, Matao”, 12 June 1944, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 6

¹⁰⁶¹ S.E.A.T.I.C. General Ground Bulletin No. 133, RG 226, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 15

more for the benefit of the individual *kikan* rather than as a response to dictate from Tokyo. Nevertheless, some *kikan* retained their commander's name.¹⁰⁶²

Name changes of a *kikan* pre- and post-occupation were not guided by any set policy; the decision to change a name was solely dependent on the local situation and requirements; the larger the *kikan*, the less likely it was to change its name post-occupation, this largely due to the difficulty and cost involved. Notably, at times it was a conscious ploy of Japanese deception not to change a name, in particular when function had altered, such as from clandestine activity to political administration. Occasionally, the personnel of a particular *kikan* would be completely substituted, yet the name of the *kikan* remained.¹⁰⁶³ The majority of *tokumu kikan* personnel were *gunzoku*, with the largest *kikan* having only four to five IJA personnel, with civilians recruited there and then.¹⁰⁶⁴

Between 1929 and 1937, IJA SSD were known as:¹⁰⁶⁵

IJA	<i>Chūzai Bukan</i>	operating in areas of lesser
	<i>Tokumu Kikan</i> (from 1930)	importance, directly responsible
	(<i>Rikugun</i>)	to Tokyo, primarily the General Staff

With the onset of the Second Sino-Japanese conflict in the summer of 1937 came a second reorganisation. Following Japan's occupation of Nanjing, IJA *Chūzai Bukan* continued to operate in Canton and Hankou, but elsewhere were relegated to near obscurity as SSOs were restructured and remodeled.¹⁰⁶⁶ Whilst the IJN continued to maintain their Naval and Assistant Naval Attachés, the IJA withdrew, if temporarily, their Military and Assistant

¹⁰⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶⁴ Memorandum for Lieutenant Commander Peter Belin "Okino, Matao, Captain, IJN – interview with, on 16 Jul 1945" 17 July 1945, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 3

¹⁰⁶⁵ "Naval Attaché to United States of America, Chungking, Interrogation of Japanese Naval Prisoner of War, Captain Okino, Matao", 12 June 1944, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 7

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Military Attachés until the establishment of the Wang Ching-wei puppet government.¹⁰⁶⁷

The IJA SSD at this time adopted the title *Rikugun Tokumu Kikan* encompassing all of China, coming for the first time under direct command of Supreme HQ Nanjing. The latter was made responsible to either the War Department or the General Staff, this dependent on the work involved. The *Hokushi Rikugun Tokumu Kikan* (North China IJA Special Service Department) was headquartered in Beijing, commanding IJA SSDs in Tientsin, Tsingtao, and some others in northern cities. Conversely, SSD in Nanjing, Shanghai and Hankou were answerable only to IJA Supreme HQ in Nanjing. The *Hokushi Rikugun Tokumu Kikan* held no jurisdiction over these areas.¹⁰⁶⁸

The IJA SSD were known between 1937 to 1943 as:¹⁰⁶⁹

IJA	a) <i>Rikugun Tokumu Kikan</i> (1937 to 1938)	responsible to Supreme HQ Nanjing
	b) <i>Rikugun Tokumu Bu</i> (Special Duties Department)	
	<i>Rikugun Tokumu Kikan</i> (Shanghai and Nanjing) (1938 to 1943)	
	c) <i>Chūzai Bukan</i> (Hankou and Canton)	

The IJA in 1938, due to the name *Rikugun Tokumu Kikan* becoming associated with espionage and counterespionage activities in certain areas, altered its title for the SSD to *Tokumu Bu*, but only for those operations in Shanghai and Nanjing.¹⁰⁷⁰ The reason for this apparent exception appears to

¹⁰⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7

lay in the function of these two formations, which were now primarily involved with collaboration with their respective puppet governments.¹⁰⁷¹

With the growing importance of political intelligence, linked inextricably with the establishment of these puppet regimes by the Japanese, came the establishment of one of its most successful *Tokumu Kikan*, the *Ume* (Plum, or Plum Flower) *Kikan*. The *Ume Kikan*, an offshoot of the *Tokumu Kikan* in Nanjing, had been formed in 1939 under Major-General Kagesa Sadaaki to install Wang Ching-wei and his puppet government.¹⁰⁷² Following its establishment, *Ume Kikan* would initially remain in place to liaise with, and further to both advise and lead Wang's regime.¹⁰⁷³ Notably however *Ume Kikan* was disbanded soon after its establishment following achievement of its aim.¹⁰⁷⁴ This practice of disbanding arguably diluted the pool of experienced intelligence officers available to the Japanese well versed in local political conditions, bearing in mind the lack of intelligence training and thus experience in the field required. In relation to *Ume Kikan* this occurred despite considerable success. The same may be said of the innumerable other *Kikan* that had been dissolved over time.

The importance of *Ume Kikan* in the continuing evolution of Japanese intelligence in China appears nonetheless to have been substantial. Despite its disbandment in 1940, the term "*Ume*" continued to be associated with Japanese intelligence, primarily in the Shanghai area (of major importance to the Japanese in China), with a particular series of intelligence reports entitled "*Ume*". Allied interception of these reports found them to be of a general nature regarding political, economic and military policy, notably also on areas outside of China.¹⁰⁷⁵ Much of the information within purportedly emanated from Japanese agents within foreign consulates. Information found, however, was of a broad nature, often without obvious merit and of dubious

¹⁰⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷³ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 4

¹⁰⁷⁴ "Naval Attaché to United States of America, Chungking, Interrogation of Japanese Naval Prisoner of War, Captain Okino, Matao", 12 June 1944, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 7

¹⁰⁷⁵ "The Japanese Intelligence System" Military Intelligence Service WDGS, 4 September 1945, Container #78, Entry# A1 9002: Studies on Cryptology, 1917-1977, SRH 245-SRH 255, Records of the National Security Agency/Central Security Service, Record Group 457, National Archives at College Park, MD, pp. 34-36

credibility.¹⁰⁷⁶ Irrespectively, the experience of *Ume Kikan* appears to have contributed to Japan's next intelligence development in China.

Control of Japanese SSD in China had been relegated in 1939 to Expeditionary or Area Army Headquarters, as "control couldn't be effectively exercised from Tokyo."¹⁰⁷⁷ As the puppet regime in China strengthened its position, and as there was a decentralisation of military control, smaller SSD were established in various Chinese towns, operating beneath local Area Army HQ or even Brigade HQ. One source states that around this time the Chief of Staff of the local Area Army was tasked with responsibility for special service operations, and subsequently the head of the SSD now became the former's subordinate, in effect combining Operational HQ and the SSD.¹⁰⁷⁸

Following the China Incident, Japanese political and economic interest in China rose dramatically, as did the scope and range of SSD operations. As puppet administrations were established following the onset of hostilities in 1937, *gunrei* duties had gradually become subordinate to *gunsei* concerns, so that by 1944 *gunrei* activities were only a very small proportion of SSD activities.¹⁰⁷⁹ Expertise in areas including *Seimu* (Political Affairs), General Affairs (*Shōmu*) and Economics was now required, but the pool of recruits with the requisite qualifications was insufficient up to the end of 1941.¹⁰⁸⁰

From the beginning of 1942, SSD personnel began to be substituted by specialist civilians known as *bunkan* (officers), essentially educated *gunzoku* in a particular field. *Bunkan* were required to have both a university education and a specialist college diploma, these followed by an entrance examination to the organisation itself.¹⁰⁸¹ *Bunkan* wore uniforms similar to those of the military, but with different insignia. Successful candidates from Imperial universities were normally inducted at the rank of *Hanin* (*Ni Kyu*),

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35

¹⁰⁷⁷ "History", Puppet Intelligence Study, Box No. 10, Japanese Activities in the Far East – China, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

¹⁰⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷⁹ "Naval Attaché to United States of America, Chungking, Interrogation of Japanese Naval Prisoner of War, Captain Okino, Matao", 12 June 1944, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 6

¹⁰⁸⁰ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Ambassador Yamamoto Kunaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 16

¹⁰⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17

the equivalent of Sergeants, whereas those from private universities were inducted at the rank of *Koin*, Superior Private.¹⁰⁸²

Between July 1942 and early 1943 an increasing number of IJA SSD functions were delegated to autonomous and provincial governments. Both espionage and counterespionage were separated from the newly-formed *Renraku Bu* (Liaison Department) and centralised in Headquarters, Nanjing under the name *Tokushū Kikan* (Special Duties - official name unknown).¹⁰⁸³ The IJA *Renraku Bu* was, officially, now limited to liaison with the puppet regime, economics and propaganda, with branches throughout all centres of the Nanjing Government.¹⁰⁸⁴ Irrespective of how delineation was now drawn, Japanese retained all key roles, and the *Renraku Bu*, through its commercial control, exercised “just as much power as its predecessors”.¹⁰⁸⁵ Functions once held by the *Rikugun Tokumu Bu*, *Tokumu Kikan* and *Chūzai Bukan* in relation to the operations of the puppet government were absorbed into the *Renraku Bu* (except in Shanghai, where this department operated under the title *Rikugun Bu* [Army Department]). The *Renraku Bu* maintained departments within all puppet government centres, including Beijing, Nanjing, Hankou, Canton and Shanghai (operating under the *Rikugun Bu*), differing from the previous change of command in that these now answered directly to IJA HQ in the area.¹⁰⁸⁶ The section of the IJA SSD concerned with espionage and counterespionage, *Tokushu Kikan* (although never referred to as this) and its detachments, including the *Matsu* and *Kiku Kikan*, remained responsible to Supreme HQ Nanjing.¹⁰⁸⁷

¹⁰⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 17

¹⁰⁸³ “History”, Puppet Intelligence Study, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁶ “Naval Attaché to United States of America, Chungking, Interrogation of Japanese Naval Prisoner of War, Captain Okino, Matao”, 12 June 1944, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 8

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

IJA SSD were known from 1943 as:¹⁰⁸⁸

IJA	<i>Renraku Bu</i>	puppet government duties,
	<i>Rikugun Bu</i> (Shanghai)	answerable to GHQ Nanjing
	Department (name	espionage and counter-espionage
	unknown – referred to as	duties
	<i>Tokushu Kikan</i>)	Supreme HQ, Nanjing

The *Kempei Tai* in Shanghai

Hayashi Hidezumi, on reporting to Shanghai to take up his assignment in March 1938, was informed by Colonel Oki Shigeru, OC Shanghai *Kempei Tai* (at the time still Central China Expeditionary Forces *Kempei Tai*), that despite Shanghai now being under Japanese control, difficulties still arose from the International Settlement and French Concession who refused to cooperate. The International Settlement and French Concession were thought to be passively resisting the Japanese, moving slowly but inevitably toward active support of the Chungking Government, and authorities within refused to arrest those suspected by the Japanese as Chungking “terror” elements. The Wei-Hsin Government, a Japanese-organised puppet regime, was soon to be established, yet the man who was to be Chief of the Law and Order Department of this government had been assassinated by, purportedly, a Chungking agent, and the French Concession and International Settlement authorities had not arrested the culprit. Against this background, Hayashi was charged by Oki with dealing with these authorities, and eliminating enemy Chungking agents within their domain.¹⁰⁸⁹

Shanghai, in Hayashi’s opinion, was potentially worth half of China’s economy, and therefore should not be considered as just a city in China. In Hayashi’s words: “Occupation of Shanghai equals occupation of half China, and he who loses Shanghai loses half China.”¹⁰⁹⁰ As the centre of Chinese

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9

¹⁰⁸⁹ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 10

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8

economic activity, long held by Japan, Hayashi thought it probable there existed in Shanghai a sizeable number of businessmen, including Chekiang capitalists, who might consider collaboration with Japan in order to further their economic interests or receive protection.¹⁰⁹¹ Likewise it was in Japan's economic interest to cooperate with the Chinese, and certainly a sizeable number of Japanese were involved in such activity.¹⁰⁹²

Colonel Hayashi had not previously served in China, and proceeded to research the political situation and local conditions within Shanghai, and China as a whole. Initially, Hayashi sought to utilise the *Kempei Tai* archives, but found these to be significantly wanting. This raised the question for Hayashi as to what the *Kempei Tai* had been doing for the five to six years they had been present in Shanghai.¹⁰⁹³ But for a nominal list of members of the Nationalist Blue Shirt Association¹⁰⁹⁴, thought to have been among documents disposed of in haste by the retreating Chinese, little of use was to be found. In Hayashi's own words, "...I soon saw how inferior was the information service and how incompetent those engaged in intelligence work [*sic*]."¹⁰⁹⁵ Hayashi further found no help could be sought from his acquaintances who had resided in Shanghai, and was forced to proceed with private study, reading important publications on Shanghai, keeping a close eye on the local press and perusing in detail local unit reports.¹⁰⁹⁶

Within the Special Branch (*Tokkoka*) of the Shanghai *Kempei Tai* there were only eighteen staff as at March 1938, and of these only two had operated in Shanghai for a period of two or more years.¹⁰⁹⁷ Six had been stationed in Shanghai for only one month before Hayashi's arrival, and within the group as a whole, only two were conversant in Chinese, and only one in English.¹⁰⁹⁸ The branch had three interpreters attached to it, two for the

¹⁰⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 10

¹⁰⁹⁴ Chiang Kai-shek's secret police, made up primarily of graduates (and Chiang loyalists) of the Whampoa Military Academy – van de Ven, H.J., *War and Nationalism in China, 1925-1945* (London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003) p. 165

¹⁰⁹⁵ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 10

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11

¹⁰⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

dialect of Shanghai and another for Korean. In total then, only six were able to collect information in foreign languages.¹⁰⁹⁹

Soon after his arrival in Shanghai, Hayashi began a reorganisation of his section, including:

- i) Compulsory language education, in either English or the Shanghai dialect, of all *Kempei Tai* personnel
- ii) Contacts with Japanese employed within the Municipality Police Force, in order to obtain information held by the Settlement Police.
- iii) Contacts with long-term Japanese residents of Shanghai; predominantly those better educated
- iv) Contacts with pro-Japanese Shanghai citizens; again, predominantly those better educated
- v) Assessment of captured Chungking agents toward their conversion to the Japanese viewpoint and subsequent employment as intelligence sources
- vi) Detailed perusal of local unit reports, assessing their reliability and attempting to identify sources used
- vii) Scrutiny of the foreign press¹¹⁰⁰

By 1940, the staff of the Special Branch was increased to approximately 170, including an increase in numbers of those proficient in a foreign language.¹¹⁰¹

Hayashi's efforts did not bring immediate results. Having expected detailed information from Japanese personnel of the Municipal Police Force, Hayashi found that these members of staff held only subordinate positions within the organisation, and were excluded from important branches, including the investigation and special branches. Hayashi found information of importance never passed British officials who held all important and responsible positions.¹¹⁰²

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Japanese long-term residents of Shanghai, although well informed of local conditions, were nevertheless unacquainted with Chinese of any political influence or importance, being predominantly scholars, or the equivalent.¹¹⁰³ Those Westerners that had approached the Japanese seeking employment as agents were almost exclusively White Russians, and presented themselves with convincing anti-Chungking, anti-American or anti-British sentiment. Information provided by these however may at first have appeared credible, yet it was found, after several instances of purchase and subsequent examination of content, this information was completely unfounded. Hayashi stated that there had been quite a number of occasions in which Japanese *kikan* and intelligence organisations had fallen afoul of this false information. In light of this experience, Hayashi issued an order to his subordinates that no dealings were to occur with White Russians from then on.¹¹⁰⁴

Those involved in sizeable business dealings, despite seeking Japanese support and protection, were found unwilling to engage in intelligence activities.¹¹⁰⁵ Although merchants of smaller scale were found willing, these were found unsuitable for this work.¹¹⁰⁶ In regard to the low level of funding provided for intelligence work, Hayashi drew attention to one example in Shanghai connected to the Japanese Liaison Office.¹¹⁰⁷ At the time, the Japanese sought to cultivate a British journalist, taking him to dinner. The cost of this dinner was ¥500. The monthly stipend dedicated to intelligence was ¥700, leaving little with which to continue such activities.¹¹⁰⁸ Units that exchanged information with the Shanghai *Kempei Tai* included the Shanghai Defence Unit; the Shanghai Special Marine Force; the Shanghai Special Duties Department – Chinese Expeditionary Forces HQ; the Police Section, Shanghai Special Municipality (Japanese); and the Police Section, Japanese Consulate-General¹¹⁰⁹ Information received from these units,

¹¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12

¹¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12

¹¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁷ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6313, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 233, 24 May 1946, Item 2152, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, p. 32

¹¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁹ TNA: WO 208/3916, Special Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 12

however, was lacklustre, furnishing little of consequence. Hayashi thought their understanding in particular of the local political situation was “extraordinarily ineffectual”.¹¹¹⁰ According to Hayashi, during his four years in Shanghai there were approximately 420 “terrorist incidents” that might have been deemed anti-Japanese in nature.¹¹¹¹ Despite utilising everything under his command, Hayashi was unable to adamantly foresee or circumvent any of these activities, only tracking down those responsible in many instances after the fact.¹¹¹² Notably, Dai Li’s¹¹¹³ agents are suspected of having been involved with over 150 assassinations in Shanghai between August 1937 and October 1941.¹¹¹⁴

***Nobori Butai* (13th Army), Shanghai**

The *Nobori Butai* (13th Army) was headquartered in Shanghai, and serves as example of the excessive overlap of Japanese intelligence institutions and subsequent inefficiency and competitiveness between Japanese services. Shanghai also, conversely, provides example of the extreme thoroughness of Japan’s intelligence operations, including espionage, counter-espionage, subversion and propaganda activities.¹¹¹⁵

Within Shanghai there existed the Army with its counterpart Army Bureau (*Rikugun Bu*), the Peace Preservation Corps, Puppet Armies, the *Kempei Tai* and its subordinate Police Force, the Foreign Office and its Consular Police and development companies, the railway police, and others. All areas related to intelligence were thus covered in a most comprehensive fashion by one or all of the above organisations. Each institution however maintained its own channels of reporting, and rather than liaise with one

¹¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12

¹¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15

¹¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹¹³ Head of Chiang’s military intelligence service – See Wakeman, F., *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003)

¹¹¹⁴ Yeh, W., *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 2000) p. 315

¹¹¹⁵ Japanese Intelligence Organisations in China (WWII), RG 263, NACP *op. cit.*, p. 17

another to coordinate activity and exchange information, rivalry was rife, each organisation controlling its own network of informants and agents.¹¹¹⁶

Within China the Imperial Japanese Army did not from the onset of hostilities maintain a fully coordinated intelligence system with direct information relay to Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo. Within traditional military intelligence, but also across the intelligence apparatus as a whole, little direction was received from Imperial General Headquarters as to what was deemed of importance, leading to subjective information collection by both local commands and staff involved. Repetition and overlap of duties by different intelligence organisations was commonplace, unaided by this lack of direction by upper echelon Intelligence Departments. IJA Special Service organisations, initially acting primarily as strategic intelligence units, had ostensibly been under command of the Second Department, IJA General Staff. In practice, Japanese intelligence units and their respective chains of command operated independently within their area of operations, decentralising further throughout the course of the conflict in China. Efficacy of Japan's intelligence apparatus was further hampered by a lack of coordinated and specialised training in the field of intelligence. With the establishment of puppet regimes in China, primary focus, in relation to intelligence collection by Special Service units, shifted from tactical to political concerns. The continuous reorganisation and decentralisation of Japan's intelligence apparatus, reactive rather than proactive according to circumstances on the ground in China, combined with this lack of clear direction and sufficient training, led to an inherent inefficiency for the duration of the conflict. Despite its prolific presence on the ground, a lack of cohesion over time undoubtedly circumvented Japan's intelligence reorganisation's potential. Were the conflict to have extended beyond 1945, lessons learnt and subsequent changes to the intelligence apparatus may well have overcome inherent short-term inefficiencies that come with change, yet hostilities came to an end prior to the full force of these improvements being felt in China.

¹¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.17-18

9 The Pacific War

By 1940, against a backdrop of growing international opposition to Japan's actions in China and Manchuria, and increased economic pressure brought to bear on Japan by the Americans, British, Chinese and Dutch, Japan would come to the realisation that its wartime efforts would soon be severely hampered by a lack of key strategic resources, including oil, nickel and rubber.¹¹¹⁷ In January that year, the US would stop exports of aviation fuel and scrap metal to Japan, later restricting the export of scrap steel and all grades of iron, knowing this would make it near impossible for Japan to continue its military presence in China.¹¹¹⁸ Konoye Fumimaro would resign his third Cabinet via letter on 16 October 1941, stating:

Fumimaro, Your Majesty's humble servant, acutely feels his own responsibility since the occurrence of the China emergency. Therefore, I have sincerely made every effort to convince War minister Tōjō in cooperation with the Japanese Government and military circles to conclude the negotiations with the United States and to settle the China emergency. From the point of cultivating our national power and keeping public opinion in check it is very important. I believe that at present it is better to bend and persuade the people of our nation to work in order to develop our nation. However, the War Minister asserted that he could not consent to the evacuation of our troops and still keep alive the military spirit. He felt that if Japan should bend to the United States, the United States would become overbearing. Furthermore, even if we would be able to conclude the China emergency, the relations between Japan and China would break down in a few years. Like Japan and the United States too, has its weaknesses [*sic*]. We must determine to declare war soon against the United States so as not to miss the opportunity. I had conversed freely with Tōjō four times, but I could not convince him otherwise.¹¹¹⁹

¹¹¹⁷ Murakami, H., *Japan: The Years of Trail, 1919-52* (Tokyo, New York & San Francisco: Kodansha International Ltd., 1983) pp. 75-89

¹¹¹⁸ Buruma, I., *Inventing Japan* (New York: Modern Library, 2003) p. 115

¹¹¹⁹ "The Memoirs of Prince Fumimaro Konoye with Appended Papers", 10 June 1946, Appended Paper No. 8, "The Letter of Resignation Written by Premier Konoye on the

Nevertheless, following Konoye's resignation, Prince Higashikuni's recommendation of succeeding Prime Minister would not be accepted, and when asked by the Keeper of the Privy Seal as to, given current circumstances, whether the Imperial Command should go to the Navy or War Minister, Konoye responded:

From the political point of view, the War Minister is better suited than the Navy Minister, since the former seems to stand against the continuance of negotiations between the US and Japan (gathered from his statements of the past few days), and insofar as the Navy is reluctant to make up its mind. Since any plan will have to be launched with all previous discussions rescinded, it is not likely that war will break out as soon as the War Minister receives the Imperial Command. Hence even the War Minister will assume a more or less discreet attitude.¹¹²⁰

Tōjō would be unwilling to withdraw from China, a move deemed inimical to Japan's national interest, and despite considerable opposition from within the IJN itself (that saw conflict with the US as a losing proposal), a rapid Japanese advance southward would be decided upon.¹¹²¹ With insufficient time for full intelligence preparation, information-gathering efforts would of necessity revert in large part to those non-military services that had served previously, namely the South Manchurian Railway and the Foreign Ministry. In terms of methodology, given the military's usurpation of the Japanese intelligence system as a whole in China and Manchuria, nothing here had changed, and ultimately an out-dated, and ultimately flawed, system of intelligence would be transposed onto Southeast Asia.

Occasion of the Resignation En Bloc of the Third Konoye Cabinet", 16 October 1941, Box 42, Folder 42.5, Bonner F. Feller Papers, 1904-1907, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Stanford, California 94305-6010, pp. 1-2

¹¹²⁰ "The Memoirs of Prince Fumimaro Konoye with Appended Papers", 10 June 1946, Box 42, Folder 42.5, Bonner F. Feller Papers, 1904-1907, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Stanford, California 94305-6010, p. 70

¹¹²¹ Murakami, H., *op. cit.*, pp. 86-90

The South Manchurian Railway Company during the Pacific War

Known branches of the *Mantetsu* were in New York, Paris, London, Berlin, Saigon, Beijing, Shanghai, Bangkok, Dairen and Rangoon (although this last office had not been finished prior to the onset of hostilities in the Pacific). Furthermore, branches existed in Osaka and on a smaller scale across Japan.¹¹²² Research by the *Mantetsu* would continue to be of great benefit to Japan throughout its lifetime, and the Research Department lived, through differing incarnations, to the end of the Pacific War. The *Mantetsu*'s Investigation Department, under the leadership of Matsuoka Yōsuke (see Chapter 3), later to be Foreign Minister during the early years of the Pacific War, had taken over research and investigation bureaus not only in Manchuria but also in North and Central China. Information garnered by these organs was made available not only to the military, but also the various development companies instituted by the Japanese, these in reality extensions of the Japanese war economy (and indeed, Japanese Intelligence).¹¹²³

The Research Department was expanded in order to strengthen its capacity in the face of the “total war” principles Japan now faced. Matsuoka Yōsuke, while head of the SMR, faced internal discontent following the establishment of Manchukuo and uncertainty regarding the *Mantetsu*'s role during the conflict with China. By this time however the Asia Development Board had been established, and a Planning Board managed its resource mobilisation planning.¹¹²⁴

Matsuoka hoped to subsume politics, economics and the military into one strategic centre, and the *Tetsudō*'s Research Department, enlarged under Matsuoka's patronage, would undertake such important tasks as the investigation of Japanese-Manchurian-Chinese economic conditions, as well as operations of considerable benefit to the military, such as the investigation of the resistance capacity of the Chinese, including the political and economic

¹¹²² TNA: WO 203/6315, Interrogation of Yokoyama Ryoichi, *op. cit.*, p. 13

¹¹²³ “South Manchuria Railway Company (Nanmantetsudo Kaisha)”, undated - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

¹¹²⁴ Fogel, *op. cit.*, p. 174

capacity of both the Chungking regime and Communist bases to resist Imperial Japan forces. Under Matsuoka, the Research Department's staffing levels greatly exceeded the original plans of Gotō Shinpei.¹¹²⁵ To demonstrate the sheer scale (and hence complexity) of the human and hence information resources ultimately available to the *Mantetsu*, one need only make a contemporary comparison. The *Mantetsu* at its peak would employ almost 400,000 people. Those within its Research Department, the *Chōsa Bu*, would number 2,345, with the average intelligence unit employing 100 staff.¹¹²⁶ Compare this with Japan's modern day intelligence organisation:

...as at April 2005, the Japan Defense Intelligence Headquarters maintained 2,300 staff; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 80, the Cabinet Intelligence Research Office, 170, the National Police Agency (NPA, Foreign Affairs and Intelligence), 1200-1500, and the Public Security Agency, 1500.¹¹²⁷

The Association of Economical Research Bureaux (*Zenkoku Keizai Chōsa Kekan Rengokai*) was founded circa 1920.¹¹²⁸ Sada Kōjirō, formerly of Mitsui and research section head within the *Mantetsu* before the Manchurian Incident, was instrumental in increased cooperation between the Kwantung Army and the *Mantetsu*.¹¹²⁹ Following the First World War Japanese companies had developed a desire for research, and many established their own research departments. Toward the creation of a coalition of these departments, the East Asian Economic Investigation Bureau and the Research Department of the Bank of Japan, key examples of this trend, played an integral organisational role in the association's creation.¹¹³⁰

The Association of Economical Research Bureaux's membership and activity would over time cover the range and scope of both economic, political and military intelligence, and served as centre for Japanese intelligence

¹¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 173-177

¹¹²⁶ Maruya, *op. cit.*, p. 3

¹¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4

¹¹²⁸ TNA: WO 208/1223, "Japanese – Intelligence Methods", *op. cit.*

¹¹²⁹ Fogel, *op. cit.*, p. 116

¹¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44

penetration into the Southern Regions. The organisation was known within Asia to consist of, before 1941, the South Manchurian Railway Investigation Department, based in Dairen, with branches in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Beijing; within Southeast Asia, the EAEIB, based in Tokyo, but operating primarily through the *Dainan Kōshi*, a Japanese trading company, and the Kechorn Kierti Trade Bureau in Bangkok.¹¹³¹

Instructions regarding the organisation's intelligence activities are thought to have emanated from the Planning Board of the Cabinet, certain at least in the case of Kokubu Shōzō, a Japanese intelligence officer on whom documents were found demonstrating the fact. The EAEIB, under the aegis of the Association of Japanese Economic Research Bureaux, was thought to make recommendations to the Planning Board, which in turn made decisions on future action to be taken.¹¹³²

Member organisations of the Association included:

- i) The Oriental Economic Research Bureau
- ii) The Economic Department of the Tokyo Imperial University
- iii) The Research Bureau of the Bank of Japan
- iv) The Research Bureau of Economic and Finance, attached to the office of the Minister of Finance
- v) The *Nippon Yūsen Kaisha*
- vi) The Government Statistical Bureau; the Research Bureau of the Mitsui Unlimited partnership
- vii) The Economic Department of the Sumitomo Company
- viii) The Osaka City Office
- ix) The Osaka Chamber of Commerce
- x) The Mitsui OSK
- xi) The Tokyo Chamber of Commerce
- xii) The Secretariat of the Minister of Navy
- xiii) The Secretariat of the Minister of Army
- xiv) The Fujimoto Bill Brokers' Securities Ltd. Co.

¹¹³¹ TNA: WO 208/1223, "Japanese – Intelligence Methods", *op. cit.*

¹¹³² *Ibid.*

- xv) The Correspondence Department, attached to the Secretariat of the Ministry of Forestry
- xvi) The Commercial Research Institute, attached to the Kobe University of Commerce
- xvii) The Mitsubishi Economic Research Bureau
- xviii) The Nomura Bill Co.
- xix) The Research Bureau of the Nippon Life Insurance Co.¹¹³³

The Association of Japanese Economic Research Bureaux, organised by research agencies and attached to banks, school, government agencies, etc., had an annual budget of approximately ¥15,000, using this to finance excursions, provide lectures and issue publications. The East Asia Economic Investigation Bureau (EAEIB) conversely operated as a foundation, with an annual expenditure of ¥120,000. With this substantial budget the EAEIB ordered and collated materials, establishing and managing a library for this purpose, financed research and investigations, printed publications, and dealt with other matters of importance as decided by its leadership.¹¹³⁴

The Foreign Ministry during the Pacific War

Following further reorganisation of the Foreign Ministry circa 1942, following the onset of the Pacific conflict, the Foreign Ministry Investigation Bureau now formed part of the Foreign Ministry Third Department, concerned with the collection of statistics and information regarding foreign nations. Information was only at this time concerted collected using, occasionally, surreptitious means. During the pre-conflict period, the *Chōsa Bu* (Investigation Departments) of large overseas branches of Japanese firms had been used predominantly for this purpose. The Bureau was manned by university graduates with correspondingly high qualifications in foreign languages, and information collected was forwarded to the Cabinet Information Bureau.¹¹³⁵ The Foreign Ministry (*Gaimushō*) thus maintained a

¹¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹³⁵ S.E.A.T.I.C. General Ground Bulletin No. 133, RG 226, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 19

political intelligence network in areas considered important to policy-making. Here lay heavy reliance on Japanese journalists and their contacts, Japanese business interests and other semi- to non-official agencies.¹¹³⁶

The Cabinet Information Bureau (*Naikaku Jōhōkyoku*)

In Tokyo, under direct control of the Cabinet, was the *Naikaku Jōhōkyoku*, similar in function to the British Ministry of Information. Duties included official issue of Cabinet Minister statements and interview arrangements between Government and press agents. The War Office and Imperial Headquarters maintained similar departments named *Hōdobu* (Mass Media Department).¹¹³⁷ The Cabinet Information Bureau (*Naikaku Jōhō Bu*) was likely another name for the Board of Information (*Jōhōkyoku*). When the Board of Information was established in 1942, it absorbed the information services of other government departments, including the greater part of the Information Bureau of the Foreign Ministry, this becoming the third division of the Board. The Director of the Board and other officials retained their position in the Foreign Ministry lists. Three successive presidents of the Board were previously ex-Foreign Ministry officials. This was due to the Board of Information's responsibility for Government statements, be they regarding foreign or internal affairs.¹¹³⁸

The Board of Information maintained no agencies abroad, and so the Foreign Ministry created a sub-section of the Investigation Section. This sub-section was charged with the collection of information required by the Foreign Ministry in the performance of its duties, and for propaganda purposes abroad. The Board's third division contained two or three sections. The first disseminated news to foreign correspondents in Tokyo and dealt with wireless broadcasting overseas. The second section prepared materials for foreign propaganda and was responsible for cultural relations with foreign nations.¹¹³⁹

¹¹³⁶ Chapman, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 148

¹¹³⁷ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Lieutenant-General Isoda Saburō, *op. cit.* p. 6

¹¹³⁸ TNA: WO 203/6319, Interrogation of Consul-General Minoda Fujio, *op. cit.*, p. 23

¹¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

The *Naikaku Jōhōkyoku* came under control of the Cabinet Minister, along with the *Naikaku Shoki Kanchō* (Cabinet Secretary's Branch) and the *Hoseikyoku* (Cabinet Legislative Bureau).¹¹⁴⁰ A meeting between officials of the Foreign Ministry and the Board of Information was arranged at the Ministry once a week in order to maintain close liaison between the two.¹¹⁴¹ Despite its apparent intelligence role, however, the principal duty of the Bureau was the dissemination of news and propaganda to the Japanese populace, predominantly in relation to world affairs, using primarily radio, although a pamphlet was published weekly.¹¹⁴²

¹¹⁴⁰ S.E.A.T.I.C. General Ground Bulletin No. 133, RG 226, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 19

¹¹⁴¹ TNA: WO 203/6319, Interrogation of Consul-General Minoda Fujio, *op. cit.*, p. 23

¹¹⁴² S.E.A.T.I.C. General Ground Bulletin No. 133, RG 226, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 19

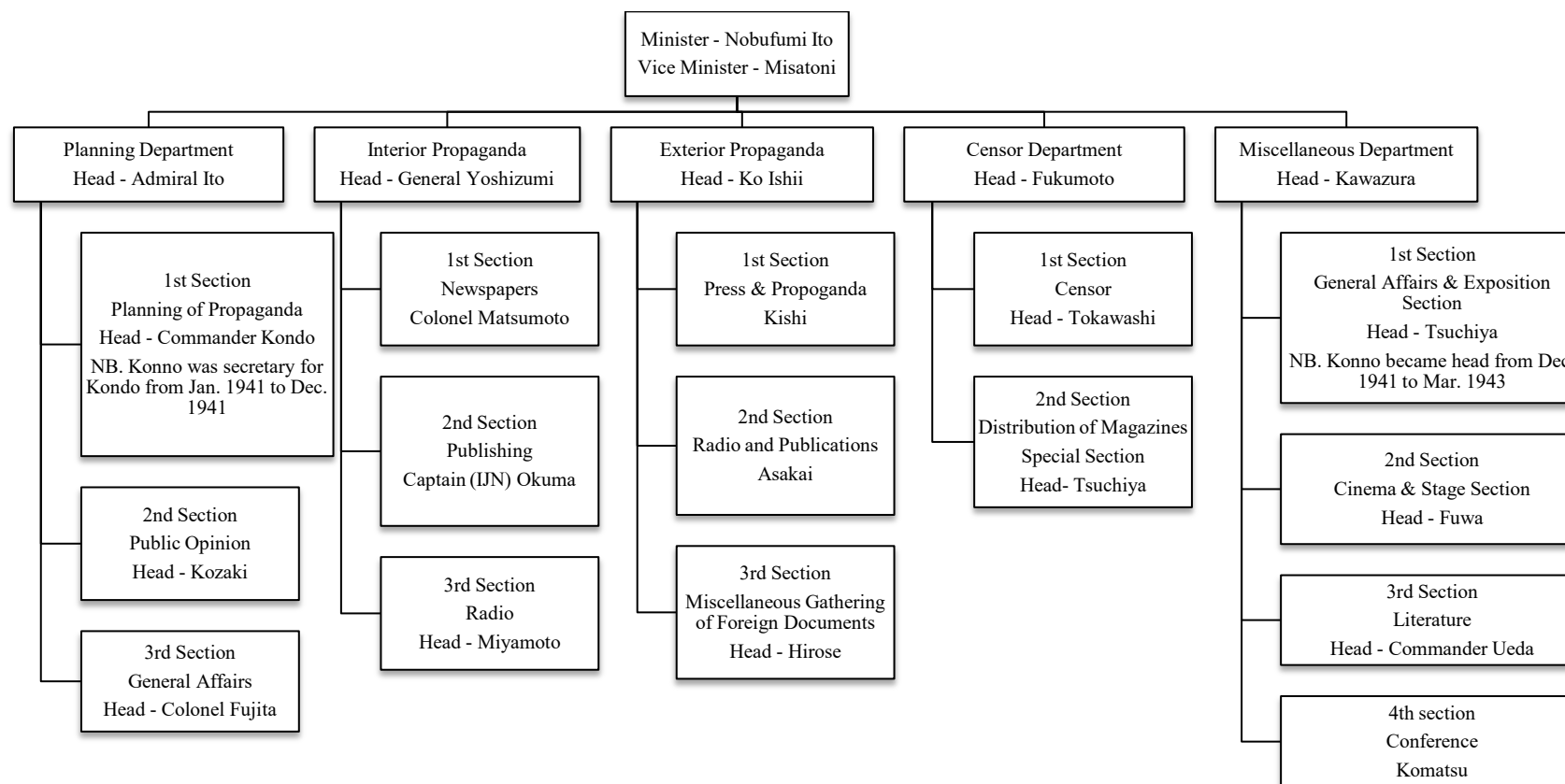


Figure 9. Organisation of the Information Bureau, December 1940 to 1943¹¹⁴⁴

¹¹⁴⁴ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6319, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 239, 29 June 1946, Item 2201, Interrogation of Consul-General Kono Tatsuichi, p. 30

The Greater East Asia Ministry (*Dai Tōa Shō*)

The Greater East Asia Ministry (*Dai Tōa Shō* [GEAM]) was established in November 1942 on the order of the Japanese Government. Personnel were predominantly from the Foreign Ministry, as it was to take over much of the latter's role in Asia, but also included previous members of the Exchequer and Department of Industry and Commerce.¹¹⁴⁵ Career diplomats once employed by the Foreign Ministry were now employed in the Greater East Asia Ministry.¹¹⁴⁶ On the Ministry's foundation the Emperor issued an edict stating all work done on its behalf was to be in accordance with international law, with sovereign rights of those nations within its jurisdiction to be respected.¹¹⁴⁷

The GEAM would eventually employ approximately one thousand two hundred staff in Tokyo, with another five hundred stationed abroad. The GEAM had at its head Aoki Kazuo as First Minister. Yamamoto Kunaichi held the position of Vice Minister, having been transferred from the Foreign Ministry where he held the same title.¹¹⁴⁸

Under direct control of the First Minister existed four bureaux:

- i) General Affairs Bureau
- ii) China Bureau
- iii) Manchuria Bureau
- iv) Southern Area Bureau (initially covering Siam, but later also Burma and the Philippines).¹¹⁴⁹

There was furthermore a Secretariat consisting of 4 sections:

¹¹⁴⁵ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6313, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 233, 24 May 1946, Item 2152, Interrogation of Ambassador Yamamoto Kunaichi, p. 43

¹¹⁴⁶ Memorandum "Japanese Intelligence Services, Information regarding" 18 June 1945, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 3

¹¹⁴⁷ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Ambassador Yamamoto Kunaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 43

¹¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

- i) Personal Affairs Section
- ii) Telegraphic Section
- iii) Finance and Accounts Section
- iv) Documents Section

The Secretariat came under direct control of the Vice Minister.¹¹⁵⁰

The Greater East Asia Ministry was initially established to oversee the diplomatic and economic concerns of China, Manchuria and Siam, and ambassadors in these countries were under its direction. Although Burma and the Philippines would later come within the Ministry's sphere of influence, here the GEAM served only as subsidiary to the Military Authorities, as the GEAM held no jurisdiction in occupied nations (Manchuria, Siam and parts of China delegated to the GEAM were considered independent members of the Co-Prosperity Sphere). Were an economical or political problem to arise on occupied territory related to the role the GEAM played, it would consult with the respective Military Authority.¹¹⁵¹

Notably, the GEAM appears to have been only marginally active in the intelligence field. The minimal role of the *Dai Tōa Shō* in Japanese intelligence is attributed to Aoki Kazuo, who when appointed to the role of Greater East Asia Minister in 1942 placed many former Finance Ministry staff in high positions in the *Dai Tōa Shō*. With the Ministry's primary focus on political and economic affairs, it is implied that few Foreign Ministry professional intelligence staff were ever attached to it.¹¹⁵²

According to Yamamoto Kunaichi, formerly Ambassador to Siam and Vice Minister of the Greater East Asia Ministry, the GEAM maintained no connection to the IJA, having only a few military officials on staff, and these few in minor roles.¹¹⁵³ In regard to diplomatic affairs, direction was given by the Foreign Ministry. Economic policy had once been the domain of the Foreign Ministry, utilising the Exchequer and Department of Industry and Commerce in its operation. Once the GEAM was established, it formed its

¹¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵² Memorandum for Lieutenant Commander Peter Belin "Okino, Matao, Captain, IJN – interview with, on 16 Jul 1945" 17 July 1945, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 2

¹¹⁵³ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Ambassador Yamamoto Kunaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 43

own economic policy, having absorbed many of those staff previously involved in these matters from the departments mentioned.¹¹⁵⁴

Territories occupied by the Japanese may be roughly divided into two types: i) those with an established puppet regime (including Manchukuo, Occupied China, the Philippines and Burma) and ii) occupied territories governed by a Japanese Military Administration (*Gunseikan*) or Japanese Colonial Government (*Sotoku*) (Malaya or the Dutch East Indies).¹¹⁵⁵ Across this spectrum, the relationship between the GEAM and the military is thought to have been less than amiable, with the GEAM always keeping watch over the military. In Siam, Manchuria and China the military fumed under the restraint of the GEAM, whereas in Burma and the Philippines, under Army jurisdiction, the GEAM received little assistance.¹¹⁵⁶

The *Dai Tōa Shō* was thus primarily an organ of economic control over occupied territories, and was hence staffed by many former employees (former in the sense of now working for the *Dai Tōa Shō*) of the *Ōkura Shō* (Finance Ministry). Nevertheless, the GEAM did maintain a minor intelligence role, yet this revolved around political and economic concerns. Due to a lack of operational intelligence requirements in Manchukuo and Occupied China the maintenance of a large-scale Japanese intelligence organisation was not required, and although the Foreign Ministry continued in purely diplomatic activities in relation to the *Dai Tōa Shō*, following the latter's establishment the Foreign Ministry was thought to have no reason to maintain an intelligence organisation in East Asia.¹¹⁵⁷

Graduates of the *Ōkawa Juku* (see Chapter 7) were employed within the *Dai Tōa Shō* and were posted to countries in the Southern Regions to hone their language skills in the same manner as language officers of the military had previously been. Examples exist of *Ōkawa Juku* graduates being attached

¹¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵⁵ S.E.A.T.I.C. General Ground Bulletin No. 133, RG 226, NACP, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12

¹¹⁵⁶ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Ambassador Yamamoto Kunaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 43

¹¹⁵⁷ Memorandum for Lt. Comdr. P. Belin "Okino, Matao, Captain, IJN – Interview with", 25 July 1945" 28 July 1945, Folder Okino, Mateo Capt. I.J.N., Box No. 4, Individuals (A to Z) and Capt. Matao Okino (I.J.N.), Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 5

to Japanese embassies in Burma and Siam, this at the express request of Ōkawa. Some students who had been educated in Hindustani were later attached to *Hikari Kikan* (to be discussed in Chapter 10), but thought only in terms of their acting as interpreters or translators, translating local publications and newspapers.¹¹⁵⁸ This, although discrediting Ōkawa's claims that graduates were not employed in secret service roles, nonetheless demonstrates their not being especially trained, that is to say, specialised, for these roles.

Kuramochi thought this more understandable if regulations in regard to civil servants were taken into account. Generally, *Juku* graduates were disliked due to their inefficiency and “mistaken political ideas”, which they sought to promote and put in play, believing themselves thoroughly qualified. As an example, Kuramochi explained that of the two hundred employed by the *Mantetsu* in the Southern Regions, not one was a graduate of the Ōkawa *Juku*.¹¹⁵⁹

Given the propensity of Japanese Intelligence to politicise, the low quality of intelligence staff and agents employed, and belated, ineffectual (even cynical) efforts undertaken to draw indigenous movements to Japan's cause (to be examined in Chapters 10 and 11), the activities of the Greater East Asia Ministry, and the all-embracing “Co-Prosperity Sphere”, *prima facie* sought after by Japan in collaboration with its Asian neighbours, would be undermined.

The persistent presence of Japan's secret societies

Tōyama Hidozo, the son of Tōyama Mitsuru, was interrogated in March 1946 in order to better understand the ties (through individuals) between the *Genyōsha*, the *Kokuryūkai*, and other patriotic societies.¹¹⁶⁰ Tōyama held that membership, or alleged membership, of the *Kokuryūkai* had always held several facets. Some might be publicly associated with the society, but in actual fact had no connection, Tōyama citing Sasakawa Ryōichi, Ōkawa

¹¹⁵⁸ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Kuramochi Hiroshi, *op. cit.*, p. 37

¹¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶⁰ TNA: WO 208/3886, “Organisations in Japan”, *op. cit.*, p. 1

Shūmei, Doihara Kenji, Hashimoto Kingorō and Prince Konoye as examples. Others, in the effort of raising their status and influence, sought to have their names associated with the Society.¹¹⁶¹ Pointedly, Tōyama Hidozo asserted that any who were simply well-acquainted with Tōyama Mitsuru would be labeled a member of the *Kokuryūkai*, citing Kōki Hirota as an example.¹¹⁶²

Irrespective of formal membership, it is the relationships that were maintained by, and between, societies that were most important in relation to Japan's informal intelligence network. Many of Japan's patriotic societies for the most part maintained their independence from one another, but connections were maintained both between them and the Japanese government. In the political realm, Inukai Ki and Ōkuma Shigenobu, while perhaps not being formal members of these patriotic societies, nevertheless aided in their endeavours and no doubt received a return from their investment.¹¹⁶³

Seth believes that by 1944 the Black Dragon Society maintained a membership estimated to have been in excess of ten thousand members, its activities extending from Latin America and the United States, to North Africa.¹¹⁶⁴ According to Tōyama Hidozo, however, no branches of the *Kokuryūkai* ever existed outside Korea, Manchuria or Japan, the impression that these had once existed in places as far afield as India, the Philippines and Indonesia lent by the fact that leading men from throughout Southeast Asia had at one time visited Japan to liaise with Tōyama Mitsuru, including Rash Behari Bose.¹¹⁶⁵ Official membership is, however, irrelevant, and Japanese thought to have long been associated with Japanese ultra-nationalist societies, and who were later incarcerated by the Allies, included Kozū Yoshihisa, Hashimoto Kingorō, Kaogoki Kazanobu, Count Arima, Ōkawa Shūmei, Kodama Yoshio, Hiranuma Kiichirō and Sasakawa Ryōichi.¹¹⁶⁶

The efforts of Japan's earlier overarching patriotic societies had not dissipated in the interwar years. They remained entwined with the rise and

¹¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2

¹¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶³ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Secret Servants*, p. 66

¹¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64

¹¹⁶⁵ TNA: WO 208/3886, "Organisations in Japan", *op. cit.*, p. 2

¹¹⁶⁶ TNA: WO 208/3883, "Organisations and Societies in Japan", *op. cit.*, p. 1

fall of numerous other societies and political parties, but their influence had waned during a rise in liberal and leftist thought in Japan in the 1920s. By the 1930s, however, right-wing thought had regained ground. Before 1923, but for the *Genyōsha*, the *Kokuryūkai* and the *Rōninkai*, few right-wing groups were in existence. Numbers increased from the late 1920s, until, by the end of the Pacific conflict, Japan had over 300 right-wing associations, and 137 new societies established between 1931 and 1933 alone.¹¹⁶⁷ The *Meirinkai* (Society of Enlightened Ethics), one such society, was formed 1932 by Ishihara Koichiro of the Ishihara *Sangyo Koshi* (ISK), Lieutenant General Tanaka Kunishige (head of the Taiwan Army) and Ōkawa Shūmei of the East Asiatic Economic Investigation Bureau and Ōkawa *Juku*.¹¹⁶⁸ This society sought to accumulate all power into the hands of the militarists, retaining parliament whilst abolishing political parties, forming a single nationalist party.¹¹⁶⁹ Ishihara was thought to have funded this society to the sum of ¥100,000 per year.¹¹⁷⁰ The Ishihara *Sangyo Koshi* is further thought to have been involved in intelligence activities.¹¹⁷¹ Ishihara Koichiro had gained some political influence behind the scenes in Japan over the previous decade, aided by his ownership of the newspaper *Ōsaka Jiji*. Ishihara had at one time written a nationalist-militarist book titled *The Building of New Japan*, with introductions written by Prince Fumimaro Konoye, Admiral Nobumasa Suetsugu and Lieutenant General Kunishige Tanaka, advocating Japan's southward expansion.¹¹⁷²

In China earlier efforts continued, the *Tung Wen* College in Shanghai remained in operation in 1937, occupying buildings of the Chiao Tung University, still utilising IJA funding. By 1939 this establishment maintained four thousand members, and continued its operations until Japan's surrender.¹¹⁷³ *Tung Wen* graduates would operate throughout Manchukuo

¹¹⁶⁷ Sabey, *op. cit.*, p. 310

¹¹⁶⁸ TNA: KV 3/253, Straits Settlements Police Special Branch, *op. cit.*, p. 4

¹¹⁶⁹ "G-2 Study", undated, Box 1, Japan Subject Collection, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Stanford, California 94305-6010, p. 131

¹¹⁷⁰ TNA: KV 3/253, Straits Settlements Police Special Branch, *op. cit.*, p. 4

¹¹⁷¹ Malkin, M., *In Defense of Internment: The Case for 'Racial Profiling' in World War II and the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2004) p. 5

¹¹⁷² TNA: KV 3/253, Straits Settlements Police Special Branch, *op. cit.*, p. 4

¹¹⁷³ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Secret Servants*, p. 64

after 1932, and would continue to cooperate with both the Japanese Government and IJA throughout China after 1937.¹¹⁷⁴ Information available to the Allies suggested the presence of *Tung Wen* College graduates throughout the Far East, including in India and Burma, many of these within Japanese Consulates, banks, commercial firms, and within the *Dōmei* News Agency. Three, Murata Sueo, Yoshimura Yuso and Ono Yoshio were known to be attached to commercial firms in Bombay, India; another, Uyematsu Kaorn, having left India sometime before. Considering their training in the *Tung Wen* College, these men were undoubtedly engaged in intelligence and propaganda activities.¹¹⁷⁵

The names and addresses of a number of Tung Wen College graduates shows the extent of graduate work and distribution in Southeast Asia; their employment in various departments demonstrating the vast distribution of Japan's informal intelligence agents and dissemination throughout both the political and economic spheres:

Singapore

Namba Takeo	Japanese Consulate-General
Aimoto Muneichi	<i>Nippon Yūsen Kaisha</i>
Yamamoto Hisaichiro	<i>Nippon Yūsen Kaisha</i>

Hong Kong

Arimoto Masayoshi	Yokohama Specie Bank
Hamamoto Kazuto	South Manchurian Railway
Kawano Shichiro	Japanese Consulate-General
Kawakatsu Shigeru	<i>Nippon Yūsen Kaisha</i>
Koizumi Seiichi	Special Investigator of the Economic Department of the Shanghai Japanese Consulate-

¹¹⁷⁴ Reynolds, *op. cit.*, p. 948

¹¹⁷⁵ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 208/1223, "Japanese – Intelligence Methods"

	General, Hong Kong branch office
Nakamura Nofu	<i>Dōmei</i> News Agency
Matsuyo Keiji	<i>Dōmei</i> News Agency
Shoji Yunosuke	Ōsaka Mainichi branch office
Tonegi Chonosuke	Japanese Consulate-General
Yaya Minoru	Japanese Consulate-General ¹¹⁷⁶

The *Dai Nihon Seisantō* (Greater Japan Production Society), established in 1931, appears to have been an initial attempt to draw like-minded societies under the one umbrella and to one cause. In this endeavour it met with not inconsiderable success, the society claiming a membership of 100,000 soon after its formation.¹¹⁷⁷ According to Tōyama Hidezo, Uchida Ryōhei had been the intellect behind the *Dai Nihon Seisantō*, and along with Yoshida Masuzō, who had also been a member of the *Kokuryūkai*, the driving force. The *Dai Nihon Seisantō* ran alongside the *Kokuryūkai*.¹¹⁷⁸ The *Dai Nihon Seisantō* and the *Seinento* (Young Men's Society), founded 1936, along with such groups as the *Yurinkai*, the *Rōninkai* and of course the *Genyōsha*, would form the vanguard of Japanese penetration in Asia, preceding work of the IJA.¹¹⁷⁹

Notably, this resurgence in the 1930s coincided with the political rise of two of the *Genyōsha*'s more prominent figures, Hirota Kōki and Nakano Seigō. Hirota would become Foreign Minister in 1933, and later Prime Minister in 1936. In 1937, Hirota would again serve as Foreign Minister within the Cabinet of Konoye Fumimaro, serving in this role until January 1939, and later becoming Japan's ambassador to Thailand in 1942.¹¹⁸⁰ As 1939 approached, Japan's patriotic societies shifted allegiance away from various political parties to the military clique. Patriotic societies within Japan

¹¹⁷⁶ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 208/1223, "The Tung Wen (Common Language) College, Shanghai (Japanese Diary, Appendix 16, March, 1938)"

¹¹⁷⁷ Scalapino, R.A., *Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan: The Failure of the First Attempt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953) p. 360

¹¹⁷⁸ TNA: WO 208/3886, "Organisations in Japan", *op. cit.*, p. 2

¹¹⁷⁹ TNA: KV 3/253, Straits Settlements Police Special Branch, *op. cit.*, p. 3

¹¹⁸⁰ Sabey, *op. cit.*, pp. 299-300

had always existed symbiotically with the Japanese government, and for this reason had held considerable sway.¹¹⁸¹

Before 1937 the purpose of Japanese societies was usually self-evident. Many were cultural, military, or even dramatic societies, composed of Japanese parents, military or members of religious sects.¹¹⁸² After 1937, however, US intelligence found that it was no longer safe to assume that these organisations maintained their earlier purpose:

The Japanese used similar techniques to those used by the Germans and Italians; every effort was made to take over the already existing organisations and mold them to the “New Order”. It was far simpler to take an organisation already in being and to force or coerce its membership into following the “New Order” than it was to organise a completely new organisation. There is ample evidence that this technique produced excellent results. Hundreds and hundreds of the older organisations acquired the new nationalistic pattern as that emanating from Japan. Although this technique was highly successful subsequent to the Sino-Japanese Incident, it was also found either necessary or desirable to form many new organisations which were patriotic in character.¹¹⁸³

Similar efforts were made throughout mainland Asia, and on commensurate scale. As Everest-Phillips states, developments in Japan’s political atmosphere would encourage three main focal points of Imperial Japan’s overseas information collection:

Overt formal diplomacy and open search for knowledge propagated by the Foreign Ministry; an increasing range of informal networks for technology transfer and deeper understanding; and covert nationalist

¹¹⁸¹ TNA: WO 208/3883, “Organisations and Societies in Japan”, *op. cit.*, p. 1

¹¹⁸² An Index of Japanese Organisations in the United States, Headquarters Western Defense Command, Civil Affairs Division, Research Branch, Presidio of San Francisco, June 1944 - General II, Box No. 1, Japanese Organisation & Intelligence in U.S.; Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-36; Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38; National Archives at College Park, MD.

¹¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

connections that sought to develop Japan's strength in East Asia, and to fund, by secret as well as overt means, improvements to Japan's image and reputation.¹¹⁸⁴

Cultural manifestations of Japan's secret societies would later be found in the Indo-Japanese, Nippon-Thailand and South Sea Associations, and in the religious realm, the International Buddhist Society and Japan-Mohammedan Society, amongst others. These groups would operate under the Foreign Ministry. The *Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai*, mentioned above, published a book in 1939 providing full details of these societies.¹¹⁸⁵

The importance of Japan's informal intelligence network to Imperial Japanese ambitions is best represented in the establishment in late 1940-early 1941 of the *Taisei Yokusankai* (Imperial Rule Assistance Association) in order to amalgamate Japanese social and patriotic organisations, both internal and overseas. Some were to continue as associates under the umbrella of the *Taisei Yokusankai*, while others were to be disbanded.¹¹⁸⁶

Between the 4 and 9 November 1940, a convention was held in Tokyo, consisting of 2,000 Japanese subjects residing abroad. The resultant establishment of the Overseas Japanese Central Society (*Kaigai Dobo Chūo Kai*) based in Tokyo, although it was meant to appear as a popular decision, this was, according to the US Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), actually an official decision of the Japanese Government under joint sponsorship of the Foreign Ministry, War Ministry, Navy Ministry, Overseas Affairs Ministry, Commerce and Industry Ministry, the Cabinet Bureau of Festivals and the City of Tokyo.¹¹⁸⁷ Attendees were for the most part representatives of overseas clubs, coming from as far afield as Australia, Canada, China, Central and South America, Hawaii, Manchukuo, and the

¹¹⁸⁴ Everest-Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 686

¹¹⁸⁵ TNA: KV 3/253, Straits Settlements Police Special Branch, *op. cit.*, p. 5

¹¹⁸⁶ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6312, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 232, 17 May 1946, Item 2134, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi and Consul-General Kohno, p. 8

¹¹⁸⁷ "Japanese Organisations in U.S.", 8/9/41, Japanese Organisations - General I, Box No. 1, Japanese Organisation & Intelligence in U.S.; Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-36; Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38; National Archives at College Park, MD.

South Seas, yet also included one hundred representatives of Japanese government departments involved with overseas development and another three hundred Japanese with overseas organisations and/or investments. Policies of the conference were moulded by official suggestion, with the clear aim of creating a unified overseas association. This in itself was unsurprising, considering those personages earmarked for offices within the organisation, including Vice Admiral Hamada Kichijiro (Vice President), Tahara Haruji, representative in the Diet (Vice President), Lieutenant General Suzuki Yoshimichi (Vice President), and Nomura Kichisaburō, Japanese Ambassador to the US (Advisor). Furthermore, offices also included honorary positions awarded to such figures as Prince Konoye Fumimaro (honorary President), Tōjō Hideki, then Army Minister (Honorary Advisor), Matsuoka Yōsuke, Foreign Minister (Honorary Advisor), and Arita Hachirō, former Foreign Minister (Honorary Advisor). The organisation's stated aim was to act as liaison between overseas Japanese associations and to assist in all matters. Branches were to be established to act as coordination centres in Hawaii, North America (likely to include Mexico), Latin America, East Asia and the South Seas.¹¹⁸⁸

The subsequent establishment of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, established following a decision by the Japanese Cabinet 14 January 1941, sought to consolidate all “thought societies” of the Japanese in order to aid the “Greater Asia Movement”. To this end a special committee was formed, the Central Cooperative Council, including Prince Konoye Fumimaro as President, Count Arima Yoriyasu as Secretary-General and Admiral Suetsugu Nobumasa as Chairman.¹¹⁸⁹ Tōyama Mitsuru, up until his death in 1944, would act as a director of the *Taisei Yokusankai*.¹¹⁹⁰

Not only were major political parties to be dissolved with the establishment of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, but also Japan's patriotic societies were to be amalgamated into a new powerful element of the Japanese nation.¹¹⁹¹ Even the spy-hostage *hōkō* system (*tonari-gumi*, or

¹¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹⁰ Seth, *op. cit.*, *Secret Servants*, p. 64

¹¹⁹¹ TNA: WO 208/3883, “Organisations and Societies in Japan”, *op. cit.*, p. 1

Neighbourhood Associations – see Chapter 6), were to be centralised under the *Taisei Yokusankai*.¹¹⁹² It should be noted, however, that although the formation of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association was to unite the population behind the government, not all of Japan's patriotic societies provided their support, some remaining indifferent, others actively opposing its aim.¹¹⁹³ Tōyama Hidozo felt that had Uchida Ryōhei been alive in 1940 (Uchida had died in 1937) he would have resisted assimilation of the *Kokuryūkai* into the *Yokusankai*, asserting its independence, but Kuzū Yoshihisa, his successor, had not opposed the idea.¹¹⁹⁴ Resistance of such groups as the *Kōdō Yokusan Seinen Renmei* (Imperial Way Assistance Association Youth's League), the *Seisanto*, the *Aikoku Sha*, and the *Kokuryūkai* (and another forty societies of similar purpose) would later lead to the establishment of the *Nippon Shugi Seinen Zenkeku Kaigi* (Japan Youth National Council), which sought to achieve the “purification” of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association.¹¹⁹⁵

The *Dai Nippon Kōa Dōmei*¹¹⁹⁶ was established in July 1941, under the leadership of the *Taisei Yokusankai*, in an attempt to unify the associations of the *Dai Ajia Shugi* movement (Greater Asia movement), and was based on the principle of “the eight corners of the earth under one roof”, an ideal that often obfuscated Japan's imperial ambitions.¹¹⁹⁷ The *Kōa Dōmei* (Great Japan, *Dai Nippon*, often dropped from the title as superfluous) was formed through the amalgamation of thirty associations concerned primarily with Manchurian and Chinese affairs. These associations were known for their organisation of “inspection tours” of these territories, and the establishment of the *Kōa Dōmei* was to oversee and control the actions of these associations, including these “inspections”. The president of the *Kōa Dōmei* was General Hayashi Senjurō until his death in 1943, his successor, Mizuno Rentarō, former Advisor to the Privy Council and Home Minister. In August 1944 the association changed its title to *Kōa Sōhombu* (General Headquarters for

¹¹⁹² TNA: KV 3/297, “Note on Japanese Intelligence Service”, undated, p. 7

¹¹⁹³ TNA: WO 208/3883, “Organisations and Societies in Japan”, *op. cit.*, p. 1

¹¹⁹⁴ TNA: WO 208/3886, “Organisations in Japan”, *op. cit.*, p. 2

¹¹⁹⁵ TNA: WO 208/3883, “Organisations and Societies in Japan”, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2

¹¹⁹⁶ The character *renmei* is often used here in place of *domei*.

¹¹⁹⁷ TNA: WO 208/3883, “Organisations and Societies in Japan”, *op. cit.*, p. 2

Advanced Asia), with the presidency at the time held by General Matsui Iwane.¹¹⁹⁸ The appointment of Matsui, formerly head of the infamous Harbin Special Service Agency, seems rather pointed, given the apparent effort to direct, even formalise, organisations operating informal intelligence networks.

The *Dai Nippon Koa Dōmei*, like the *Taisei Yokusankai*, did not receive unilateral support, the *Token Dōshikai* (East Asia Construction Society), the *Sekishikai* (Society of Single Heart, led by Hashimoto Kingorō), and the *Tonokai* (led by Nakano Seigō) refusing to join. As such, despite the intended aim of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, Japan's nationalist patriotic societies would continue to exist as a patchwork framework aimed at different (normally in terms of geography) yet similar issues faced by Japan.¹¹⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the importance of their work in the intelligence field, in terms of numbers, field of operation and importance of information gathered and furnished cannot be underestimated, if only in terms of saturation.

Activities of Japan's patriotic societies and their infrastructure and informal intelligence networks remained integral to Imperial Japan's expansion to the end of World War II. The sheer scope of political and financial support and membership of various patriotic societies demonstrates their importance to the Japanese government and its intelligence requirements. Pre-conflict Japan was home to an estimated 650,000 active members of these societies, with another several million inactive.¹²⁰⁰ These, with the IJA, the IJN, Japan's police forces, clergy and Government officials, provided both an impressive support base for the Emperor, and served as a political bloc and, indeed, physical force. These societies exhibited three fundamental traits: i) support of the Japanese economic system which closely resembled that of Nazi Germany ii) support of Japan's imperialist ambitions abroad in their most aggressive form, both in foreign policy and colonial annexation, and iii) support of absolute monarchy.¹²⁰¹

¹¹⁹⁸ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi and Consul-General Kohno, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9

¹¹⁹⁹ TNA: WO 208/3883, "Organisations and Societies in Japan", *op. cit.*, p. 2

¹²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Japanese Intelligence in Southeast Asia during the Pacific War

Even at the beginning of the 1940s, just before the Pacific War, staff officers in charge of intelligence were not specifically trained in this line of work.¹²⁰²

IJA policy had been to staff intelligence organisations with those with mediocre records; those who developed a good record in intelligence later placed in command of operations. Even military attachés, who specialised in the collection of information from embassies abroad, would on return be given operational commands in line with this policy.¹²⁰³

Furthermore, among those officers graduating from the Staff College, those allocated intelligence roles came from those who had undertaken the optional course rather than the regular course. Finally, few graduates of the Officer's School were enrolled in the Nakano School. For example, the records of Lieutenant Colonel Yamamoto, 38th Army Staff Officer and head of intelligence, show he had no previous experience in intelligence work before his assignment to 38th Army HQ.¹²⁰⁴

The inception and development of Japanese planning toward Malaya, Burma and India occurred over three distinct periods that corresponded to Japanese foreign policy changes:

a) Up to July 1940

i) Chief Events

1938	Japan occupies Canton and Hankou and the Chinese coast is blockaded. There is no sign of settlement of the "China Incident"
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¹²⁰² TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 33

¹²⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

December 1939	Wang Ching-wei leaves Chungking and arrives in Tokyo through French Indo-China. Nanjing Government founded and peace “offensive” begun
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ii) Foreign Policy

Primary emphasis remained on the China “Incident” which appeared to be aiming toward stalemate. The requisite cutting of Chungking supply routes was realised and bombing of the same commenced.

iii) Plans

Planning was almost entirely directed toward China with particular emphasis on support of the Wang Ching-wei government

b) July 1940 to June 1941

i) Chief Events

July 1940	Nishihara <i>Kikan</i> formed and sent to Hanoi to investigate and report on supply routes to Chungking Government-controlled areas
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September 1940	IJA enters Northern French Indo-China
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January 1941	Siam-French Indo-China armistice signed followed by Boundary Demarcation Treaty
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June 1941	Germany declared war on the USSR
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ii) Foreign Policy

Japan's Foreign Policy during this period focused on a solution to the China "Incident" and the cutting of supply routes to Chungking Government-controlled areas. Negotiations were also entered with the US in an effort to stop the economic blockade, while war materials were sought from French Indo-China and Siam and oil negotiations were conducted with the Dutch East Indies. Preparations for an assault on the USSR were put in place in accordance with the Anti-Comintern Pact, yet this plan was suspended July 1941.

iii) Plans

Although primary emphasis remained on support of the Nanjing Government, the Japanese sought to establish and develop relationships with nationalist movements in French Indo-China and Burma in an attempt to halt supplies reaching China. Activities were extended to French Indo-China, Siam and Burma, and attempts made to draw Siam to Japan's aims (see Chapters 9 through 11)

c) July 1941 onward

i) Chief Events

July 1941	The Franco-Japanese Defence Protocol signed; the IJA enters southern French Indo-China.
July 1941	The US and UK suspended Japanese finances overseas and the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty was annulled.
July 1941	Dutch-Japanese oil negotiations collapse; Japanese delegation recalled.

August 1941	US oil embargo strengthened against Japan
October 1941	Tōjō Cabinet formed
November 1941	US-Japanese negotiations became critical

ii) Foreign Policy

Relations between Japan and both the US and UK came under greater and greater strain. War preparations against the USSR were left to concentrate on preparation against these two in case negotiations faltered.

iii) Plans

Focus was placed on independence movements in both British and Dutch colonies to facilitate future Japanese operations here. All anti-British and anti-Dutch movements received Japanese support.¹²⁰⁵

Southern Area Army (*Nampōsōgun*)

The 2nd Staff Section of Southern Area Army HQ only organised its intelligence section between December 1941 and August 1942, and with even less emphasis laid on intelligence from September 1942, the section's personnel was so depleted that it was eventually subsumed into 1st Staff Section and became subordinate to the Staff Officer, Operations. However, from December 1943 the importance of intelligence was once more recognised and the 2nd Staff Section re-established.¹²⁰⁶

Colonel Yano Muraiji (Chapter 7) was now head of the 2nd Staff Section of the Southern Area Army (SAA). The 2nd Staff Section

¹²⁰⁵ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-47

¹²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43

(Intelligence) theoretically dealt with all intelligence concerns, but in effect was limited to matters solely in relation to SAA HQ.¹²⁰⁷

On paper, division of duties within the section was as follows:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------|--|
| Lieutenant Colonel Ikarii: | i) | General Intelligence (<i>Ippan Jōhō</i>) and Appreciation of Enemy Situation (Order of Battle) (<i>Teki Jo Handan</i>) |
| Lieutenant Colonel Tada: | i) | Signals Intelligence (<i>Tsushin Chōsa</i>) |
| | ii) | Law and Order Intelligence (<i>Chian</i>) with the cooperation of Lieutenant Colonel Ishida |
| | iii) | <i>Hikari Kikan</i> ; following policy of Lieutenant General Isoda |
| | iv) | General Security (<i>Bōchō</i>) |
| Major Hara: | i) | General Affairs |
| | ii) | Geographical Affairs (<i>Heiyo Chishi Han</i>) |
| | iii) | Maps ¹²⁰⁸ |

According to Colonel Yano however, General Security (*Bōchō*) was effectively non-existent as an operational section.¹²⁰⁹

Yano confirmed that the IJA, particularly while in the field, still had no units specifically organised for counter-intelligence. This remained the jurisdiction of the *Kempei Tai*, and Yano admitted no knowledge of how they operated in practice. According to Yano's statement:

“I” Officers in the field knew next to nothing of counter-intelligence; and so it is that I myself, head though I was of No. 2 Staff Section,

¹²⁰⁷ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, p. 10

¹²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11

¹²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11

Southern Area Armies, have no acquaintance with the problems of counter-intelligence...From the point of view of the actual war situation, there [had] been an uninterrupted succession of important campaigns (to be dealt with by "I" Staff) ever since the Leyte campaign in the Philippines in October 1944, when I took up my appointment with No. 2 Staff Section, and the result has been that our attention was monopolised by operational intelligence.¹²¹⁰

Due to the rapid advance of IJA forces into Southeast Asia, Yano felt that while it was possible to maintain reasonably adequate security organisations to cover Japan and Manchuria, in China and in the Southern Regions, these being near or, in fact, operational areas, a similarly developed system was impossible. The 2nd Staff Section SAA HQ, constantly involved in operational intelligence, had no time to perfect a security or counterintelligence organisation.¹²¹¹

¹²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23

¹²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11

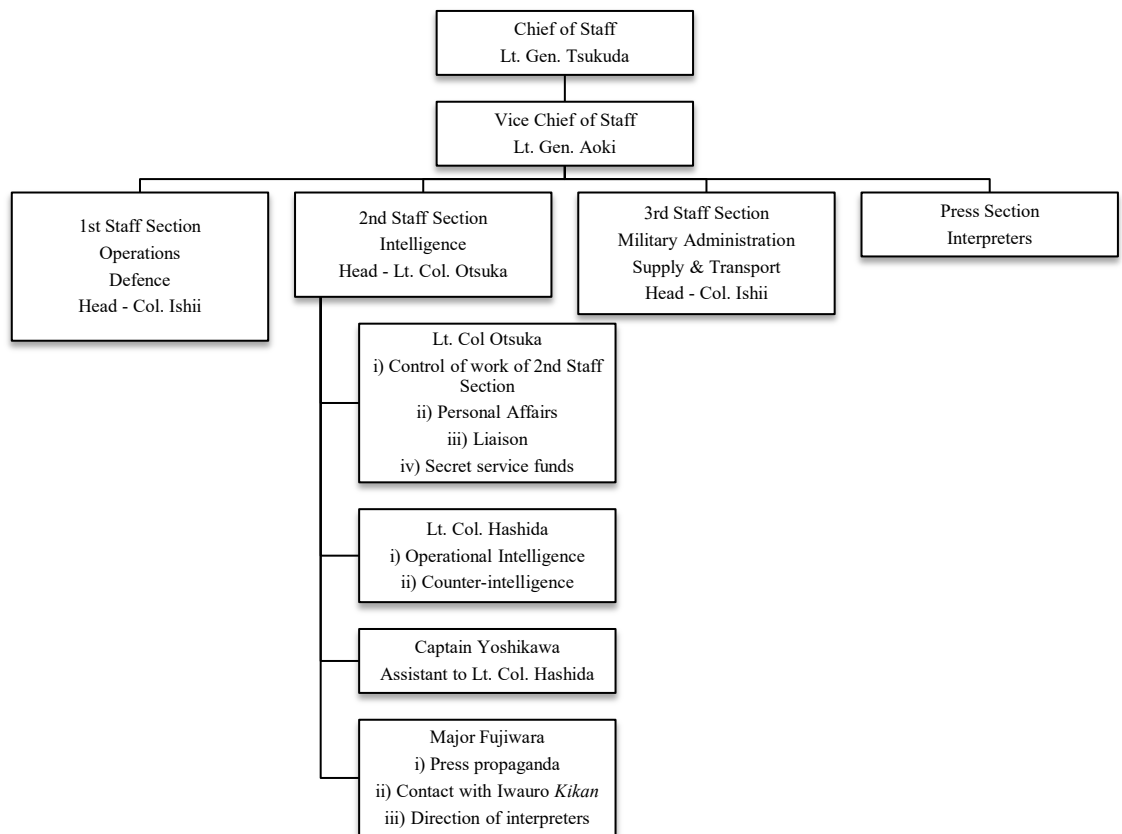


Figure 10. Organisation of 2nd Section, Southern Area Army HQ, May to July 1942¹²¹²

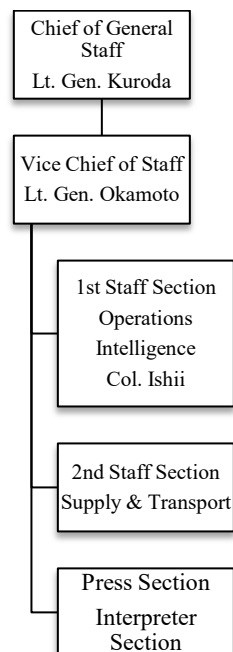


Figure 11. Place of Intelligence, Southern Area Army HQ, September 1942 to March 1943¹²¹³

¹²¹² TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 42

French Indo-China

Sources of intelligence within French Indo-China before the outbreak of hostilities included the Japanese consulates at Saigon and Hanoi, as well as the Greater East Asia Ministry and visiting dignitaries of the Foreign Ministry. No military attachés were present, and Colonel Yano Muraiji knew of no special mission of military personnel.¹²¹⁴

Between July 1940 and June 1941, 23rd Army was tasked with the blockade of Southern China. To this end it extended its operational control to Nanning and Liu Chu in order to restrict Chungking Government supply routes. To aid in this endeavour the IJA made contact with the Northern French Indo-China Annamite Independence Movement, and this contact proved a further source of intelligence.¹²¹⁵

In September 1940, without orders from Imperial HQ, 23rd Army advanced into Northern French Indo-China irrespective of the ongoing negotiations between Japanese and French Indo-China. With secret encouragement of the 23rd Army, the nationalist independence movement began revolt. This was in direct contravention of Tokyo policy banning any assistance to the Annamites at that time. Those Army and Divisional commanders involved were later dismissed.¹²¹⁶

Major General Kuroda, Chief of the General Staff at Southern Area Army, formulated Japan's initial policy toward nationalist movements in French Indo-China in a note in December 1941. In summary this policy dictated:

- i) The IJA was not to support local ethnic movements
- ii) The present situation was to be explained to independence movement leaders in a sympathetic fashion, and efforts made to convince the same that now was not the time for their concerns to come to the fore

¹²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 43

¹²¹⁴ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, p. 14

¹²¹⁵ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p.

47

¹²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

- iii) The IJA was to remain neutral in nationalist disputes but for occasions where law and order came under threat¹²¹⁷

This policy was not made known to nationalist movements or IJA elements that it did not concern. Some nationalist leaders would in time come to the realisation that the IJA support was self-serving, leading to a weakening of Japanese support. The French would try to exacerbate this move away from pro-Japanese sentiment in pointing out the apparent hollowness of Japan's proposed friendship with the nationalists, but anti-French sentiment would continue to rise toward the end of 1943 and beginning of 1944.¹²¹⁸

Around July 1944 Hayashi Hidezumi (see Chapter 8), who had been transferred to French Indo-China that year, came into possession of another note on IJA policy, identically dated, but containing differing information.¹²¹⁹ Whereas the first note had stated the IJA was not to support native movements, the second note contained two points: i) the IJA was not to become involved in native ethnic movements and ii) independence movements of the North, Central and Southern regions of French Indo-China would not be allowed to unite. Southern Area Army HQ, when asked to clarify this disparity, apparently could not do so due to "some documents having been lost".¹²²⁰ Policy toward French Indo-China, even at the upper echelon of intelligence, remained unclear.

The *Kisaragikai* was established to research Annamite concerns in Tokyo in February 1944. The organisation's president was General Matsui Iwane, later held responsible for the Nanjing Massacre and former head of the Harbin Special Service Agency. Although membership is thought to have been limited to Japanese, the *Kisaragikai* maintained the *Kisaragi Ryo* (Kisaragi Inn) to accommodate Annamites in Japan to study their host country. These students received instruction in Japanese language, history and political culture etc. Membership was essentially composed of those

¹²¹⁷ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6312, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 232, 17 May 1946, Item 2132, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, p. 1

¹²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²²⁰ *Ibid.*

interested in Asiatic politics (*Ajia Kōsaku*) including IJA or IJN officers on the retired list, politicians or former Cabinet ministers.¹²²¹

It is thought the Imperial Rule Aid Assistance Association, through Vice-Admiral Kondo Hidejiro (Eijiro), a naval officer on the retired list and a director of the *Taisei Yokusankai*, encouraged the *Kisaragikai* and its relationship with the Annamites.¹²²² The *Shimizu Gumi*, a very large Japanese construction concern, was financially tied with the *Kisaragikai*, and the Greater East Asia Ministry (*Dai Tōa Shō*) provided further funding of ¥30,000. Members of the *Kisaragikai* were to be sent to French Indo-China, but successful opposition to the proposal was led by Hayashi Hidezumi on behalf of the IJA and Consul-General Kohno on behalf of the Consulate-General. Reasons for this opposition were not given in their testimony.¹²²³

The political overthrow of French Indo-China

The decision to assume administration in French Indo-China through *coup d'état*, in the process disarming the French, originated from the Supreme War Council in Tokyo (*Saiko Senso Kaigi*) on recommendation of the Supreme Commander, Southern Regions, who in turn acted on the advice of the General Staff.¹²²⁴ Field Marshal Terauchi received his final instructions on the matter via a major sent from GHQ Tokyo. The decision was made due to a lack of sympathy toward the French, and greater confidence in Japanese administration in the case of Allied landings. Only the highest of Japanese officials who had spent some time in France differed in this opinion.¹²²⁵

According to Yano Muraiji's testimony, Japanese troops were generally on amiable terms with the Annamites, sympathising with the hardships they had endured under French rule. Japanese who fought with the Annamites, Yano believed, had developed relationships forged through

¹²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8

¹²²² *Ibid.*

¹²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 9

¹²²⁴ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, p. 19

¹²²⁵ *Ibid.*

adversity, not through shared ideology, dismissing theories suggestive of support of forces including the Viet Minh.¹²²⁶

In October 1944, by order of Major General Kawamura, Hayashi Hidezumi¹²²⁷ was required to produce by December an administrative plan for French Indo-China following armed measures against the French. Hayashi was surprised that no such plan already existed, but more so that he would be assigned a task of such magnitude and importance.¹²²⁸ Hayashi was fortunate in that his colleague in the task, Satō Shun (an IJA civil administration officer) was well acquainted with French Indo-Chinese politics, economics and civil concerns, and was able to impart a general knowledge of French administration and village organisation. Notably, Hayashi found intelligence information held by the garrison army to be of no worth; further than political and economic ignorance, even the extent and restrictions of the respective powers of the *Sûreté* (French secret police), the *Kempei Tai*, the police organisation and the police station were unknown. In a proclamation made March 1945 by the Army Commander, the phrase “members of the *Kyoshakkai*” was used; not even the head of the *Kempei Tai* knowing to what it referred.¹²²⁹

Satō and Hayashi only presented their plan to a conference held 15 December 1944. Attendees included Lieutenant General Wakamatsu, Deputy Chief of Staff, Southern Area Army and Major General Kawamura, Chief of Staff 38th Army. Satō and Hayashi presented the following revelation:

The Japanese have insufficient trained personnel to be able to take over the administration of French Indo-China themselves. Few Japanese speak French and the native languages. The administration following the demise of the French must be based on the grant of independence to the natives. Native ability to govern themselves is underrated; at present the actual government is done by the natives. Furthermore if

¹²²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²²⁷ Formerly head of the *Kempei Tai* in Shanghai, Hayashi was posted as staff officer to 38th Army HQ in French Indo-China from January 1944.

¹²²⁸ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 2

¹²²⁹ *Ibid.*

independence is not granted after the elimination of the French, the natives will turn against us.¹²³⁰

This conclusion was unacceptable, and Satō and Hayashi were directed to formulate another plan involving complete administrative takeover by the Japanese without independence being granted. A new proposal was completed by Hayashi approximately 28 December 1944, Major General Kawamura, then Chief of Staff, granting approval, and following minor alterations by Satō, the plan received approval from the Army Commander 31 December 1944.¹²³¹

This plan's main tenets were:

- i) the three protectorates should be given independence
- ii) the southern part of Laos would be mandated to the Empire of Annam
- iii) Hanoi, Haiphong, Tourane and Cochin China should initially be administered by the IJA
- iv) the independent states should take as their administrative model that of the areas controlled by the Japanese.
- v) the Japanese would attach an advisor to each independent state
- vi) restitution of former territories was to be promised¹²³²

Hayashi was shown a tentative plan on 17 January 1945 by the Army Commander who also directed further changes be made to the already accepted plan now titled “Outline Plan for the Control of Indo-China”. When made, these amendments were deemed insufficient and the plan rejected once more. Hayashi’s final proposal was accepted marginally approximately 19 January 1945.¹²³³

¹²³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²³¹ *Ibid.*

¹²³² *Ibid.*

¹²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 3

A plan was concurrently being prepared by Southern Area Army but was not yet complete. The Chief of Staff wished to take a draft plan to Tokyo toward the end of January 1945, and so Hayashi and Lieutenant Colonel Kojima of the Staff conferred. No major dissimilarities existed between the plans of the 38th Army and Southern Area Army.¹²³⁴

The plan's main tenets were:

- i) the independence of the protectorate would not be granted
- ii) the IJA would takeover administration from the French and military government would be installed across the entirety of the territory
- iii) to avoid disturbance and dislocation as much as possible, organisation and legislation of the French regime would be retained
- iv) French officials would be retained in their respective offices as far as possible
- v) Cuong De and his party would not be utilised¹²³⁵

In terms of numbers, both Satō and Hayashi deemed 120 to be the requisite number of administrative personnel required to rule French Indo-China. When this was disputed, this number was decreased to fifty-five, then again to thirty-three. French Indo-China, much larger than Java, would thus have to be administered with less than 10% of the number of Japanese military administration employed there.¹²³⁶

The measures agreed upon on 28 February 1945, by the combined Japanese military forces and the Greater East Asia and Foreign Ministries, were only shown to Hayashi 1 March. Although the *coup d'état* had been planned for 9 March 1945, Japanese units in Tonkin were only informed two hours before commencement. This was due to the inability to send such sensitive orders by plane, as crashed aircraft were primarily discovered and

¹²³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²³⁶ *Ibid.*

inspected by the French authorities. Furthermore, the orders late arrival from Tokyo meant rail delivery was out of the question as the journey from Saigon to Hanoi would take two weeks. Hayashi in the end delivered these himself, using a combination of rail and car, leaving Saigon the night of 5 March 1945 and arriving with only two hours to spare.¹²³⁷

Lieutenant Colonel Ishida was attached by 2nd Department to 38th Army to assist in intelligence and propaganda in February 1945, establishing the *Yasu Butai* with ten members of staff.¹²³⁸ The *Yasu Butai* would be the intelligence organ organising the groundwork for the March 9 *coup d'état*.¹²³⁹ The *Yasu Butai* was however only established a couple of weeks prior. Their commanding officer, Isoda, was not in contact with the French, their military dispositions already well known to the Japanese 38th Army Staff. *Yasu Butai*'s efforts were directed at attracting the favour of the local Annamese around Saigon. Following the takeover, the *Yasu Butai* would be tasked with the dissemination of propaganda trying to explain the actions of the Japanese. The *Yasu Butai* would develop a dark reputation however due to looting committed by Annamese wearing *Yasu* armbands, and due to the degree of intimidation and coercion involved.¹²⁴⁰

Following Japan's takeover of French Indo-China, the IJA would preclude most senior French officials from retaining their positions in the Japanese-led administration. Middle and lower echelon civil servants and local resident officials would be employed. This would thwart nationalist elements who had already been on the verge of taking control on the local scale, and those who had once been pro-Japanese now went to the Viet Minh believing the Japanese to be no different to the French.¹²⁴¹

Japan had chosen this course as i) disruption of lower echelons of administrative staff was untenable in light of expected and imminent Allied operations directed at French Indo-China; ii) the IJA was unaware of which ethnic elements were pro-Japanese and feared compromise if politically unsuccessful; and iii) these elements were found on investigation to be under

¹²³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5

¹²³⁸ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21

¹²³⁹ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 4

¹²⁴⁰ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, p. 12

¹²⁴¹ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 5

par. Hayashi found leaders of Cochin China, Annam and Tonkin slandered one another, no unity seemed possible between elements, and sound political judgment, even amongst their leadership, was lacking and few had any conception of the duties of political office.¹²⁴²

French Indo-China's ethnic elements were as completely unaware of Japan's intentions as anyone else due to the great secrecy surrounding preparations for the *coup d'état* and the IJA's intentions afterward. These elements would be treated as pro-Japanese individuals by the IJA in line with its policy of non-interference in internal politics. The IJA further would not, however, appoint pro-Japanese elements to office for fear of their possible failure and the subsequent loss of public sentiment.¹²⁴³

The *coup d'état* was undertaken to ensure the French would be unable to assist in any Allied landings in French Indo-China, rather than to establish an independent state under Bao Dai or release the protectorates. Following the coup, the IJA sought the rapid reinstatement of the pre-coup administration and began military preparations for the expected Allied assault.¹²⁴⁴ The Nationalist Movement in French Indo-China, despite its hopes, would never see a transfer of power from the Japanese, even to Cuong De, who had resided in Japan for many years and was likely in contact with the likes of Tōyama Mitsuru and Uchida Ryōhei.¹²⁴⁵ The *Kokuryūkai* operated in French Indo-China under its Vietnamese translation *Hac Long*, but as had occurred elsewhere in Asia, its efforts were by this time subsumed or sidelined into overall military strategy.¹²⁴⁶

Cooperation between the emperor Bao Dai and Cuong De was, however, initiated by the IJA. This did not, in Hayashi's testimony, conflict with the overall policy of the IJA. Cuong De's restoration movement was deemed a threat to stability and the public order and development of Annam, and the IJA would not put the party in power. Although it was felt Cuong De

¹²⁴² *Ibid.*

¹²⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6

¹²⁴⁵ Nish, *op. cit.*, *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*, p. 136

¹²⁴⁶ Guillemot, F., "Vietnamese National Revolutionaries and the Japanese Occupation: The Case of the Dai Viet Parties (1936-1946) in Li, N. & Cribb, R., *Eds.*, *Imperial Japan and National Identities in Asia, 1895-1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) pp. 228-229

should return to Annam, conditions attached would mean the effective dissolution of his movement, Cuong De was to be in effect a private citizen without political affiliation.¹²⁴⁷ Bao Di for his part would be allowed to declare independence following the 9 March coup, but in real terms this meant little for the newly “independent” state.¹²⁴⁸

Efforts at political control of French Indo-China had been *ad hoc*, and lacked sufficiently detailed planning. Furthermore, Japan’s (unclear) policy regarding French Indo-Chinese ethnic and nationalist groups (and Japanese underestimation of the same), meant pro-Japanese sympathy within the local population would be underutilised. These proclivities, unaided by time constraints, would be evident through Japan’s advance elsewhere through Southeast Asia.

Intelligence in French Indo-China

According to Hayashi, Japanese intelligence, particularly so in Southeast Asia, suffered from two main problems: i) the lack of a foreign peacetime intelligence organisation, and ii) low levels of funding dedicated to intelligence work.¹²⁴⁹

Due to the non-existence of intelligence organisations in foreign nations, only as the IJA occupied territory in Southeast Asia were Japanese expatriates called upon to supply information and provide local contacts who may be willing to work for Japan. This would create a number of problems. Japanese residents in the majority of cases would not have requisite information, having been unaware what type of information was required of them, and local contacts, generally disgruntled or disenfranchised, normally had only a low standard of education. These informants had three main proclivities, i) to seek advantage by serving the Japanese, and to avoid regulations, ii) denunciation of purportedly anti-Japanese elements, and iii) the manufacture of information (exacerbated by minders seeking information

¹²⁴⁷ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 5

¹²⁴⁸ Guillemot, *op cit.*, p. 228

¹²⁴⁹ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 32

daily).¹²⁵⁰ The reliability of informers, predominantly employed by the *Kempei Tai*, was most suspect.¹²⁵¹ Finally, no financial subsidies were provided to commercial enterprises, or to press agents, during peacetime.¹²⁵²

Sole responsibility for counteraction against subversive activity and elements lay with 38th Army, all such actions to be authorised and initiated by Lieutenant General Kawamura, chief of the General Staff. SAA served only to develop policy and forward relevant intelligence and information from Lieutenant Colonel Ishida. Official reports to SAA HQ were to be forwarded through Lieutenant General Kawamura. Information received by 38th Army through sources including the *Sendenbu* (Propaganda Department) was to a large extent summarised, only the pertinent points being forwarded to SAA HQ.¹²⁵³

The *Kempei Tai* of the Southern Area Command (north of latitude 16 degrees) in French Indo-China numbered approximately 350 (as of September 1945), with just under 150 of these based in Hanoi. Of the latter, only forty-seven were specially designated “secret police”, with another forty-three forming a wireless section. The remainder were divided into “Police Affairs” and “General Affairs”. Many of the Japanese *gendarmarie* had been detached from their initial roles in the IJA and reassigned to the Military Police.¹²⁵⁴ The headquarters of the *Kempei Tai* in Saigon was located in the old Chamber of Commerce.¹²⁵⁵

Kempei Tai were throughout French Indo-China travelling on trains, inspecting passenger permits, and removing many travellers without the

¹²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵² *Ibid.*

¹²⁵³ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6313, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 233, 24 May 1946, Item 2150, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraji, pp. 14-15

¹²⁵⁴ Memorandum Re: Japanese Intelligence in French Indo-China, 22 May 1946, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

¹²⁵⁵ “French Indo-China Kempei Tai”, undated, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

consent of the French Police.¹²⁵⁶ Agents employed by the *Kempei Tai* were predominantly Cantonese from the Cholon area, although Annamites and many supporters of Wang Ching-wei from North China were also so employed.¹²⁵⁷ No *Kikan* was ever established to deal with saboteurs, guerrilla activity, or spies.¹²⁵⁸

The Japanese use of informants and spies had systemic problems. For example: “A”, who has been utilizing “B” for the purposes of collecting information is transferred. His successor, rather than using contacts already employed, would rather organise his own. As such, the intelligence organisation was forever changing, essentially starting anew. An extreme example includes the relocation of a source, previously employed in China, to French Indo-China, where his previous knowledge would be of no consequence.¹²⁵⁹ Japanese intelligence would furthermore undertake no research into existing political or administrative structures of the country with which they were concerned. Agents would gather information of a daily nature occurring within administrative offices, gathering news rather than information. For example, the *Kempei Tai* were unable to differentiate the authority and duties of the *Sûreté* and Municipal Police in French Indo-China, and did not have an understanding of the French Indo-China system of “notables” in rural areas.¹²⁶⁰ According to Hayashi, practically all information collected at the *Jōhō Shitsu* (Intelligence Room, 38th Army HQ) contained no value. As an example, following the 9 March 1945 *coup d'état* a list of names requiring detainment was requested from the *Jōhō Shitsu* who were unable to do so. A list was therefore compiled in haste, in accordance only with administrative posts held by these individuals. As such, many who should have remained free were not, and of course many who should have been interred remained free.¹²⁶¹

¹²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵⁸ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, p. 13

¹²⁵⁹ TNA: WO 203/6313, S.E.A.T.I.C., Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*,

p. 33

¹²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34

¹²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

A lack of intelligence and counterintelligence training during peacetime would create confusion and unsatisfactory results. No liaison was maintained with local personages for the purpose of intelligence work, and agents concerned themselves with spying amongst the lower echelons of society. This was believed by Colonel Hayashi to be directly correlated to the lack of intelligence funds.¹²⁶²

2nd Staff Section SAA maintained no direct link with practitioners of Cao Dai, although Lieutenant Colonel Ishida kept them abreast of their activities. Colonel Yano believed such communication ended on Ishida's later transfer to Bangkok in 1945. Cao Dai influence was not considered by Colonel Yano to have been widespread or of consequence. In regard to the Viet Minh & Viet Nanh, Colonel Yano believed these to have been the same organisation, the latter being only a name change. This displays a further lack of knowledge regarding local political organisations.¹²⁶³ Importantly, however, Colonel Yano Muraiji stated that although Lieutenant Colonel Ishida held intimate relationships with Cao Dai and members of Annamite independence movements, at no time did he sympathise at the expense of official Japanese policy. Rather, his empathy served well in his official duties, in particular in relation to propaganda work where he sought to alleviate concerns that the Japanese sought the enslavement of the local population, nor did it seek to colonise the area.¹²⁶⁴

The Malaya Campaign

Only in approximately July 1940 had the IJA formed a strategy to invade Malaya and Hong Kong, and only in late August 1941 did the IJA and IJN commence requisite joint operational planning for the upcoming Malayan campaign.”¹²⁶⁵ In relation to Hong Kong, however, the Japanese had obtained highly secret details of the defence of Hong Kong through the Italian Consul

¹²⁶² *Ibid.*

¹²⁶³ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, p. 13

¹²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19

¹²⁶⁵ Drea, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-4

there.¹²⁶⁶ As to Malaya, Colonel Tsuji Masanobu, now in command of 25th Army's intelligence-gathering for the upcoming invasion, was fortunate in being able to undertake aerial reconnaissance over British positions in northern of the colony¹²⁶⁷ in the days just prior to the onset of hostilities.¹²⁶⁸

The ultimately successful campaign to capture Malaya and Singapore was largely attributable to last minute, *ad hoc* intelligence-gathering. For example, although the IJA had detailed excellent maps covering much of Russia, operations officers involved in the attack on Malaya were forced to rely on commercially available maps and reports from Japanese merchants.¹²⁶⁹ No official contact had existed between the Malays and the Japanese before the conflict, but for discussions and an abortive attempt to assist the Young Malayan Association. The Japanese had not expected assistance from the Malays, whom they considered unmotivated and lacking initiative.¹²⁷⁰

The General Staff had initially been led to believe one of its officers, who had spent some time residing in Malaya, would be able to gain some assistance through his contacts with Malayan Chinese. This illusion dissipated soon after hostilities ensued. Malayan Chinese anti-Japanese sentiment had increased as the conflict in China had continued, and no serious attempt by the Japanese would be made to improve relations. Propaganda on behalf of the Nanjing Government proved ineffective, Fujiwara Iwaichi (see Chapters 7, 10 and 11) felt that Nanjing Government propaganda and reconciliation units should have accompanied the Japanese.¹²⁷¹

Despite the operational success of Japanese forces as they proceeded through Southeast Asia, Japanese intelligence remained lacking. Even within the arguably successful Malaya campaign of 1941 to 1942, the following deficiencies were identified:

¹²⁶⁶ TNA: CO 323/1693/12, Cypher telegram from the Governor of Jong Kong to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 15 June 1939

¹²⁶⁷ See Tsuji's own account of this reconnaissance in Tsuji, M., *Singapore: The Japanese Version* (London: Mayflower-Dell, 1960) pp. 50-62

¹²⁶⁸ Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 548

¹²⁶⁹ Barnhart, *op. cit.*, p. 453

¹²⁷⁰ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 50

¹²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

- i) The Japanese knew nothing of the British defence lines at Jitra
- ii) Originally 18th Division was to land at Mersing, yet following commencement of operations it was found that strong defences existed within the area, leading to an alteration of operational plans (18th Division would later land at Kota Bahru)
- iii) The Japanese thought a strongly fortified defensive line existed on the northern end of Singapore Island; which was not the case
- iv) The Japanese thought strong British defences existed in the Penang area, yet following the British evacuation without resistance (allowing more rapid progress in Japan's Sumatra operations) few defences were to be found
- v) At the time of Japan's attack on Singapore, staff officers had estimated British troops to number 50,000 on the island. There were however 100,000
- vi) Japanese ex-residents were essential as guides, ground forces not having been supplied adequate maps
- vii) The Malayan campaign had been anticipated to take months, no plans having been made for the invasion of Burma. Following the rapid success of the Malayan campaign however the Japanese nonetheless went ahead with the attack on Burma¹²⁷²

When questioned regarding the existence of a detailed plan for the Malayan invasion, Fujiwara Iwaichi discounted the assertion that Japan had long intended aggressive expansion by explaining Imperial HQ formulated an operational plan for all areas annually. Fujiwara personally believed that but for "Divine Providence", the Malayan campaign would not have been successful.¹²⁷³

¹²⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8

¹²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 8

Siam

In Southern Region areas outside Siam, businessmen could be less covert in their assistance to the Japanese military as the territory was under the latter's control. Notably, in Siam, before the Pacific War, information was provided only through chance meeting with staff of either Attaché's office or the Embassy.¹²⁷⁴ No direction was given to businessmen to collect information, nor regarding what information was required.¹²⁷⁵ During the conflict, however, businessmen would be directed in regard to collection of particular information. Members of the Embassy, IJA, IJN or *Kempei Tai* would inform these men as to their purpose, with information passed on to their respective superiors.¹²⁷⁶ General imperatives included: i) both Chinese and Siamese rumours, ii) signs of anti-Japanese activity and the general attitude of local Chinese, iii) the attitude of Siamese and Chinese businessmen and officials of the Japanese, and iv) sympathies of Siamese military officers.¹²⁷⁷

Japanese intelligence services were thus informed of what military arms the Siamese were receiving (through Japanese or others), and through business acquaintance with Siamese officers, Japanese were able to forward criticisms these officers had of the equipment they had received, as well as their political opinions.¹²⁷⁸ Irrespectively, the Japanese intelligence system remained unorganised. German residents of Thailand were required to report regularly, whereas the Japanese relied on infrequent meetings of social or commercial concern.¹²⁷⁹

Japanese policy in Siam centred on support for Field Marshal Phibul. Siam would prove a source of war materials, including rubber, tin and rice,

¹²⁷⁴ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6315, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 235, 5 June 1946, Item 2163, Interrogation of Utagawa Nobusugu, p. 36

¹²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37

¹²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33

¹²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

denied to Japan following the closure of US and UK sources. Siam would also, however, prove a useful source of intelligence.¹²⁸⁰

The Japanese Embassy in Bangkok paid a great deal of attention to Siamese politics, Japan having long before recognised Siam's importance as a future base of operations within Southeast Asia. As early as November 1935 the ever-increasing number of staff employed in the Japanese Legation at Bangkok had been noticed by the British, rightly ascertaining this could only be related to increased espionage.¹²⁸¹

Toward cementing Japan's position within Siam itself, the Japanese had sought to develop prominent Siamese politician's pro-Japanese sympathies.¹²⁸² Japan would additionally aid Siam in the delivery of war materiel, including arms, tanks and aircraft, and act as intermediary through the Siam-French Indo-China border dispute.¹²⁸³

Political negotiations for the most part in Siam proceeded without incident, and the Japanese foresaw no insurmountable difficulties arising on the arrival of the Japanese military. However, during negotiations for the entry of Japanese soldiers into Siam on 7 December 1941, Phibul vanished without these coming to a close, so an agreement had not been finalised when on 8 December the Japanese landed. This led to an outbreak of hostilities between Siamese and Japanese forces, and therefore one is unable to say whether Japanese measures undertaken in Siam were as successful as they might have hoped.¹²⁸⁴

The Military Attaché to Siam had been Colonel Tamura. Assisting were aides Lieutenant Colonel Yabara (Infantry), Lieutenant Colonel Tokunaga (Air) and Major Iino (Cavalry). Lieutenant Colonel Yabara, as senior aide, supervised the section's activities and was responsible for the collation of intelligence on Siam and Burma. Tashiro and Tanitoyo also

¹²⁸⁰ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 48

¹²⁸¹ Aldrich, R.J., *Intelligence and the War Against Japan: Britain, America and the Politics of Secret Service* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p. 39

¹²⁸² TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 48

¹²⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49

received orders from Yabara, who would later become staff officer in charge of operations of the IJA force charged with the invasion of Burma.¹²⁸⁵

The number of officers employed within the office of the military attaché in Bangkok increased from July 1941 onward. Signals intelligence officers were attached to the office, as well as Engineer officers to train the Siamese air force. Normal political and military duties within Siam were supplemented by the additional task of intelligence collection on Burma and Malaya. The Naval Attaché's staff increased similarly.¹²⁸⁶

Duties of the Military Attaché's office in Siam included the development of Japanese sympathy within leading figures of the Siamese Government, drawing them to Japan's cause, the instruction and direction of the Siamese armed forces, and assisting and cooperating with Chinese and Siamese businessmen in obtaining war materials for Japan.¹²⁸⁷ The Japanese system of intelligence in Siam was, however, unorganised, and would remain so throughout the conflict.

¹²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8

¹²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9

¹²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9

10 The *Tokumu Kikan* in Southeast Asia

The Fujiwara *Kikan* and the Indian National Army

Fujiwara Iwaichi, formerly a lecturer at the 8th Section, IGHQ, and the Nakano School in propaganda, stated during interrogation that the Japanese had only considered an attack on Malaya toward mid-1941, with no organised fifth column existing in Malaya and few agents in the employ of the Japanese in India before the conflict.¹²⁸⁸ Further, Fujiwara admitted the Japanese intelligence service had always been of a low standard, undeserving of Allied credit for Japanese victories throughout Malaya and Burma in the initial stages of the war. Poor British preparations and “the liberal support lent by “Divine Providence” to the Japanese military were more pertinent to Japanese success than Japanese military intelligence in Southeast Asia.¹²⁸⁹

According to Fujiwara, Japan had offered little, if any, assistance to the Indian Independence Movement (IIL) before the conflict, due specifically to the amiable relations between Britain and Japan that had existed since the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty in 1902, and even following the treaty’s abrogation in 1921.¹²⁹⁰ During the 1930s the Japanese were entirely preoccupied with both China and Manchuria, and so little thought was given to the Indian Independence Movement.¹²⁹¹

Alternatively, Fujiwara alluded to Rash Behari Bose’s retreat to Japan in 1909 where he found support in some Japanese sympathisers. Nevertheless, when Pratap and others claiming to be of the Indian Independence Movement arrived in Japan, no assistance was offered by the Government nor IJA, and they received little support from within the Japanese population. Following the Congress Party’s criticism of Japan’s policy in China, anti-Congress feeling rose in Japan, and both the *Kempei Tai* and Japanese police maintained close surveillance over Independence Movement figures, these being suspected of forwarding information to the British during

¹²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1

¹²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

visits to Shanghai. The Japanese therefore had only begun considering the India question in about June or July 1941, as war with Britain seemed unavoidable and preparations against the USSR were abandoned. Indeed, planning in regard to India was only developed approximately a year after plans for Burma had been finalised.¹²⁹²

The IIL was thought to have some presence and perhaps influence in Southern Siam, Shanghai and Hong Kong, and that despite its lack of contact with the Congress Party, might nevertheless provide useful assistance to Japanese forces. Though late, plans were developed by Colonel Tamura and Lieutenant Colonel Kadomatsu, head of the 8th Section in Tokyo, primarily focused on the development of propaganda organs. These organs were intended to increase anti-British and pro-Japanese sentiment in Malaya, and, further, to draw Indian soldiers within the British Army to the IIL's cause and so foment dissent within British forces. However, as Japan had no contacts within India nor Burma, these plans had to be set aside initially, and, to ensure secrecy, Japan decided not to enlist Indian residents of Japan to take part in the effort.¹²⁹³

The News and Propaganda Sub-Section of the 8th Section, IGHQ, had maintained close liaison with press and film entities.¹²⁹⁴ Despite occupying the same room, no communication existed between this and the Political Affairs sub-section due to the secrecy necessarily surrounding the work of the latter. Fujiwara stated under questioning that for this reason he was unable to shed further light on the workings of the Political Affairs sub-section, and, further, had little knowledge regarding the extent of Japanese knowledge of involvement with foreign political movements prior to the Pacific War. Lieutenant Colonel Ozeki, an expert on Indian affairs, was in the section for seven years. Colonels Takeda and Kadomatsu had also been knowledgeable in Indian matters, yet left the department in August 1943. Fujiwara in April 1941 had been directed to concentrate his attention on America in view of future transfer here. Deterioration in Japanese-American relations, however, stymied this move. Only in August 1941 did Fujiwara begin to research

¹²⁹² *Ibid.*

¹²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 50

¹²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5

Indian affairs, doing so in line with his future role, collecting several publications on the matter, but receiving no help from the Foreign Ministry.¹²⁹⁵

Fujiwara Iwaichi was only posted to Siam 18 September 1941 to assist the Military Attaché and to open communications with the Indian Independence movement. Fujiwara at the time purportedly asked Lieutenant General Okamoto, head of 2nd Department in Tokyo, and Colonel Usui of 8th Section, to select an officer more suitable, citing his lack of experience in such activities and his lack of knowledge of India.¹²⁹⁶ Further, Fujiwara lacked any ability in English, Hindustani, or any other language spoken in the Southern Area. Nonetheless, he was transferred, told that he would receive instruction from Colonel Tamura, who had experience in these matters.¹²⁹⁷ Tamura, following Fujiwara's arrival in Bangkok, found that Fujiwara had no training in the work that was required of him, and directed Fujiwara remain in Bangkok to acquaint himself with the situation in the "Southern Areas".¹²⁹⁸ As would occur later in October 1944, when Hayashi Hidezumi was tasked with the development of a plan to administer French Indo-China¹²⁹⁹ (see Chapter 9), key intelligence officers were throughout the conflict ordered to fulfil roles and undertake tasks they personally felt inadequately prepared for.

Fujiwara had only been recently promoted to Major, and felt the work to be of such importance and responsibility as to warrant a more senior officer with greater experience. In the end, Fujiwara thought he was chosen for the following reasons:

- i) Colonel Tamura's relationship with his subordinates Lieutenant Colonel Yabara and Major Iino lacked cordiality, and it was felt a staff officer should be sent who would be easier to handle.
- ii) The head of 8th Section maintained no confidence in his measures for support of the Indian Independence movement, and felt that

¹²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6

¹²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9

¹²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10

¹²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12

¹²⁹⁹ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 2

were a more senior officer appointed who subsequently failed, this would reflect on his own efficacy.

- iii) Fujiwara had experience in propaganda, and the Fujiwara *Kikan* was to be more a propaganda than intelligence organisation.
- iv) Usui had no confidence in any other officer available within other sections, and sought to choose from within 8th Section.¹³⁰⁰

Self-evidently, little of the above reasoning stands as a sound basis for an intelligence operation, let alone one of such magnitude, potential, and within considerable time constraints.

The Indian Independence League, headquartered in Bangkok, and with branches in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Southern Siam, had only contacted the Japanese military attaché in June 1941 in order to develop Indo-Japanese relations and to obtain assistance from the Japanese Government.¹³⁰¹

According to reports of the attaché, the IIL had considerable size and power, although this was disputed in reports from Colonel Ichida (at the time stationed in India), who advised political parties in India, particularly the Congress Party, held no favourable disposition toward the Japanese. Ichida had reported the Congress Party sought no aid from the Japanese, holding to its principle of non-violence, and strongly opposed Japanese armed intrusion into China. Little cooperation could therefore be expected from India in Ichida's opinion, and no liaison was established with the Congress Party.¹³⁰²

In Japan it was thought there was no Indian resident able to be used as leader of any independence movement, and, indeed, the Japanese held suspicions of any Indian residents who they felt may be British agents. As such, the Japanese were of necessity required to cooperate with the IIL in Bangkok for lack of credible option. For Russia and China the Japanese had numerous personnel knowledgeable in their affairs, both within and outside the military, yet in relation to India the Japanese had a distinct lack of qualified staff. Takaoka Daisuke, member of the Diet, Kimura Nikki, a

¹³⁰⁰ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p.

¹³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰² *Ibid.*

professor of the University of Ceylon, and perhaps one or two others, sought to shed light on Indian affairs through their publications, but Fujiwara felt these had been not particularly effective.¹³⁰³ Of those officers who had once been stationed in India during their early careers during the reign of Taishō (1912-1926), including Generals Sugiyama and Imamura, Lieutenant Generals Homma, Ando and Kuroda, among others, opportunities had not been taken, the question of future conflict between the British and the Japanese having at the time been null and void. Neither the former military attaché to India, Colonel Teshima, nor Colonel Ichida could provide advice to Fujiwara; Teshima having been posted to Brazil in the same capacity as Fujiwara in December 1941, Colonel Ichida having been interned.¹³⁰⁴

Fujiwara was introduced to the IIL by Tamura 12 October 1941.¹³⁰⁵ The League's principals were Amar Singh and Pritam Singh, although as Amar Singh was too elderly to be proactive, Pritam Singh in effect held power. Tamura felt collaboration between the League and the Japanese was the only way forward on Japan's "India question", and to this end Fujiwara and Pritam Singh were asked to liaise.¹³⁰⁶ Fujiwara and Singh met on several occasions, and through their initial discussions Fujiwara sought to form an opinion on Pritam Singh's character and personality. Subjects discussed included the present state of the Indian independence movements and the current state of affairs in India. Fujiwara came to the following conclusions: i) both Pritam and Amar Singh were ardent supporters of the independence movement and held no ulterior motive, ii) the IIL, despite its branch network, did not have such a powerful organisation as had been expected by the General Staff, nor did it have any connection with the Congress Party, iii) the IIL had no friendly relations with other Indian parties, iv) the IIL did not appear to maintain any organised branches in Burma or Malaya, and v) Pritam Singh held Subhas Chandra Bose in high regard.¹³⁰⁷

¹³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 10-11

¹³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11

¹³⁰⁵ Lebra, J., *The Indian National Army and Japan* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008) p. 4

¹³⁰⁶ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 12

¹³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

As the prospect of conflict between the US and Japan increased toward the end of 1941, Fujiwara, under direction of Tamura, drafted an agreement which would later receive both Amar Singh's and Tamura's approval. The principal tenets of the agreement were:

- i) The final objective was to be cooperation between "two equal and free nations", Japan and India, toward the establishment of peace in Greater East Asia
- ii) Japan pledged all available assistance to the IIL in its campaign to free India of British dominion, and offered assurance that Japan held no ambition, be it economic, political, religious or otherwise in India, guaranteeing India's independence
- iii) The IIL would pursue the following policy from the conflicts onset:
 - a) The IIL would accompany the IJA advance into Southern Siam and Malaya, where they would expand their presence, seek to develop anti-British sentiment and promote Indo-Japanese cooperation
 - b) The IIL would raise a volunteer army to fight for Indian Independence, staffed by Indian Army officers and manned by local Indian volunteer personnel (this had been suggested by Pritam Singh who felt armed incursion into India by Japanese forces alone would be misinterpreted and unwelcome)
- iv) The Japanese would demonstrate its support for Indian independence by adopting friendly relations with local Indians in areas of Japanese occupation and a conciliatory attitude toward Indian prisoners-of-war
- v) The IIL would, in the wake of operations, extend its organisation to all areas through Southeast Asia with Japanese support
- vi) The IIL was to undertake a propaganda campaign throughout occupied territory and India itself. The Japanese for their part would avail to the IIL all propaganda organs, including those in Tokyo (although broadcasts from Tokyo were not received clearly

at the time, Bose's broadcasts from Berlin were thought influential in India)

- vii) Details would be discussed by local HQ, minor difficulties to be dealt with as they arose¹³⁰⁸

Fujiwara noted that Sikh elements were predominant in the IIL at the time, and advised little progress might be expected unless the IIL could expand its sway to encompass all Indians, regardless of caste, religion or ethnicity, with which Pritam Singh agreed.¹³⁰⁹

Fujiwara only received information on 4 December 1941, stating conflict would commence in the following days.¹³¹⁰ Fujiwara was at this time appointed to the staff of Southern Area Army. Colonel Tamura was concurrently informed Indian affairs in Malaya and Siam would thereafter come under the responsibility of the Southern Army Commander-in-Chief. Southern Army placed Malayan concerns henceforth under direction of the Commander 25th Army.¹³¹¹

On 6 December, a signal was received stating the conflict would begin 9 December.¹³¹² Fujiwara would on 10 December meet the OC and Chief of Staff at 25th Army HQ, only at this late stage acquainting himself with the disposition of Japanese forces and the proposed plan of operations.¹³¹³ Furthermore, Fujiwara received orders for the formation of the Fujiwara *Kikan*, whose duties were to include: i) execution of the policy laid out in the Tamura-Pritam Singh agreement, with emphasis laid on support of the IIL, ii) to forward liaison officers with each column to ensure amiable relations with local Indians and secure favourable treatment of Indian prisoners-of-war following occupation, iii) to rescue and protect the Sultans, and to disseminate pro-Japanese propaganda among the Chinese and Malays where and when possible, iv) to report Japanese misbehaviour toward the local populace, and

¹³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14

¹³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14

¹³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹³¹² *Ibid.*

¹³¹³ *Ibid.*

v) to ensure secrecy in regard to IJA plans and movement whilst cooperating with the IIL¹³¹⁴

All operational units were directed to cooperate with the Fujiwara *Kikan* in all matters pursued by Army HQ, insofar as this did not impede operations.¹³¹⁵ Fujiwara *Kikan* HQ would be separate from Army HQ, but would come directly under the control of Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Suzuki. The name Fujiwara *Kikan* was utilised for simplicity and convenience.¹³¹⁶

Following the surrender of Captain Mohan Singh's battalion in December 1941, Singh was sent to Japanese Army HQ. For approximately one week, Captain Mohan Singh and Major Fujiwara discussed the Japanese Emperor's wish to emancipate subject peoples, Singh professing his desire to see an independent India.¹³¹⁷ Although Singh agreed in principle with the IIL, he upheld the need for the raising of a volunteer military force. To this end, Singh was tasked with the development of the idea of independence into the men of his previous battalion, and to ensure enthusiasm for the cause existed in the minds of all.¹³¹⁸ Importantly, Fujiwara appears here to have relied here solely on the broadest principles extolled by the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, there being no clear Japanese policy toward India or the IIL at this time; the Fujiwara *kikan* being the "only sign that IGHQ was cognisant of India."¹³¹⁹

Following conversations with Pritam Singh, Mohan Singh informed Fujiwara that the Indians disapproved of Japan's method of colonisation in Formosa and Korea, and their policy within China and Manchuria. Fujiwara, however, maintained that Japan held no imperialist plan in the Southern Regions, and the principles of the Tamura-Pritam Singh agreement would be upheld.¹³²⁰ Mohan Singh felt Subhas Chandra Bose would improve the chances of success for the movement if he could be persuaded to take

¹³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18

¹³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18

¹³¹⁹ Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, *op. cit.* p. 27

¹³²⁰ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 18

leadership. Pritam Singh, Captain Mohan Singh and two other officers met Lieutenant General Yamashita at 25th Army HQ on 17 December 1941, purportedly to demonstrate Yamashita's confidence in the movement and to assure them of Major Fujiwara's assistance.¹³²¹

Toward the end of December 1941, Mohan Singh informed Fujiwara of the following decisions: i) the Indians would establish an independence movement with the aid of the Japanese, ii) an Indian National Army (INA) would be formed, iii) the INA would presently maintain close connection with the IIL, iv) Mohan Singh should be responsible for Indian prisoners-of-war, v) the IJA should offer preferential treatment to Indian prisoners-of-war, vi) those who sought to serve under the INA should fall under command of Mohan Singh, and vii) the INA should be a recognised ally of the IJA.¹³²²

Following the IJA's advance, the IIL opened branches in Kuala Lumpur, Seremban, Malacca, Muar and Johore amongst other cities, both large and small, cooperating with influential Indians as they proceeded. The IIL's assistance to Indians in need brought an influx of volunteers as the IIL's influence and reputation spread throughout Malaya. Instances of illegal requisition from Indians and any other Indian concerns in regard to the IJA were reported to Fujiwara *Kikan* who sought to remedy these situations, and as such the standing of the Fujiwara *Kikan* also increased.¹³²³

Following Singapore's surrender by British forces on 15 February 1942, Fujiwara took responsibility for Indian prisoners-of-war the following day. Fujiwara formulated a speech to deliver to these men, and this was approved by the Chief of Staff, who further offered preferential treatment to these prisoners.¹³²⁴

Fujiwara's speech contained the following:

- i) One of Japan's war aims was the emancipation of the peoples of East Asia

¹³²¹ *Ibid.*

¹³²² *Ibid.*, p. 19

¹³²³ *Ibid.*, p. 20

¹³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21

- ii) Japan seeks to assist India in regaining its independence
- iii) The fall of Singapore serves as an excellent opportunity for the Indian Independence movement
- iv) The IJA respects and assists the INA and IIL and their activities, and also recognises their joint efforts in alleviating the concerns of Indian Army deserters and Indian residents of Japanese-occupied territories
- v) The IJA will provide friendly treatment to Indian prisoners-of-war
- vi) Surrendered Indian soldiers may volunteer to join the INA and will receive IJA assistance
- vii) Captain Mohan Singh will be responsible for all Indian prisoners-of-war of the IJA
- viii) The IJA would seek to provide supplies, but asked for indulgence due to the rapid advance through Malaya¹³²⁵

Fujiwara took command of approximately 45,000 Indian officers and men on 17 February 1942.¹³²⁶ Following the fall of Singapore, the INA and Fujiwara *Kikan* worked together to accommodate Indian prisoners throughout Malaya and the city, withdrawing Japanese guards and establishing autonomous control. Indians were allowed to roam free under Mohan Singh's direction insofar as they did not interfere with IJA activities. During this time, Mohan Singh consorted with other Indian officers. Branches of the IIL were established and mass meetings held as in all other places over Malaya. Following negotiations with the IJA, freedom of speech and association were granted, and raising of the Congress Flag was allowed.¹³²⁷ Singh's leadership was not universally welcomed by Indian prisoners of war, however. Many soldiers would be coerced into joining the INA, and many Indian officers that enlisted would do so with reservations, in regard to Mohan Singh's leadership ability, as well as to Japanese intentions.¹³²⁸

¹³²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22

¹³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22

¹³²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³²⁸ Getz, M.J., *Subhas Chandra Bose: A Biography* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2002) pp. 82-83

Tōjō only made Japan's first public announcement regarding its policy toward India in February 1942, with the IIL and INA only subsequently recognised.¹³²⁹ On 1 March 1942, 25th Army was informed by Southern Area Army that a meeting of Indian representatives was being arranged by the Staff Department in Tokyo in order to discuss Indian independence. Ten representatives from throughout Malaya and Siam were sought, and these were to be accompanied by Colonel Iwakuro Hideo (see Chapters 7 and 10) and Fujiwara. Fujiwara at this time was informed Iwakuro would replace him as head of the Fujiwara *Kikan*, and preparations for the reorganisation of the *Kikan* were begun.¹³³⁰ Just as the Fujiwara *Kikan* had found some success, it had been disbanded and replaced. As late as 1942, a lack of consistency in leadership, and further, failure to retain expertise and experience in key intelligence areas and operations, continued within Japanese intelligence.

In Tokyo, Fujiwara reported to the chief of the General Staff, the head of 2nd Department and the head of 8th Section. His report contained the following:

- i) The Indians would not allow the Independence Movement to be used as puppets, and would not allow their use in the furtherance of Japan's imperialist ambition as this would receive no support from within India.
- ii) The Indian Independence Movement should be based on popular support and could not be expected to succeed otherwise. As such, close cooperation between the INA and IIL was required.
- iii) All elements within the Independence Movement sought complete independence following a democratic constitution along the lines of that in Britain. Axis aspirations were held in low regard and the Indians would resent any coercion or interference. Japanese support of the IIL had acknowledged this, and any attempt to force Japanese principles or methods should be avoided; any condescension, perceived or otherwise, would be keenly resented.

¹³²⁹ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 50

¹³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22

- iv) Japan's oppressive policy in Manchuria, Formosa, China and Korea was held in low regard in Indian opinion, and a review was required in regard to the present situation. Furthermore, if Japanese respect for liberty and equality was not shown through its actions in Southeast Asia through respecting Burmese and Siamese independence, success could not be expected.
- v) The support of parties within India, particularly that of the Congress Party, should be sought, and to this end the INA and IIL should seek to emulate as far as possible that of the Congress Party.
- vi) Indian ex-patriots, although sympathising with the Independence Movement, sought greater political power within their nation of residence, and as such Japan should seek to accommodate them.
- vii) In supporting the Independence Movement Japanese policy should focus on the creation of a unified state that discouraged differentiation based on caste or religion. Nevertheless the Movement's path should be allowed to evolve of its own accord.
- viii) Indian residents in the Southern Regions held Subhas Chandra Bose, then in Berlin, in high regard.¹³³¹

Fujiwara thus felt Japan should clearly state its attitude toward India and take action demonstrating its support for the Indian Independence Movement. Agreements should be upheld, and Japan should encourage the Movement in all sincerity and without any ulterior motivation. The successor Iwakuro *Kikan* should be deemed a liaison organ.¹³³²

The main success of the Fujiwara *Kikan* had been the establishment of the INA.¹³³³ Fujiwara thought the reasons for the success of Fujiwara *Kikan*'s propaganda activities included i) the rapid advance of the Japanese, which had impressed the local populace, ii) nationalist movements had already been in existence throughout Southeast Asia prior to the Japanese' arrival, and needed only the encouragement provided by the Japanese' incursion to turn actively

¹³³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24

¹³³² *Ibid.*, p. 24

¹³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 41

anti-British or anti-Dutch, iii) the Fujiwara *Kikan* had empathised with and acted upon Indian concerns, be they of local residents or of captured personnel, and had sought to prevent Japanese misconduct in relation to the local population, even seeking disciplinary measures when required, iv) personnel of the *Kikan* were loyal to Fujiwara and carried out their work dutifully, operating with an avoidance of coercion and demonstrating sympathy, and v) the Fujiwara *Kikan* encouraged local initiative toward the establishment of their freedom, avoiding unnecessary interference in these activities.¹³³⁴

Greater success had not been achieved, however, as Japan's IGHQ saw the INA as primarily a propaganda organisation, useful in the maintenance of law and order among the Indian population and controlling prisoners-of-war.¹³³⁵ The IJA, in particular the Military Administration established, and the *Kempei Tai*, had [despite Fujiwara's exhortations] adopted an oppressive policy toward local movements irrespective of their character, be they religious, economic or political in nature. Communists were able to utilise this to their advantage, and many moderate nationalists were forced to collaborate with more extreme elements. Had a policy of persuasion been adopted rather this may have been different.¹³³⁶ Furthermore, the INA operated somewhat at cross-purposes to that of the IIL.¹³³⁷ Finally, despite the Fujiwara *Kikan* having developed good relationships with the local populace and having gained the trust of Indian soldiery, on disbandment no successor organ immediately replaced it. Iwakuro *Kikan* therefore had to attempt to regain this amiability on its formation. Had a gradual transition taken place, and the name of the *Kikan* retained, much that Fujiwara *Kikan* had accomplished would not have gone to waste. The Military Administration had opposed the work of Fujiwara *Kikan*, and this had hastened the *Kikan's* demise.¹³³⁸

¹³³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³³⁵ Sareen, T.R., *Japan and the Indian National Army* (Delhi: Agam Prakashan, 1986) p. 78

¹³³⁶ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*

¹³³⁷ Fujiwara, I., *F. Kikan: Japanese Army Intelligence Operations in Southeast Asia During World War II* (Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1983) pp. 244-245

¹³³⁸ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p.

Fujiwara thought the primary difficulties that had faced Fujiwara *Kikan* were:

- i) Conflict had ensued without time for necessary planning and preparations
- ii) Including Fujiwara, officers and officials knew little of the Southern Regions, and spoke little to no English, Malay or Hindustani
- iii) But for a few high-positioned officers connected with the type of work with which Fujiwara *Kikan* was tasked, most Japanese failed to understand their activities' importance and failed to assist. Plans to win the confidence of local populations therefore failed.
- iv) The Japanese Government did not put into practice its plans nor keep its word to native populations of Southeast Asia. Furthermore, political organisations that had assisted the Japanese were not recognised.
- v) The *Kikan*, dependent on the cooperation of local populations and surrendered Indians to support its aims, had to protect their interests to ensure this assistance. Doing so often placed them at odds with Japanese.
- vi) Fujiwara was disallowed from taking part in operational discussions and was not informed of operational decisions when made. Fujiwara therefore found himself at a disadvantage compared with other staff officers.
- vii) Too few officers, including only a single NCO, were assigned to the *Kikan*.
- viii) This was the first occasion that Japanese officers were required to liaise with these ethnicities and they were not accustomed to developing relationships with foreign communities.¹³³⁹

¹³³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 32

Intelligence activities of the Fujiwara *Kikan*

Due to the Fujiwara *Kikan*'s role as a primarily liaison agency, it maintained no real connection with counterintelligence services. As the Chief of Staff maintained responsibility for discipline, Fujiwara stated he as commander had less overall power over *kikan* personnel than a unit commander would normally have.¹³⁴⁰ Fujiwara *Kikan* officers lacked skills in either English or Hindustani, and as such were required to act through deed rather than word. This, in effect, meant *kikan* officers would be required to back locals even in disputes with Japanese officers, even if they were disinclined to do so, in order to demonstrate that Indians were held in equal standing to the Japanese.¹³⁴¹ Fujiwara *Kikan* also employed graduates of the Nakano School.¹³⁴² As mentioned previously, however, the Nakano School had initially been focused on Russia, going some way to explain why these men were not more specialised for the work in which they found themselves. Japan's rapid and surprise southward move had wrong-footed the Imperial Japan's primary (and modern) intelligence establishment.¹³⁴³ During interrogation, Fujiwara emphasised that the Fujiwara *Kikan*'s role was as a propaganda and liaison unit, not a sabotage unit. In time, however, he confessed that Fujiwara *Kikan* personnel were indeed allowed to take part in sabotage activities, consistent with another source, a graduate of the Nakano School well-acquainted with the *kikan*'s composition and duties¹³⁴⁴, but stated infiltration of Allied lines by *kikan* personnel had occurred on only two occasions, once with the bandit Yukata Tani, and on the second occasion to assist members of the YMA in the rescue of Ibrahim, their president, in Singapore.¹³⁴⁵ Personnel had been ordered to cut communication wires and perform minor acts of sabotage en route, as long as this did not jeopardise the

¹³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17

¹³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴² Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 559

¹³⁴³ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 38

¹³⁴⁴ Maruyama, S., *The Nakano School: Memoirs of a Member of the Tokumu Kikan* (Tokyo: Heiwa Shobo Co., 1948) pp. 25-26

¹³⁴⁵ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 38

main mission. Fujiwara did not believe they had been effective in this enterprise.¹³⁴⁶ Despite initially denying Fujiwara *Kikan* had in any way been directly connected with operational intelligence, Fujiwara did concede the *Kikan* had been instrumental in collecting intelligence before the campaign's commencement, this being carried out through observation and questioning of former residents.¹³⁴⁷ Fujiwara knew of no agents employed by the Fujiwara *Kikan*, however. It was his supposition that knowledge of Allied movements may have been derived through the questioning of local people, and that *kikan* personnel, at the request of local military commanders, may have aided in this.¹³⁴⁸ Fujiwara did, however, state that this kind of information collection had not been a Fujiwara *Kikan*-organised activity.¹³⁴⁹

In early January 1942 the CO, Southern Area Army, ordered part of the Fujiwara *Kikan* be transferred from 25th Army to 15th Army to assist the INA and IIL in 15th Army-controlled Burma. Fujiwara sent Captain Tsuchimochi, Sergeant Major Takimura and two civilian employees, informing them they were to operate under 15th Army command. Fujiwara further explained that it was understood this task was daunting, as their group was small, the area to cover large, and little preparation had been undertaken. They were told not to be disheartened, as only limited success could initially be expected, but rather to press ahead in their assistance.¹³⁵⁰

Pritam Singh and Mohan Singh were informed of the move and were pleased that the IIL was to be extended into Burma. The IIL sent some workers under Gopal Singh, while the INA sent thirty to forty men under an officer with Tsuchimochi. Fujiwara did not know the mission results, but believed it to have been a failure. Fujiwara did however state he had not heard any criticism of Tsuchimochi's conduct, and that he believed the mission's failure was to have been expected due to the lack of appreciation by higher Command.¹³⁵¹

Following Singapore's surrender on 15 February 1942, Lieutenant

¹³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36

¹³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37

General Suzuki, 25th Army Chief of Staff, had ordered Fujiwara to take command of all Indian prisoners-of-war and to collect information, under supervision of Lieutenant Colonel Sugita, 25th Army Intelligence Staff Officer, from British forces. Fujiwara was thereafter responsible for intelligence in relation to the British intelligence service and anti-Japanese political elements. During the discussions held on 16 February 1942 at Fort Canning, the British representatives were required to produce all available intelligence documents; to which the British responded these had been destroyed. Consequently, information on the British Army intelligence organisation was again made 25th Army's responsibility.¹³⁵²

¹³⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 40

Toward the aim of obtaining information on anti-Japanese political elements, Fujiwara *Kikan* personnel were ordered to Singapore Police HQ to speak with the Chief of the Special Branch and collect all that was available. This officer was taken to Fujiwara *Kikan* HQ at 31 Malcolm Road, and a list of political criminals handed over, including lists of suspected Chinese communists, but containing little to no information in regard to Indian activities. Fujiwara showed these lists to Lieutenant Colonel Sugita, and went on to say his duties related to Indian prisoners-of-war etc. were too onerous to allow his seeking further information on Sugita's behalf. Sugita had these documents submitted to the *Kempei Tai*, making them responsible. The *Kempei Tai* would prove in future to be most uncooperative with the Fujiwara *Kikan*.¹³⁵³

Fujiwara thus admitted the Fujiwara *Kikan* had been the only Japanese "fifth column" organisation, although it was never as widespread or effective as thought by the British.¹³⁵⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, now deputy Intelligence Staff Officer 25th Army, had been responsible for counterespionage during the Malaya campaign according to Fujiwara. No security section existed as this fell within the duties of the *Kempei Tai* (see Chapter 11).¹³⁵⁵

Despite minimal intelligence activity undertaken by Fujiwara and his agency, and despite its successes in what can only be described as political liaison (if not political intelligence), on the *kikan*'s disbandment, Fujiwara found himself later transferred in March 1943 to the Staff of 15th Army, first as Staff Officer in charge of Intelligence, and later as Staff Officer in charge of Operations. The Fujiwara *Kikan* exemplifies the change in *tokumu kikan* to predominantly organs of political control, as had occurred in Manchuria and China. Furthermore, a prominent Japanese "intelligence" officer once more found himself as an operational commander, despite minimal experience in this area; this change in duties deemed a promotion, yet further diluting the already limited pool of experienced officers in the field.

¹³⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Iwakuro Kikan and Hikari Kikan

Major General Hideo Iwakuro was one of the founding figures of the Nakano School, and a dedicated intelligence officer.¹³⁵⁶ During a conference in Bangkok convened on 9 May 1942, Rash Behari Bose was elected chairman of the IIL and concurrently commander-in-chief of the INA. Resolutions of the conference centred on the Tamura-Pritam Singh agreement, and the newly formed Iwakuro *Kikan*, in line with the *prima facie* independence thought to have been given the Indian independence movement, sent a single officer to observe only. Resolutions adopted at the conference were only later presented to Iwakuro and accepted; approval being sought from Tokyo. Tokyo would not acquiesce, and in fact was furious that the IIL, essentially an unknown element, would be given such autonomy by the Iwakuro *Kikan*. In Fujiwara's opinion, the Iwakuro *Kikan*, only recently established, and with a new staff, was unfamiliar with the Indian Independence Movement, and had failed to gain its trust, while the IIL had forged ahead with its own plans in an indiscrete manner, failing to cooperate with the Japanese in developing a joint understanding. More fundamental, however, was the disjointed relationship between policy pursued by the Iwakuro *Kikan* on the ground and that sought in Tokyo, where Fujiwara felt "they could not bury the old practice of espionage, nor could they rid themselves of the imperialistic administrative policy of the western powers which had permeated them since the Meiji period." The Iwakuro *Kikan* could do little more than placate Rash Behari Bose and the IIL in the meantime.¹³⁵⁷

In relation to the newly-established INA, the IJA, through *Iwakuro Kikan*, would now disregard Mohan Singh's supposed authority over Indian prisoners-of-war, and as such Singh would be unable to realise his intention of utilising these men to supplement the INA.¹³⁵⁸ Even a request to declare to the world the existence and intention of the INA on Mahatma Gandhi's birthday would be opposed, and Singh's command would thus be undermined. Thereon in, Singh would be distrustful of Japanese intentions, and Bose's

¹³⁵⁶ Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 558

¹³⁵⁷ Fujiwara, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-241

¹³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 241

intervention on behalf of the Japanese would create a fissure between the two predominant Indian organisations. Where once there had been cooperation between the INA and Fujiwara *Kikan*, no such relationship would develop with the Iwakuro *Kikan*. Singh would come to the conclusion that “the Japanese have no other intention but utilising the INA as an espionage agency.”¹³⁵⁹

The Indian National Army was dissolved in 1942 by its chief, Mohan Singh, only to be later reestablished under Subhas Chandra Bose in 1943.¹³⁶⁰ Later Singh would be suspected of being a leader of an “anti-Japanese group” following the breakdown in relations between the INA and IIL, and would be imprisoned by the Japanese.¹³⁶¹

The Iwakuro *Kikan* would be as short-lived as the Fujiwara *Kikan*, and in April 1943 the *kikan* changed its name once more to *Hikari Kikan*. Shortly afterward, *Kikan* HQ moved to Bangkok, where it remained until Japan’s surrender.¹³⁶² *Hikari Kikan* would be led by Lieutenant General Isoda Saburō.¹³⁶³ Initial plans for the *Hikari Kikan* had begun around March 1942 in Bangkok, following a conference in Tokyo between the Indian Movements and Japanese authorities.¹³⁶⁴ The *kikan* would be nominally under INA command, with Japanese officers operating in observatory and advisory roles. The Bangkok Conference had developed the principles upon which the Indian revolutionary movement was to operate, with the formation of the INA approved unofficially. The INA was only formally established following Subhas Chandra Bose’s arrival in Singapore in 1943, and in order to provide

¹³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 241-242

¹³⁶⁰ Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 559

¹³⁶¹ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6312, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 232, 17 May 1946, Item 2137, Interrogation of Ono Ichire, p. 20

¹³⁶² Interrogation of Ogata Shinichi, Inspector-General of Police, Singapore, Item 1947, S.E.A.T.I.C. Intelligence Bulletin No. 211, 6 October 1945, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 2

¹³⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶⁴ Interrogation of Lieutenant-General Isoda Saburō, Item 1955, S.E.A.T.I.C. Intelligence Bulletin No. 211, 6 October 1945, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 11

aid from a military standpoint the *Hikari Kikan* would operate in the role of liaison, propaganda, provision of transportation, assistance in infiltration tactics and collection of information of use to the INA.¹³⁶⁵

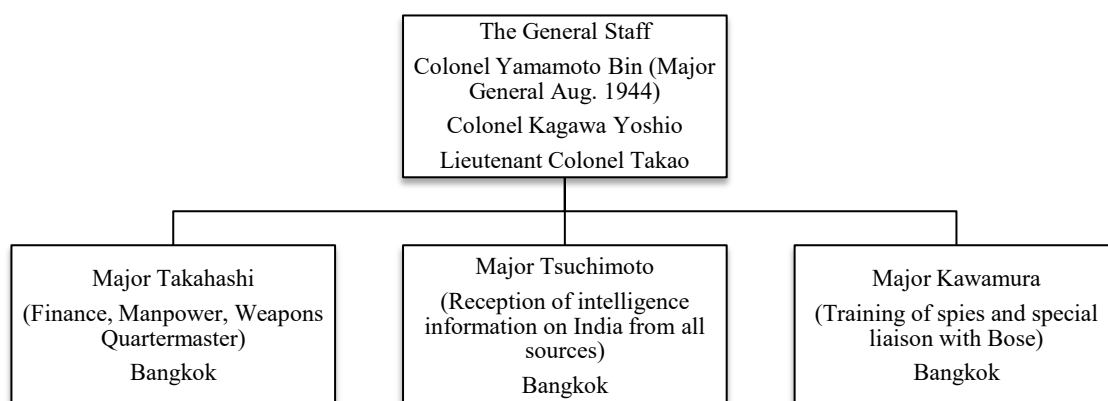


Figure 12. Indian National Army organisation under Lieutenant General Isoda¹³⁶⁶

Branches of the *Hikari Kikan* existed in Singapore, Penang and Ipoh. These were for liaison between the *Ārzī Hukūmat-e-Āzād Hind* (Provisional Government of Free India) and INA Rear HQ, along with the IJA. Furthermore, these branches acted as facilitators of supply, received information on Indian sentiment in Malaya, and passed on orders from the IJA to the INA.¹³⁶⁷

Discord existed between the *Hikari Kikan* and the INA as Bose sought command of INA formations, even when these were attached to, and subsequently under command of, IJA formations. Bose was considered both argumentative and unhelpful, and an anti-Bose movement existed within the INA itself, although notably not anti-INA.¹³⁶⁸

Hikari Kikan would follow the IJA's advance into Burma, and in 1943, the organisation consisted of three *Han* (departments). *Hikari Kikan*'s third department, the "Information Group", was tasked with research of the political and economic situation in India. The Delhi Radio Broadcast provided information for this purpose, and propaganda from the IIL was

¹³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12

¹³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.12

¹³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 12-13

¹³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.13

analysed to detect any response from within India. All personnel of the Information Group were civilians.¹³⁶⁹

Reports on these broadcasts were forwarded to the Operational Commander, *Hikari Kikan* branch every ten days; later these would be forwarded to the Operational Commander HQ following the establishment of Rangoon HQ. Furthermore, political and economic reports were submitted by the Information Group to either the General Staff HQ or the War Department in Japan. Copies of these reports were forwarded to Southern Area Army and *Mōri* (Forest, code name of the Burma Area Army), ten copies of each report being disseminated on an exchange basis to units under *Mōri*.¹³⁷⁰

The Information Group had no chief, and essentially acted independently of the military until the reorganisation of *Hikari Kikan* preceding the Imphal operation. Following this reorganisation, the Information Group would operate under the Military Intelligence Section (*Gunji Jōhō Han*) under Captain Oura as Operational Commander, the latter coming from China or Manchuria.¹³⁷¹

Following reorganisation in January 1944, before Japan's Imphal Operations, the Burma Branch of *Hikari Kikan* consisted of i) *Shomu Han* (General Affairs); ii) *Gunji Han* (Military Affairs); iii) *Jōhō Han* (Intelligence); and iv) *Seimu Han* (Civil Affairs).¹³⁷² The *Hikari Kikan* thus sought to emulate the *Renraku Bu* (Liaison Department) in China, becoming an instrument of political control as much as an intelligence organ. In September 1943, Major General Arisue Seizo, head of Intelligence in Tokyo, ordered Komatsubara Yukuo of the 2nd Department to go to Burma Area Army HQ to raise three guerrilla regiments.¹³⁷³ Komatsubara left Tokyo with Major Kanawara in October 1943, arriving in Rangoon about mid-November. Ten officers and approximately twenty NCOs had already been mustered to act as Komatsubara's future staff, with others later drawn from across China,

¹³⁶⁹ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Ono Ichire, *op. cit.*, p. 16

¹³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17

¹³⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15

¹³⁷³ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6312, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 232, 17 May 1946, Item 2138, Interrogation of Colonel Komatsubara Yukuo, p. 23

Manchuria and the Southern Regions. In total, there would be sixty officers and one hundred and fifty NCOs.¹³⁷⁴

During staff recruitment Komatsubara and those already assembled were attached to *Hikari Kikan* during the Imphal Operation as liaison officers, this lasting from February to August 1944. Komatsubara felt this to have been a waste of time for his staff and him, and thought this to have been “the greatest blunder” of the Chief of Staff, Burma Area Army HQ. Komatsubara felt if he had been allowed to proceed with his raising of three guerrilla regiments (only one would be formed in time) to take part in operations, rather than acting as liaison with the INA and “their so-called Guerilla Regiments”, outcomes would have differed markedly. Komatsubara during this attachment held little interest in *Hikari Kikan* affairs. No liaison existed between him and any INA officer during this time, nor was he ever required to instruct INA guerrilla regiments.¹³⁷⁵

The *Tokumu Kōsa* (Special Work) section was established when the *Hikari Kikan* was reorganised in January/February 1944. A similar organisation had existed before, within both the *Hikari Kikan* and INA. Its formation was to aid the INA in despatching agents into India and furnishing them with equipment, including wireless transfer sets.¹³⁷⁶ Nevertheless, even at this late stage, no direct link existed between field intelligence organisations and Tokyo, for example, between *Hikari Kikan* and 2nd Department GHQ. Communications had to be directed through Area Army HQ.¹³⁷⁷ *Hikari Kikan* lacked an extensive signals network. Wireless transmitters were only used by *kikan* officers when they were with INA units attached to IJA Divisions and lesser formations. All signals were sent through Southern Area Army.¹³⁷⁸ INA efforts against the British in Burma would ultimately be ineffectual.¹³⁷⁹

Isoda Saburō of *Hikari Kikan* and Chief of Staff Naka held conference with Bose in July 1944. At this meeting, the Japanese informed Bose that the

¹³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24

¹³⁷⁶ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Ono Ichire, *op. cit.*, p. 15

¹³⁷⁷ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Colonel Komatsubara Yukuo, *op. cit.*, p. 23

¹³⁷⁸ Interrogation of Lieutenant-General Isoda Saburō, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p.12

¹³⁷⁹ Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 559

Imphal operation had been ordered to cease, and further explained the situation in relation to their gradual withdrawal. The news came as a surprise to Bose.¹³⁸⁰ On leaving Rangoon, the latter left some Indians behind with supplies (both in funding and weaponry) to collect information on British troops. Although establishing a spy ring was considered, Isoda would not authorise the plan as he believed it would "...take Japan at least twenty years to reach the status of even a third class power and that period is too long for leaving agents behind".¹³⁸¹

In October 1943, Prime Minister Tōjō published a statement of the Japanese Government, the substance of which included the following: i) the Indian Independence League would serve as subordinate to the Provisional Government of Free India (meaning in effect that Behari Bose would find himself subordinate to Chandra Bose, Chief of the Provisional Government. Behari Bose would serve as advisor to the Provisional Government within the local setting), and ii) the Indian National Army was to be subordinate to the Provisional Government of Free India (as such, the INA would cease to come under the command of the IIL).¹³⁸²

This, in essence, meant it was no longer necessary for the IIL to be under direct command of the Japanese Government nor Army, and it would now serve to supply new appointees to the Provisional Indian Government and the INA.¹³⁸³ In October 1944, however, the Japanese were concerned the British were planning a landing in Malaya. The cooperation of an INA Division was sought to repel such an attack, and without consultation with Bose, this division was ordered to come under their command. Bose, furious, claimed that as an ally, the INA would not be subordinate to the Japanese, and should rather be given equal status. Japanese command of INA personnel in Burma had been for operational purposes solely, and this agreement was not relevant to the situation in Malaya.¹³⁸⁴ Bose referred to the *Hikari Kikan* as only a liaison agency and stated he would take the matter up with Tokyo.¹³⁸⁵

¹³⁸⁰ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Ono Ichire, *op. cit.*, p. 18

¹³⁸¹ Interrogation of Lieutenant-General Isoda Saburō, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p.13

¹³⁸² TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16

¹³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 16

¹³⁸⁴ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Ono Ichire, *op. cit.*, p. 18

¹³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Following a Japanese Cabinet shake-up, Bose paid a courtesy call to Koiso Kuniaki, raising the matter also with either the Foreign Ministry or War Department.¹³⁸⁶ This would lead to nothing. A lack of both time and planning, and a subsequent lack of understanding (if not another manifestation of “dual-diplomacy”), had undermined efforts to subvert the Indian Independence Movement’s cause to suit Japan’s own interests, and little would result from the final manifestations of Japanese Intelligence’ *tokumu kikan* in relation to India.

Minami *Kikan* and the Burmese Independence Army

Fujiwara Iwaichi, following the disbandment of his own Fujiwara *Kikan*, would hold both intelligence and operational commands within the 15th Army (Burma). Fujiwara noted that intelligence was not highly regarded within the formation, and Lieutenant General Mutaguchi felt he could attain victory “by use of the sword and Japanese spirit”.¹³⁸⁷ In this he would be unsuccessful, and Fujiwara thought the failure of the Imphal campaign was due to his neglect of intelligence.¹³⁸⁸ Iwakuro Hideo, following the disbandment of the Iwakuro *Kikan*, was later employed as Chief of Staff 28th Army, also in Burma. Iwakuro would employ a number of intelligence and reconnaissance units, including approximately one hundred and sixty men under Mitsuo Hachisuka, who, disguised as Burmese, were able to infiltrate British lines and send back detailed reports on British troop strength, topography, etc.¹³⁸⁹ Nevertheless, this would remain too little, too late.

Kokubu Shōzō had reportedly retired from the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) as a Lieutenant around 1920 due to insubordination. Practicing as a dentist in Burma for twenty to twenty-five years, Kokubu maintained contacts with Burmese nationalists (who would later be recruited by the Japanese for training on Hainan Island in 1941), and maintained his existing relationship

¹³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸⁷ Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 558

¹³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

with important figures within the IJN.¹³⁹⁰ From 1939 covert operations in Burma had been undertaken by all three Japanese services, the Foreign Ministry consulate in Rangoon, the IJA and the IJN. All sought to collect information on Burma and to hinder Allied supply routes across the Burma Road. Even at that point, however, each organisation's efforts were unknown to the others, and communication and collaboration between them remained non-existent.¹³⁹¹ The IJN were the first to recognise the importance of the Burmese nationalist movement through Kokubu Shōzō, who had formed a relationship with the *Thakin Ba Sein*. In 1940 this group had shown Kokubu a draft of their "Secret Plan for Burma's Independence" and asked for Japanese support. Around the same time, the Foreign Ministry in Rangoon was making contacts with other Burmese leaders, including Ba Maw, who had been Prime Minister of Burma before the conflict.¹³⁹²

Colonel Suzuki Keiji of the IJA would only in spring 1939 receive orders from IGHQ to go to Burma to i) collect information on the Burmese nationalist movement; and ii) investigate the Burma Road. Prior to departure, Suzuki would call on the *Mantetsu's* Research Section and the China Affairs Board (*Koain*) to collect information. Suzuki would seek employment with Shōriki Matsutarō, President of the Yomiuri (one of Japan's largest newspapers), to provide a cover, and Shōriki would accede. Thereafter, Suzuki would take an alias, Minami Masuyo, from which the later Minami *Kikan* would take its name.¹³⁹³ Between July 1940 and June 1941 the IJA sought to propagate confusion and reduce the rate of supplies along the Burma Road through the fomentation of unrest and support of Burmese independence movements, in particular the Thakin Party. Some Burmese would later retreat from Rangoon on Japanese ships and across the Siam-Burma border, led by Aung San.¹³⁹⁴

¹³⁹⁰ Memorandum Re. Kokubu, Retired Navy Officer, 7 August 1945, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*

¹³⁹¹ Naw, A., *Aung San and the Struggle for Burmese Independence* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2001) p. 59

¹³⁹² *Ibid.*

¹³⁹³ Yoon, W.Z., *Japan's Scheme for the Liberation of Burma: The Role of the Minami Kikan and the "Thirty Comrades"* (Athens: Ohio University, Centre for International Studies, 1973) pp. 17-19

¹³⁹⁴ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 47

After establishing contacts with key Burmese nationalist leaders, Suzuki had made a daring assurance to help Burma achieve independence. Suzuki was not authorised to make such a pledge, but felt it necessary to achieve the primary aim of Imperial Japan, the closure of the Burma Road.¹³⁹⁵ From July 1941 onward the general Japanese plan was to encourage the activities of the Burmese independence movements, so as to restrict and perhaps close the passage of supplies to the Chungking Government, simultaneously preventing strategic use of Burma to both China and Britain. Even at the outset of hostilities, the Japanese had no intention of operations within Burma, only to send a detachment to assist these Burmese independence elements, yet as Malayan operations were so rapidly accomplished, surplus troops available were directed at a substantial incursion into Burma.¹³⁹⁶

The importance of the Burmese independence movement had been realised by spring 1941, and the Minami *Kikan* under Colonel Suzuki was established to assist in its activities.¹³⁹⁷ The original founding members of the Minami *Kikan* included six IJA officers, three IJN officers, and seven civilians.¹³⁹⁸ IJA members included Colonel Suzuki Keiji, who would lead the *kikan*, Captain Kawashima Takenobu, Captain Kakubo Naomi, Lieutenant Noda Takeshi, Lieutenant Takahashi Hachiro and Lieutenant Yamamoto Masayoshi.¹³⁹⁹ Notably, Captain Kawashima had been involved in the 1936 “incident” in Tokyo (see Chapter 7).¹⁴⁰⁰ Before the commencement of hostilities the Minami *Kikan* came under direct command of Imperial HQ.¹⁴⁰¹

Kokubu Shōzō would be a part of the naval contingent of the Minami *Kikan*, which would now seek to organise a Burma Independence Army to

¹³⁹⁵ Yoon, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21

¹³⁹⁶ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48

¹³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4

¹³⁹⁸ Yoon, *op. cit.*, p. 23

¹³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰⁰ “Suggested Questions on Japanese Intelligence Systems” Undated, Folder Okino, Mateo Capt. I.J.N., Box No. 4, Individuals (A to Z) and Capt. Matao Okino (I.J.N.), Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 4

¹⁴⁰¹ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 47

assist the Japanese. *Minami Kikan* consisted of approximately thirty men, six of these being Japanese Naval Officers. *Minami Kikan* transferred to Thailand in March 1941, maintaining a commercial guise.¹⁴⁰² Kokubu would later argue with Colonel Suzuki, *Minami Kikan*'s commanding officer, with the result being a complete withdrawal from the *Kikan* of the Naval contingent. Kokubu purportedly returned to Japan, taking up a position as president of the *Nichimen Kankyūkai* (perhaps Japan-Burma Study Association), with the rank of Captain in 1941.¹⁴⁰³ Japan's first concerted and cooperative intelligence effort between all three services, in terms of *tokumu kikan*, would be short-lived, due predominantly to the old frailty of personal rivalries.

Minami Kikan would only begin training about thirty members of the Thakin Party on Hainan Island in May 1941 in guerrilla tactics. This cadre would later come to be known as the "Thirty Comrades", amongst whom was Shu Muang, also known as Ne Win, future Prime Minister of Burma from 1958 to 1960 and 1962 to 1974; and Head of State from 1962 to 1981. The main force of *Minami Kikan* transferred to Siam about August 1941, and in December 1941 Thakin Party members followed to organise the Burma Independence Army.¹⁴⁰⁴ Ba Maw, not of the Thakin Party, and less radical in his thinking, would not be one of the Thirty Comrades.¹⁴⁰⁵

The Japanese 15th Army, charged with the invasion of Burma, had begun with an attack on the city of Moulmein in December 1941. From the outset, however, the BIA was to play no part in the hostilities, and following Moulmein's fall, *Minami Kikan*'s agents were forbidden from recruiting or engaging in political activities in the city. Once more, intelligence activities had been secondary to operational priorities. As military government was established following the fall of Rangoon, in direct contravention of the

¹⁴⁰² Memorandum Re. Kokubu, Retired Navy Officer, 7 August 1945, Folder Okino, Matao Capt. I.J.N., Box No. 4, Individuals (A to Z) and Capt. Matao Okino (I.J.N.), Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

¹⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰⁴ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p. 48

¹⁴⁰⁵ See Maw, B., *Breakthrough in Burma: Memoirs of a Revolution, 1939-1946* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1968)

promises made to the ‘comrades’, this no doubt in some part led to subsequent Burmese elements turning against the Japanese as the British started to regain lost ground.¹⁴⁰⁶

The BIA had begun recruitment immediately following the IJA’s entry into Burma. By May 1942, approximately 50,000 volunteers had joined their ranks. According to 15th Army reports, although the BIA would aid the Japanese through the development of cooperation between Burmese and Japanese, no military success would be achieved. Many in the BIA were found to be of low character and caused trouble within the local populace.¹⁴⁰⁷ Furthermore, the IJA, rather than granting independence following the campaign’s completion rather established a military administration. Japan’s later policy of support for Ba Maw, previously having taken no part in the movement, would cause dissent within the membership of the Thakin Party, and general distrust of the Japanese amongst the Burmese population rose.¹⁴⁰⁸

Initially, Japanese support (in the form of *Minami Kikan*) had been offered to the Burmese ostensibly for indigenous overthrow of British colonial rule. Aung San, while in Japan to discuss cooperation with the Japanese, had developed his “Plan for Burma’s Independence”. Colonel Suzuki and Captain Kawashima had, however, later revised this.¹⁴⁰⁹ Importantly, the commander of the 15th Army had not known of the *Minami Kikan*’s existence before hostilities started, only being informed later in December. Tensions had soon risen between the two, with Suzuki adamant his promise of Burmese independence was binding, while the 15th Army held to the contrary.¹⁴¹⁰

From December 1941 to June 1942, activities of the BIA had essentially followed Suzuki’s *Biruma Kōsaku Keikaku* (Plan for the Burma Operation), meant to facilitate IJA forces in Burma. In Suzuki’s planning, however, a provisional government was to be established, this toward the aim of creating an independent Burma. Within the plan, *Minami Kikan* itself was

¹⁴⁰⁶ Mercado, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-59

¹⁴⁰⁷ TNA: WO 203/6314, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Fujiwara Iwaichi, *op. cit.*, p.

48

¹⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰⁹ Yoon, *op. cit.*, p. 24

¹⁴¹⁰ Lebra, J., *Japanese-Trained Armies in Southeast Asia Independence and Volunteer Forces in World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977) p. 67

to administer military government in occupied areas. This plan was submitted to 15th Army Command, whose Chief of Staff, in turn, forwarded it to Southern Area Army Command for approval (himself not authorised to make political decisions, especially so as they pertained to the establishment of an independent government). After some deliberation Southern Area Army would refuse, having since January 1942 planned to install a military administration. SAA Command would send orders to install what would amount to another puppet government, if perhaps only as a temporary measure to delay Burmese independence. In doing so, Southern Area Army appears to have contradicted Tokyo, which had agreed in principle with the idea of granting Burmese independence, Tōjō himself stating on 21 January 1942: “...if the Burmese offer to cooperate with Japan in establishing the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, Japan would gladly grant independence to the Burmese”.¹⁴¹¹ Support found in Tokyo however was largely guided at this time by military expediency, and the same can be said of SAA’s apparent contradiction.

General Akira Mutō, former *Kantōgun* head of intelligence, and now head of the Military Affairs Division of the War Ministry in Tokyo (Chapter 8), would visit Rangoon following its fall. Colonel Suzuki met with Mutō to determine Tokyo’s views on Burmese independence. Mutō informed Suzuki that in line with IGHQ policy, and specifically the “Outline of Management of Occupied Territories After the War”, a Japanese military administration was to be put in place. Suzuki argued that were the Burmese disallowed the independence they sought, they would surely revolt against the Japanese, but his protest would fall on deaf ears.¹⁴¹² Further high-handed actions of the Japanese against the Burmese population would lead to dissension in the ranks of the Burmese soldiery, and Suzuki would oppose a later IJA proposal to disband the force, perhaps even genuinely sympathising with the idea that the BIA was to have formed the nucleus of an independent Burma.¹⁴¹³

¹⁴¹¹ Yoon, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-42

¹⁴¹² Izumiya, T., *The Minami Organ* (Rangoon: Translation and Publication Dept., Higher Education Dept., 1985) pp. 178-179

¹⁴¹³ TNA: WO 203/6315, Interrogation of Utagawa Nobusugu, *op. cit.*, p. 38

As the BIA had become increasingly difficult to deal with, Fujiwara Iwaichi, now Staff Officer of the 15th Army, was sent to speak with Suzuki. Suzuki, sympathising with the Burmese nationalist cause, warned of a BIA revolt.¹⁴¹⁴ Fujiwara, understanding the danger, felt the BIA required reorganisation, but also felt the Minami *Kikan* had outlived its usefulness.¹⁴¹⁵ The IJA sought, essentially at the last minute, someone to lead a collaborationist government. Both Thakin Mya, leader of the Thakin Party, and Aung San were overlooked. In the end it was decided Ba Maw would be best suited, this with Suzuki's approval.¹⁴¹⁶ The IJA had thus found someone suitable for their plans, yet in apparent opposition to the work of the Minami *Kikan* at the time. Ba Maw would however in time be accepted by the majority of Burmese independence leaders, and Burma would finally be granted [nominal] independence, if belatedly, 1 August 1943. Nonetheless, by this time Burmese support of Japan had begun to wane.¹⁴¹⁷

The Southern Area Army's disbandment of the Minami *Kikan* around June or July 1942 would ultimately serve as a precursor of Japan's long withdrawal through Southeast Asia, and later the reorganised Burma Defence Army (BDA) would aid in Japan's defeat in 1945.¹⁴¹⁸ Former Minami *Kikan* staff, and in particular those graduates of the Nakano School, now attached to the Military Administration, were charged with counterintelligence duties in Burma from the beginning of 1943. These men remained few in number, and efforts could only be concentrated around Rangoon and the Delta region.¹⁴¹⁹

Both Fujiwara's "F" *Kikan*, and Suzuki's Minami *Kikan*, established under the aegis of 8th Section, 2nd Department of the General Staff in Tokyo, had largely been staffed by graduates of the Nakano School. In particular, the influence of Iwakuro had developed an understanding of the need for activities outside the simple gathering of intelligence (*jōhō shūshū*), including sabotage and guerilla warfare (*bōryaku*) and the spread of destabilisation and

¹⁴¹⁴ Lebra, *Japanese-Trained Armies in Southeast Asia Independence and Volunteer Forces in World War II*, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66

¹⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 66

¹⁴¹⁶ Izumiya, *op cit.*, p. 193

¹⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-199

¹⁴¹⁸ Maruyama, S., *op. cit.*, p. 22

¹⁴¹⁹ Izumiya, *op cit.*, pp. 200-201

fostering of independence movements. Given time, these later *kikan* may have come to equal the UK's own Special Operations Executive.¹⁴²⁰ The Japanese had indeed organised fifth column activities in Southeast Asia, if belatedly. The "effect" of these, however, demonstrates vividly and accurately how the division between intelligence operations and policy negatively impacted upon Imperial Japan's chances of success overall in Southeast Asia. Under Fujiwara and Suzuki, nationalist sentiment had been successfully tapped, aided by their "unorthodox views" (namely a shared desire of these two officers to operate in "an equal Pan-Asian partnership with the various nationalist movements")¹⁴²¹, but as these independence movements came to the realisation that they would always be subordinate to Japanese forces, their promise as a credible fifth column element in time amounted to nothing, due in no small part to desertion, and, in some more extreme cases, a return to British and Indian Army service.

Unconventional tactics and greater flexibility had eventually come to the fore in the IJA with the founding of its Nakano School in 1938, but did so too late to provide an overarching influence on the war, despite localised tactical successes.¹⁴²² Graduates were by the standards of all other Imperial Japanese defence force elements surprisingly adaptable, yet by the end of 1945 only 2,500 Japanese had passed through the curriculum of the Nakano School (including its Futamata Branch, responsible for commando training). Due to minimal tenure in the conflict, Nakano's senior graduates had reached only the rank of Major.¹⁴²³ Granted even ten or fifteen more years in tenure, with these officers gaining operational commands, Imperial Japanese forces may have developed the requisite intelligence capability (and inherent flexibility) required to overcome the adversities they had found themselves surrounded by.

¹⁴²⁰ Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 558-559

¹⁴²¹ Aldrich, *op. cit.*, p. 42

¹⁴²² Mercado, *op. cit.*, p. 267

¹⁴²³ *Ibid.*, p. 267

11 Counterintelligence

The *Kempei Tai* in the Southern Regions

Field units of *Kempei Tai* continued to be attached to each IJA command in the Southern Regions, for example, in Rangoon, Burma. Units were always attached to IJA formations; that is, no permanent *gendarme* section existed within Japanese Divisions. Attachment occurred when an occupied territory required “pacification”.¹⁴²⁴

As elsewhere, the *Kempei Tai* remained Japan’s primary counterintelligence organ. In Singapore (indicative of *Kempei* units across the board) the Police Section (*Keimu Ka*), responsible for relations between Japanese military and the local population outside areas of military control, was divided into two sub-sections, the *Keimu* (Police Duties) and the *Tokko* (Special Branch), also known as the *Tokumu Han*. *Kempei Tai* were responsible for defensive intelligence, involving the maintenance of law and order, preservation of integrity of personnel, military policing, and criminal apprehension.¹⁴²⁵ In these duties both informers and agents were employed. Funding for these operations was always lacking, and agents so employed often took advantage of their employment with the *Kempei Tai* to coerce the local population and enrich themselves.¹⁴²⁶

A majority of *Tokumu Han* staff wore their hair long and dressed in civilian attire, and were involved in general intelligence duties, detection of enemy agents, countering propaganda and investigation of communist activities. The *Tokumu Han* employed informers and collaborators as agents, with funding supplied by Army HQ to *Kempei Tai* HQ.¹⁴²⁷ According to Warrant Officer Imanaka Masae, the duties of the *Tokuhan* came within two

¹⁴²⁴ “Japanese Military Police”, 25 July 1944, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 1

¹⁴²⁵ Interrogation based on SCIU Questionnaire, Item 1958, S.E.A.T.I.C. Intelligence Bulletin No. 212, 15 October 1945, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 6

¹⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7

¹⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

main areas, namely i) maintenance of public order (*chian iji*), and ii) counterespionage (*bōchō*). The *Tokuhan* were further charged with the “thought control” of military personnel and civilians in military employ (*gunzoku*). Imanaka tellingly thought no Allied agent had ever been discovered on Singapore Island, although some may have been on the Malay Peninsula.¹⁴²⁸

Sergeant Major Hyodo Toshiyuki stated, however, that the Singapore *Kempei Tai Tokuhan* was predominantly anti-communist in its operations.¹⁴²⁹ Informants utilised by the section, small in number (one officer used only two), were not paid at any fixed rate, and often received goods, such as tobacco or rice, in lieu of cash for their services. Although tasked with identifying enemy agents, the *Tokuhan* appears to have had very limited success, one officer stating he had at one time spent several months investigating the veracity of one agent's reports, namely that Siamese merchants were exchanging information of intelligence value with others in Singapore, only to find the accusation baseless.¹⁴³⁰

Notably in Singapore (but indicative of elsewhere too), the *Tokumu Han* was comprised entirely of *Kempei Tai* personnel and drew from no other intelligence organisation.¹⁴³¹ Furthermore, the section held no connection with the military's *tokumu kikan*. Finally, none of the senior officers of the Singapore *Kempei Tai* (Lieutenant Colonel Nakamura, Major Kamizumi or Major Suzuki) could name a single Malay, Chinese, Indian or other person of another nationality employed by the *Kempei Tai*, stating that the handling of these agents, including initial employment, tasking, and subsequent reward,

¹⁴²⁸ Interrogation of WO Imanaka Masae, Item 1957, S.E.A.T.I.C. Intelligence Bulletin No. 212, 15 October 1945, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 3

¹⁴²⁹ Interrogation of Sgt. Maj. Hyodo Toshiyuki, Item 1957, S.E.A.T.I.C. Intelligence Bulletin No. 212, 15 October 1945, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 1

¹⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴³¹ Interrogation based on SCIU Questionnaire, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 6

was handled by subordinates.¹⁴³² 2nd Lieutenant Yamaguchi Oguri became OC of the Singapore *Kempei Tai Tokuhan* in March 1945, at which time staff numbered approximately twenty-eight, and were from all ranks.¹⁴³³

Yamaguchi stated under interrogation that the detection of enemy agents was part of the duty of all *Kempei Tai* personnel, and the *Tokuhan* was not more concerned with this than any other section. Yamaguchi stated that in actual fact no special section existed solely for the interception of enemy agents.¹⁴³⁴

***Kempei Tai* training**

The *Kempei Tai* Training School was located at Kakoi-cho, Nakano-ku, Tokyo. Organisationally the school came under command of a Lieutenant General, and was divided into five sections. The first section was composed of students entering the service for the first time. Under the command of a Colonel, the students were divided into two companies, each with over two hundred pupils, these, in turn, being divided into six *kutai* (sections), each under a lieutenant. Initially, only regular army personnel who had enlisted for longer than one year and were of the rank of Superior Private or above could enrol at the school, and in June 1941 four hundred and fifty students were enrolled in the school's elementary course.¹⁴³⁵

The school offered training courses of different lengths. For officers, courses lasted 10-12 months. For non-commissioned officer candidates, courses lasted one year, while for NCOs it was six months. For the rank and file, courses lasted just three months.¹⁴³⁶ Other sections of the school, corresponding to the above courses, were: i) Section "A" (*Ko*); enrolment of approximately fifteen for generals and colonels, courses lasting up to one

¹⁴³² *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7

¹⁴³³ Interrogation of 2nd Lieutenant Yamaguchi Oguri, Item 1959, S.E.A.T.I.C. Intelligence Bulletin No. 212, 15 October 1945, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, pp. 8-10

¹⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10

¹⁴³⁵ "Report from Captured Personnel and Material Branch Military Intelligence Service, US War Department", undated, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6

¹⁴³⁶ Interrogation of Major Kamizumi, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 19

year, with graduates to enter *Kempei* HQ or other high position; ii) Section “B” (*Otsu*); for captains to lieutenant colonels (usually majors soon to be promoted); enrolment of about fifty to be Gendarme Unit COs; iii) Section “C” (*Hei*); for warrant officers and lieutenants, enrolment approximately one hundred and fifty; and iv) Section “D” (*Tei*); for sergeants and sergeant majors, with an enrolment of about five hundred. Courses taught at the school included organic law, law enforcement, political science, criminal law, service regulations, Chinese language and counterespionage, with further instruction in investigation, arrest techniques, self-defence, finger-printing and blood-testing, among other activities. Application to the *Kempei Tai* could take as long as six months. From the onset of the war, the volunteer aspect of service with the *Kempei Tai* was changed, with regimental commanders now selecting men for *Kempei Tai* service, although preference might be granted to those eager to serve.¹⁴³⁷

A *Kempei Tai* Training School was later established in Kuala Lumpur and was organised into three companies. Each company was divided into four sections, each led by a subaltern. Notably, the school curriculum included normal education at a higher elementary school standard (meant to hone powers of common sense) along with training in administrative and judicial concerns. Special training for those destined for the *Tokuhan* was, significantly, absent; the skills required in this department were to be learnt from experience. Furthermore, it appears that as the war progressed, intakes were given less instruction. For example, the school intake of July 1943 graduated in June 1944, whereas the intake of August 1944 graduated in February 1945.¹⁴³⁸ The possibility that the school became more efficient over time seems unlikely.

The *Kempei Tai* received little to no training in offensive intelligence operations, with most of their training comprised of lessons in law. A

¹⁴³⁷ “Report from Captured Personnel and Material Branch Military Intelligence Service, US War Department”, undated, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 7

¹⁴³⁸ Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Nakamura Kazuo, Item 1959, S.E.A.T.I.C. Intelligence Bulletin No. 212, 15 October 1945, Folder Military Police (Kempei Tai), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 10

captured (and subsequently translated) Japanese “Field Military Police Manual” paints in only the broadest strokes what *Kempei Tai* duties involved, as they pertained to intelligence, noting these officers should “[win] over good secret agents”, “get hold of [the enemies’] singular and common secrets”, and “take the initiative against the enemy and thwart their plans”. Including a detailed list of activities the enemy may engage in, there remains no instruction how to address or circumvent these concerns.¹⁴³⁹

Were a *gendarme* detachment required to operate in an area without direct attachment to a local army unit, the *Kempei Tai* were not subordinate to the IJA, and their reports were forwarded to *Kempei Tai* HQ who subsequently forwarded the information to the IJA HQ under which they operated.¹⁴⁴⁰ Information related to operations went to *Dai Ikka* (1st Department), while other intelligence information went to *Dai Nikka* (2nd Department), the formal Intelligence branch. A *Kempei Tai* Liaison Section existed at Army HQ, the OC not actually of the local *gendarmerie* HQ, but rather stationed to aid in *Kempei Tai* administration. Information reported by the *Kempei Tai* was considered reliable, although recognised as low level. This information, it is thought, would rarely go higher than the Army HQ, under which the *Kempei Tai* HQ operated.¹⁴⁴¹

Military Police were neither trained in sabotage nor used in sabotage operations. Likewise, the *gendarmerie* was not involved in emplacing agents against the enemy, this being seen as the work of specially created *tokumu kikan*. Lieutenant Colonel Nakamura, Major Kamizumi and Major Suzuki were all aware of the Nakano School, which specialised in all forms of clandestine operations, but were adamant that the school was not connected in any way with the *Kempei Tai*.¹⁴⁴² Major Suzuki stated under interrogation that a working agreement would have been constructive between the various *kikan* and *Kempei* units, but this did not exist.¹⁴⁴³ Often, were a longhaired

¹⁴³⁹ “Field military police training manual (tr. 1/23/45)”, Wartime Translations of Seized Japanese Documents, microfilm 10-EP-307, Cecil H. Green Library, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305, p. 8

¹⁴⁴⁰ Interrogation based on SCIU Questionnaire, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 7

¹⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8

¹⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 8

“civilian” (seen as non-conformist, and hence suspect) to come under suspicion and be subsequently arrested, it would later come to light the prisoner was actually of a *kikan*, the work of the *Kempei Tai* drawing ire rather than commendation.¹⁴⁴⁴

But for an occasional liaison between the Japanese *gendarmerie* and *tokumu kikan*, there remained no formal connection. *Kempei Tai* were involved in suppressing propaganda and circumventing fifth columnists.¹⁴⁴⁵ Although *Kempei Tai* staff may have in actual fact been occasionally attached to *tokumu kikan*, this would be in a *gendarme* capacity, and they would not have formed any formal part of the *kikan*. In effect, the *Kempei Tai* were effectively the opposite of *tokumu kikan* personnel, engaged in defensive intelligence activities as opposed to the positive intelligence activities of the various *tokumu kikan*.¹⁴⁴⁶ Major Kamizumi, of the Singapore *Kempei Tai*, stated that while in the *Kempei* school in Nakano (different to the Nakano School involved in espionage, Nakano being simply the location of both establishments) he was taught offensive counterespionage, including, for example, the detection and infiltration of enemy agents. Methods taught included observation of dialect, clothing, bearing and demeanour, eye reaction, and noticing suspicious luggage. Preventative counterespionage was also taught, this focussing on the prevention of loose talk, document security, and registration of personnel and their movement in and out of military establishments.¹⁴⁴⁷ This is notably one of very few recollections available of any such training within the *Kempei Tai*. *Kempei Tai* officers were taught that the use of double agents was preferable in obtaining information, and were not responsible for establishing post-occupation networks, receiving no training in this area.¹⁴⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴⁷ Interrogation of Major Kamizumi, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 20

¹⁴⁴⁸ Interrogation based on SCIU Questionnaire, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 8

Weakness of the *Kempei Tai*

Lieutenant Colonel Nakamura, OC Singapore *Kempei Tai* (as at March 1945), thought the weakness of the Singapore *Kempei Tai* (again indicative of the *Kempei Tai*-at-large) lay in the fact that the large number of its personnel that had been drawn from other branches, were of limited education, and that these had undertaken a “rush” course of only ten months duration before undertaking their duties.¹⁴⁴⁹ As such, requisite knowledge and experience in *Kempei Tai* duties was lacking throughout the service. Furthermore, a reorganisation of the service in Singapore in March 1945 had had little time to mature.¹⁴⁵⁰

Nakamura himself received orders from Southern Army HQ (likely through Major Takamura, who was then in charge of the *Kempei Tai* Section of Army HQ), and submitted his reports to the same.¹⁴⁵¹ Nakamura possessed no special powers in case of emergencies, and special orders came from Army HQ. During his tenure as OC Singapore *Kempei Tai*, Nakamura received no special instruction regarding the detection of enemy agents, nor in regard to establishing a counterespionage network.¹⁴⁵²

But for the detection of enemy agents undertaken by his office, counterespionage was, in Nakamura’s opinion, the work of Southern Army HQ’s Intelligence Section (*Jōhō Bu*).¹⁴⁵³ By way of means in the detection and apprehension of enemy agents, insofar as Nakamura was aware, section chiefs of the *Kempei Tai* used only Chinese informants, and, tellingly, during his time as OC Nakamura was unaware of the uncovering of a single Allied agent, nor was he aware of any increased activity towards the end of the conflict.¹⁴⁵⁴ Were there such activity, Nakamura admitted his section would have been ineffective, and he himself would have been reliant on orders from Southern Army HQ before taking any especial action.¹⁴⁵⁵

¹⁴⁴⁹ Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Nakamura Kazuo, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 13

¹⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Captain Hinomoto Noryo, OC of the *Naikinhan* (Records Section), was responsible for editing reports provided by the various *Kempei Tai* detachments and submitting these to the OC, Police Affairs Department, who, in turn, submitted these to the OC, Singapore *Kempei Tai*. From here reports went to Southern Army HQ, and the *Kempei Tai* were not involved in any further dissemination of information. Hinomoto stated under interrogation that the quality of reports he received was lacking, this attributable to a low level of education and lack of adequate training. Hinomoto knew of no dedicated counterespionage *Kempei Tai* unit, and had not read of any enemy agent apprehension.¹⁴⁵⁶

Within the *Kempei Tai*, direction from superiors (*Kempei* or otherwise) remained lacking, as did communication and cooperation with other intelligence organs. Unaided by minimal formal training, continued reliance on experience as teacher, and the broad range of duties undertaken by these officers, the *Kempei Tai* as a counterintelligence and counterespionage unit would remain ineffectual to the end of the Pacific conflict.

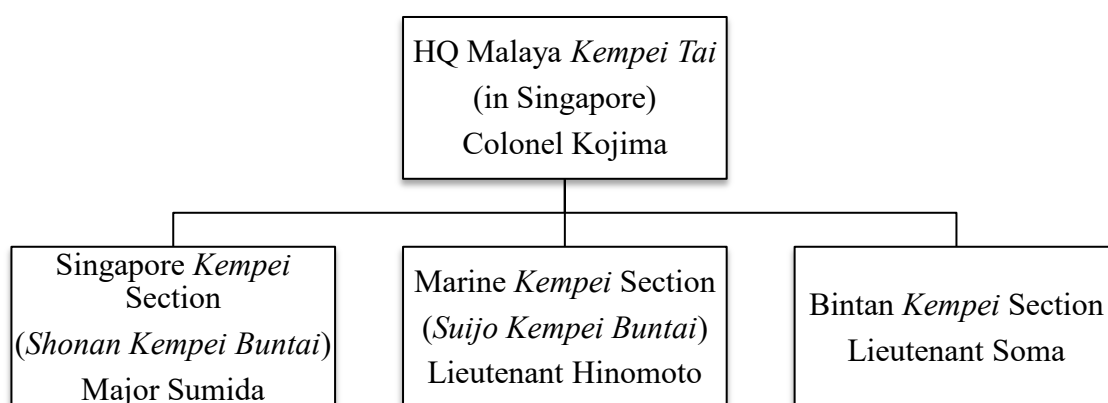


Figure 13. *Kempei Tai* organisation in Malaya as at January 1944¹⁴⁵⁷

¹⁴⁵⁶ Interrogation of Captain Hinomoto Noryo, Item 1962, S.E.A.T.I.C. Intelligence Bulletin No. 212, 15 October 1945, Folder Military Police (*Kempei Tai*), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 16

¹⁴⁵⁷ Interrogation of Tiu Loh Sein, Item 1946, S.E.A.T.I.C. Intelligence Bulletin No. 211, 6 October 1945, Folder Military Police (*Kempei Tai*), Box No. 9, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Kwantung Army, Military Police, Military Government, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD, p. 1

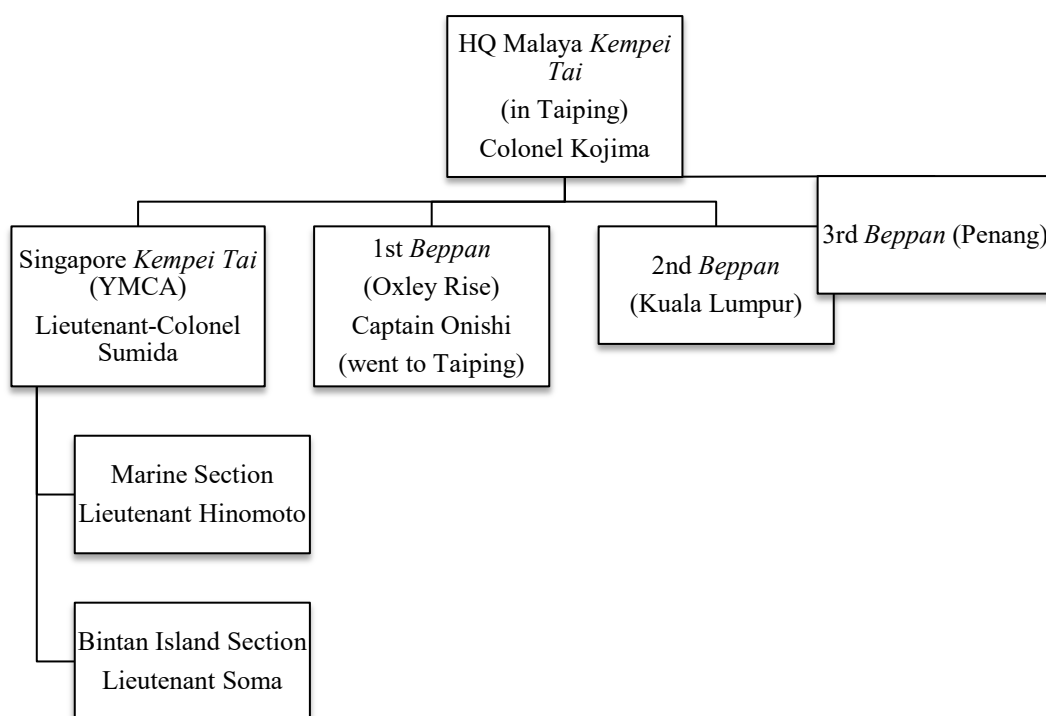


Figure 14. *Kempei Tai* organisation in Malaya from February 1944¹⁴⁵⁸

The Singapore Section became an organisation independent of Taiping HQ in March 1945, thereafter operating under the command of the *Kempei* Section (*Kempei Han*) of Southern Army HQ. Furthermore, the Johore *Buntai* (Section) came under the command of the Singapore *Kempei Tai* from June/July 1945.¹⁴⁵⁹

¹⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵⁹ Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Nakamura Kazuo, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 12

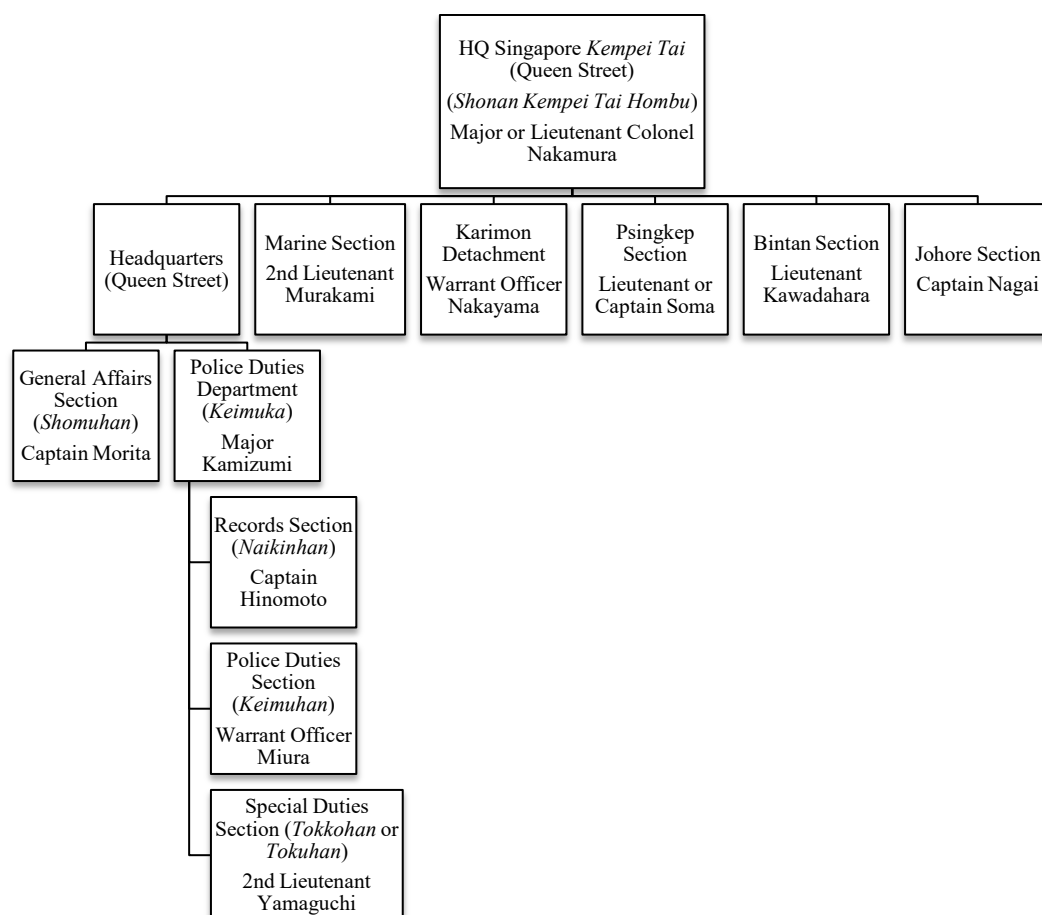


Figure 15. Organisation of Singapore *Kempei Tai* from March 1945¹⁴⁶¹¹⁴⁶²

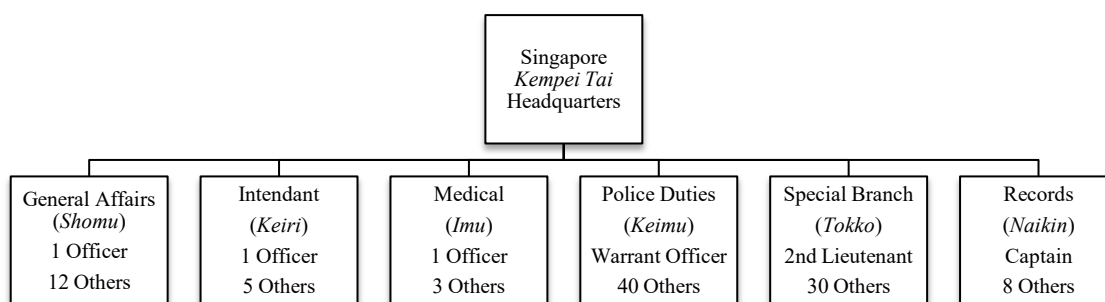


Figure 16. Organisation of *Kempei Tai* HQ duties¹⁴⁶³

¹⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11

¹⁴⁶² Interrogation of Tiu Loh Sein, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 1

¹⁴⁶³ Interrogation of Major Kamizumi, RG 38, NACP, *op. cit.*, p. 14

Chōsa Han counterintelligence

Ishida Shoichi, former Military Attaché to the US, received orders from the War Ministry to proceed to Singapore following the city's capture.¹⁴⁶⁴ At the time of receipt of the order, Ishida's future role and task was not disclosed, only being made clear on his arrival in Singapore, when the *Nampōsōgun* ordered the creation of a counterespionage organ (*Chōsa Han*).¹⁴⁶⁵ Only as late as 1942 would Japan seek to establish a dedicated counterintelligence and counterespionage system.

Ishida had minimal experience of *bōchō* (counterintelligence or counterespionage) operations previously.¹⁴⁶⁶ He had formerly been employed at the War Ministry in Tokyo, filing *bōchō* reports, but by the time of their receipt, these reports had already been perused by the authorities and were merely to be referenced. These reports came predominantly from *Kempei Tai* and Army HQs, although none were sent from Area Armies. These reports contained details of *bōchō* operations in the various sectors, containing *inter alia* maps of harbours and railways, and it was from here Ishida developed his knowledge of *bōchō*. Ishida stated he had never received instruction from any IJA school to this end.¹⁴⁶⁷

On Ishida's arrival in Singapore, the usual intelligence teams were attached to various units, but no *Chōsa Han* organisation existed.¹⁴⁶⁸ Two *bōchō* units did exist, however: the Yamakami Unit under Lieutenant Yamakami, consisting of five interpreter/translators and NCOs (in the IJA *tsuyaku* [interpreter/translator] was a rank, but holders were always *gunzoku*), and the Harbour *Bōchō* Unit under Azukizaki (thought to be a Lieutenant), consisting of four men with the same roles. The Yamakami Unit operated within the city confines, whereas the Azukizaki Unit operated only around the harbour.¹⁴⁶⁹

¹⁴⁶⁴ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6312, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 232, 17 May 1946, Item 2140, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Ishida Shoichi, p. 25

¹⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26

¹⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Despite Ishida's arrival and purpose, these two units continued in their work with no connection to Ishida's *Chōsa Han*. Ishida knew Yamakami socially, yet no formal liaison was ever formed in relation to their work.¹⁴⁷⁰ When questioned regarding the apparent duplication, Ishida stated he did understand this himself, but alluded Singapore's administration could have been better than it actually was in practice. Both the Yamakami and Azukizaki Units operated under direct command of the Singapore Staff Department, yet despite plans for their incorporation into Ishida's *Chōsa Han*, this never proceeded. For the same reason, Ishida's knowledge of these two units was lacking.¹⁴⁷¹

Ishida stated that, although the Yamakami and Azukizaki Units essentially duplicated some of the work of *Chōsa Han*, the latter concentrated primarily on censorship of mail and telephone monitoring, while the former dealt with the collection of information through, for example, agents and personal investigation and enquiry. The *Chōsa Han* also performed these duties, but these were of a secondary nature. The Yamakami and Azukizaki Units were not involved in any manner with *Chōsa Han*'s primary duty.¹⁴⁷²

Ishida, when questioned as to why it was felt necessary to establish a *Chōsa Han* in Singapore, stated he did not know, having solely received orders from the Chief of Staff and acted upon them. On arrival in Singapore, Ishida had no personnel. In order to form his staff, Ishida spoke with a staff officer of the 2nd Department of the *Nampōsōgun* Staff. Ishida requested a number of men and their category (for example, translators) and this officer sent orders to various departments to locate and transfer these "by order of the Chief of Staff".¹⁴⁷³ In December 1943 the Translation Section of the *Nampōsōgun* sent several *gunzoku tsuyaku* to the *Chōsa Han*. Their duties consisted of:

¹⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*

- i) Translation of documents from English and Malay, and in particular those reports of *Chōsa Han* agents. These Malay and Chinese agents were collecting information in regard to anti-Japanese activities. Ishida knew of no names.
- ii) Monitoring of telephone communications and censorship of mail.¹⁴⁷⁴

Chōsa Han was responsible for the collection and collation of intelligence from the following sources:

- i) Personal contacts among prominent figures within local communities
- ii) Current literature, including press
- ii) Mail censorship (in relation to Singapore only)¹⁴⁷⁵

The *Chōsa Han* was meant to cover all aspects of *bōchō*, both “positive” and “negative”. “Negative” counterintelligence dealt with security and suppression of careless talk, whereas “positive” duties dealt with the detection and apprehension of agents.¹⁴⁷⁶ In regard to censorship, this was openly performed, with letters being cut open. No secret censorship was ever performed. The *Chōsa Han* would send a request to the Inspectorate of Military Administration (*Gunsei Kambu*), responsible for censorship, informing them of which letters they wished to look at. These would be drawn from the Post Office and forwarded to the *Chōsa Han*.¹⁴⁷⁷ When letters needed to be examined more closely, or there simply was not enough time to read them immediately, these would be sent to the photography section to be photographed.¹⁴⁷⁸

While undertaking a comprehensive intelligence survey, members of the *Chōsa Han* were tasked with observing different sections of the

¹⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27

¹⁴⁷⁵ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, p. 11

¹⁴⁷⁶ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Ishida Shoichi, *op. cit.*, p. 28

¹⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

community. Asada and Kurihara were concerned with Eurasians, Malays, and, to a lesser extent, Indians, whereas Eda maintained surveillance over the Chinese population of Singapore. A monitoring section existed within the *Chōsa Han* tasked with tapping telephone lines of firms and societies in Singapore. If the *Kempei Tai* held suspicions of any entity spying on the Japanese, the *Chōsa Han* would be informed and would proceed with their surveillance. Such surveillance would at times be initiated by Ishida's suspicions; at other times firms may be chosen at random for several days monitoring. Notably, the *Chōsa Han* made no contact with Allied activities. Although Ishida had been informed that Allied agents had infiltrated both Singapore and Malaya, no information could be obtained on them. Ishida stated he knew nothing of Allied espionage organisations in Malaya.¹⁴⁷⁹ Even at this late stage of the conflict, duties of the newly formed *Chōsa Han* would be primarily concerned with public order, and surprisingly the *Chōsa Han* would not be charged with the apprehension or detection of spies. These counterintelligence duties were to remain the role of the *Kempei Tai*.¹⁴⁸⁰

The *Chōsa Han*, as a counter-intelligence organisation, need only have been concerned with the operations of enemy intelligence. All other information should have been sidelined and/or passed to the intelligence organisations under whose jurisdiction it lay. Colonel Hayashi believed, however, that due to intelligence staff officers' lack of training and expertise, an expectation existed that all information pass through their hands. Inevitably, the *Chōsa Han* would essentially become another intelligence organ, rather than a counterintelligence organisation.¹⁴⁸¹

Bangkok *Chōsa Han*

Major Oba Hiraku was transferred from Singapore to Bangkok in March 1944 and tasked with the establishment of a *Chōsa Han* there. This *Chōsa Han* was to investigate public opinion and general conditions. On arrival in Bangkok with Warrant Officer Tanaka and Sergeant Major Hayashi, he reported to *Gi*

¹⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29

¹⁴⁸⁰ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, p. 12

¹⁴⁸¹ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Hayashi Hidezumi, *op. cit.*, p. 34

Butai (18th Area Army).¹⁴⁸² The Bangkok *Chōsa Han* was thereafter alternatively known as *Oba Kikan*.¹⁴⁸³

Oba's first task was to familiarise himself with Siam, utilising information already collected. In this Oba used:

- i) Documents compiled by the Intelligence Branch of *Gi Butai* relating to Siamese military forces, politics, general conditions, etc.
- ii) A publication of the South Manchurian Railway Investigation Department (*Mantetsu Chōsa Bu*) on Thailand providing comprehensive detail of Thailand's politics, economics, topography and all aspects of life but for that of the military
- iii) Other publications in Japanese, including "Economics of Thailand", "Guide to Thailand" and "New Thailand", the latter written by Miyahara Takeo
- iv) Translations of articles found within the "Bangkok Chronicle"
- v) Other "light" guide books¹⁴⁸⁴

He would receive no direction as to people he might consult for information. Furthermore, due to ill health, Oba would be forced to spend his time primarily in his office. *Oba Kikan* would not actively operate until September 1944, Oba having spent several weeks before in hospital.¹⁴⁸⁵

Oba Kikan was tasked with surveillance of the Siamese Government, divided into two sections, the "internal" (clerical) and "external" (information collection), toward this end. Hara Kōkichi had been commanding officer of the internal section, whose role it was to correlate information forwarded by the external section. The external section, stationed within the city and headed by Major Oba, utilised agents in the collecting of information.

¹⁴⁸² The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6315, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 235, 5 June 1946, Item 2156, Interrogation of Major Oba Hiraku, p.

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¹⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18

¹⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Although Hara knew little of these operations or the external section, it was his belief that Siamese agents were employed.¹⁴⁸⁶

Information collected, however, was well known to Hara in his position, and included:

- i) Reports on the weekly meetings held by the Siamese Parliament
- ii) Newspaper analysis
- iii) Eavesdropping on broadcasts, especially those emanating from New Delhi
- iv) Collation and analysis of rumours – Russo-Japanese relations were especially prevalent
- v) Civic affairs within Bangkok, for example mayoral elections (detailed examination was made of the approximately nine or ten candidates)¹⁴⁸⁷

The Bangkok *Chōsa Han* received an increase of five personnel as it began work in September 1944.¹⁴⁸⁸ In the collection of information, personnel of the external section would wear civilian clothing, and were directed to report all information of intelligence interest gained from conversations with the local populace or Japanese civilians. Funds required to extract such information could be withdrawn from intelligence funds without Oba being informed as to why it was required. External section staff were not allocated a fixed amount of funding per month, rather drawing funds when required.¹⁴⁸⁹

Orders in regard to important policy changes were received from Ishida. Routine orders, however, came from *Gi Butai* (18th Area Army). In submission of their reports external section staff did not note their sources. But for the two men he himself occasionally conferred with, Oba was therefore unaware where such information came from. Nishino, employed

¹⁴⁸⁶ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6315, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 235, 5 June 1946, Item 2155, Interrogation of Lieutenant Hara Kōkichi, p. 15

¹⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16

¹⁴⁸⁸ TNA: WO 203/6315, Interrogation of Major Oba Hiraku, *op. cit.*, p. 18

¹⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19

within the Japanese Embassy, was able to provide comprehensive information regarding people within the Siamese Government, having a detailed knowledge of the political situation in Siam. Oba deemed Nishino's information to be reliable. Reports submitted by the External Section were, however, later rewritten by the internal Section and submitted to *Gi Butai*, not Southern Area Army GHQ.¹⁴⁹⁰

Saigon *Chōsa Han*

Lieutenant Colonel Ishida Shoichi was posted to Saigon by *Nampōsōgun* in August 1944; French Indo-China having gained greater strategic importance following the Allied advance into the Philippines.¹⁴⁹¹ All three *Chōsa Han*, Singapore, Saigon and Bangkok, would now come under command of Ishida. Reports of the Bangkok *Chōsa Han* would be forwarded to Ishida, who would, in turn, forward these and reports of the Saigon *Chōsa Han* to the *Nampōsōgun*, now stationed in Manila. Reports of the Singapore *Chōsa Han* were forwarded direct to the *Nampōsōgun* to avoid delay in communication, with copies sent to Ishida. No liaison existed between all three *Chōsa Han*, each in effect acting as independent units under Ishida's command.¹⁴⁹²

The *Chōsa Han* utilised Annamite agents in the collection of information on i) anti-Japanese activities, ii) French forces in French Indo-China, iii) Annamite sentiment and movements, and iv) French merchant sentiment (due to their hardship under Japanese economic pressure).¹⁴⁹³

French forces in French Indo-China, initially amiable toward the Japanese, would become increasingly anti-Japanese as the tide turned against Japan.¹⁴⁹⁴ Only toward the end of 1944, however, did Japan's fear of French armed resistance begin to develop. Annamite reception of the Japanese had been "lukewarm", half maintaining pro-Japanese sympathies, with the other

¹⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19

¹⁴⁹¹ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Ishida Shoichi, *op. cit.*, p. 30

¹⁴⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

holding pro-French. According to Ishida, however, over time an anti-French bias became prevalent.¹⁴⁹⁵

Reports forwarded by Annamite agents required translation. Even now, Ishida remained unaware of any names of these agents due to their being employed by individuals within the *Chōsa Han*. Newspapers published in Saigon were also translated. The Saigon *Chōsa Han* performed no mail censorship or monitoring of telephone communications. But for its Annamite agents, no civilians or civilian firms were used to collect information, and Ishida knew nothing of Allied espionage activities in French Indo-China.¹⁴⁹⁶

Chōsa Han reports were forwarded by air to the head of 2nd Department, *Nampōsōgun*, and to *Shin Butai* (38th Army HQ Saigon). No reports were forwarded to Tokyo. No other intelligence organisations existed in Saigon, and the *Chōsa Han* maintained no communication with any other intelligence apparatus. Even liaison between *Chōsa Han* was lacking.¹⁴⁹⁷ Thus, despite the increasing strategic importance of the region, counterintelligence remained ineffectual, both in terms of effectiveness, and cooperation between what few intelligence organs were in place.

***Gi Butai* (18th Area Army), Siam**

The 18th Area Army was originally formed as the Siamese Garrison Command, later changing its name to the 39th Army, and later again to the 18th Area Army. Colonel Yano Masatoshi was head of the formation's Intelligence staff. He had entered the IJA in 1925, but was dismissed in 1936 due to the involvement of his subordinates in the 26 February Incident. Re-admitted in 1937, Yano served primarily in Manchuria until his transfer to the 18th Area Army HQ in February 1945.¹⁴⁹⁸

¹⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31

¹⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 31

¹⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹⁸ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6315, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 235, 5 June 1946, Item 2152, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Masatoshi, p. 1

Structure and duties of 18th Area Army Intelligence was as follows:

- i) General Intelligence Section (*Ippan Joho*)
 - a. Operational Intelligence Section (*Sakusen Jōhō*) – involved in the collation of intelligence reports from other areas and the dissemination of this information to HQ and units stationed in Siam. Information collected and collated was concerned with:
 - i. Disposition, strength etc. of Japanese and Allied forces in Burma, and the identification of Allied forces within India (some information related to India was marked “according to *Hikari Kikan* reports”, whereas other was simply marked “according to agents”. Yano believed these “agents” were likely those “left behind” following the Imphal operations). Reports received from Burma Area Army and Southern Area Army GHQ
 - ii. Strength, disposition and activities of Allied air forces in South China and information regarding Chinese forces in Yunnan. Reports received from 38 Army French Indo-China.
 - iii. Allied fleet dispositions in the Indian Ocean, Allied operations around the Andamans and Nicobars, Allied air forces in Ceylon and convoys between the Bay of Bengal and Ceylon. Reports received from 7th Area Army and 3rd Air Army.
 - iv. Changes in the battle situation in Australasia. Reports received from Southern Army GHQ
 - v. General war situation in China. Reports received from Southern Army GHQ
 - vi. Allied naval and air operations against Japan. Reports received from Southern Army GHQ¹⁴⁹⁹

¹⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2

Operational intelligence reports were disseminated every ten days unless information received was of particular import, in which case it would be forwarded by signal to the unit concerned.¹⁵⁰⁰

b. Political Intelligence (*Seiji Joho*)

Information was received from the following:

- i. *Kempei Tai* – in relation to Siamese–Japanese relations; Siamese police activities (with a refined focus on Police General Adul and his second-in-command); organisation, disposition, strength, materiel and movement of Siamese military forces; the activities of Siamese Ministers and the Siamese Government; the sentiment of the local population; and anti-Japanese activities of local Chinese.
- ii. *Chōsa Han* – in regard to Siamese–Japanese relations; the intentions, activities and loyalties of important Siamese personages; and the translation of “underground” Chinese publications. Economic intelligence contained in these reports was forwarded to 18th Area Army Intendence Department, being of no interest to Colonel Yano. According to Yano, *Chōsa Han* reports contained a great number of inaccuracies.¹⁵⁰¹

ii) Security Section (*Bōchō*)

The Security Section maintained a general security plan for all units. The *Bōchō* Section performed no actual espionage or counterintelligence work. This was the role of the *Kempei Tai* who forwarded their reports directly to the Staff. The section solely issued

¹⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2

¹⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*

regulations in regard to careless talk, and secured documents throughout Siam.¹⁵⁰²

iii) News and Propaganda Section

- a. Prepared news pamphlets and supplied of Japanese papers printed in Bangkok to Japanese forces in Thailand.
- b. Weekly press conference for Japanese press agents (including the Mainichi, Asahi, etc.) and occasional lectures provided at the Japanese Club (*Nippon Jin Kai*) to Japanese civilians regarding the present war situation.
- c. Films from the *Nihon Eiga* were projected at the Odeon and Chalern Krung cinemas with Siamese interpretation. These films were not well received by the local population who preferred French and American films.
- d. Press conferences were provided twice monthly to Siamese press agents. Furthermore, the News and Propaganda Section sought Japanese press agent support in persuading the Siamese to print Japanese news.
- e. Finally, the Section presented propaganda “paper plays” (*kami shibai*); these proved most popular on the streets of Bangkok. Load speaker vans were not successful.¹⁵⁰³

The News and Propaganda Section was unable to utilise Bangkok radio, although this was of little consequence, as Japanese-sponsored Siamese programs were being broadcast from Saigon and Singapore.¹⁵⁰⁴

iv) Military Topography Section

The Military Topography Section collated information of operational value obtained from officers on tour or outlying units, drawing up maps printed in Singapore.¹⁵⁰⁵

¹⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 3

¹⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Colonel Yano received orders from Lieutenant General Hamada, Chief of Staff. Yano's reports went to the GOC, the Chief of Staff, and the Senior Staff Officer (Colonel Konishi followed by Colonel Tsuji Masanobu – see Chapters 8 and 9 for the latter).¹⁵⁰⁶ No unofficial sources existed to serve the 18th Area Army HQ. All organisations serving in intelligence roles for HQ maintained their own spies, agents and emissaries. Intelligence reports, bulletins and signals were at least distributed widely (including to the 15th Army HQ [post-July 1945], 4th Div., 2nd Military Police Force, *Hikari Kikan*, SAA HQ, 7th Area Army, 38th Army, 29th Army, Bangkok Branch of *Hikari Kikan*, and miscellaneous headquarters (including supply and fuel depots, transport headquarters, etc.) A system also existed (if belatedly), approved by SAA HQ, where reports *deemed of importance* would be forwarded directly to the General Staff, IGHQ, and copied to Siam to expedite transmission.¹⁵⁰⁷ As late as 1945, an acceptance of subjective and selective forwarding of information remained within Japanese intelligence.

Reports received by the 18th Area Army from *Oba Kikan* covered i) translations of political articles, with notations from Oba, from the local Siamese Press, ii) the opinions and actions of prominent Siamese, again with Oba's comments, and iii) confidential documents sourced from government offices and records of interviews and conferences of Siamese political leaders.¹⁵⁰⁸ These reports served as an overview of Siamese reliability, to observe any Allied collaboration or sympathy, and were passed to the Chief of Staff (concurrently the Military Attaché), who passed on what he deemed appropriate to Embassy Staff.¹⁵⁰⁹ Political reports of high reliability were forwarded directly to the Permanent Under Secretary for War (*Rikugun Jikan*) and Deputy Chief of Staff (*Sanpō Jichō*) in Tokyo, along with comments of

¹⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4

¹⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1

¹⁵⁰⁷ The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 203/6313, S.E.A.T.I.C., Intelligence Bulletin No. 233, 24 May 1946, Item 2151, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Masatoshi, pp. 25-26

¹⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26

¹⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

18th Area Army, and copied to SAA HQ.¹⁵¹⁰ Despite this, *Oba Kikan* operated under SAA HQ, not 18th Area Army HQ, as the Southern Area Army had greater capacity to respond on a higher level. If proven necessary, the SAA could settle disputes with Siam "...with more authority".¹⁵¹¹

The Japanese Civil and Military authorities held meetings twice a week with the Siamese Government, using reports of minor Japan-Siam Treaty transgressions as leverage. It had been deemed necessary to organise a special organisation to keep an eye on Siamese political affairs as the effects of the unfavourable war situation in Burma and the Pacific were making themselves felt among the Siamese. The Siamese, never over-enthusiastic disciples of the doctrine of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, were becoming less and less keen to give any material assistance to the Japanese, or implicate themselves too deeply in the affairs of a doomed nation. The Japanese were particularly vexed at their lack of cooperation in matters concerning the construction of communication routes and airfields and in the apprehension of Allied parachutists. Japan could not force Siam's hand (or at least it might prove troublesome to do so) and was eager to obtain its aims through diplomacy and outwardly friendly relations. It was therefore necessary to watch Siamese political activities closely and seek reliable information on current thought.¹⁵¹²

Both the *Kempei Tai* and Siamese counterparts kept watch over espionage activities to some degree. Suspects could be arrested and questioned on direct authority of the *Kempei Tai*, or through them on order of the Chief of Staff. Reports from the *Kempei Tai* went through Colonel Yano, who forwarded them to the Chief of Staff, other interested HQs and to SAA HQ, depending on the documents' importance.¹⁵¹³

¹⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27

¹⁵¹² *Ibid.*, p. 26

¹⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 28

Intelligence Conferences (*Jōhō Kaigi*)

Colonel Yano, as Chief of Intelligence 18th Area Army, coordinated intelligence conferences to i) maintain contact with relevant intelligence organisations, ii) to improve relations between the same, and iii) to perfect the system of intelligence collection and dissemination.¹⁵¹⁴

Representatives and their respective organisations attending these conferences were:

Lieutenant Yamamoto	-	Special Signals Platoon
Major Inoue	-	Bangkok Special Signals Intelligence Unit
Lieutenant Negi	-	<i>Kempei Tai</i>
Lt. Col. Ishida or Maj. Oba	-	Investigation Section (<i>Chōsa Han</i>)
Major Kainuma	-	HQ 18 th Area Army ("I" Staff)
Major Konari		
Lieutenant Yoshimura		

Notably, *Hikari Kikan* did not attend these conferences, although efforts were under way prior to Japan's surrender to amend this.¹⁵¹⁵

Main subjects discussed during these conferences included:

- i) War situation in Burma
- ii) Information intercepted by the Bangkok Special Signals Intelligence Unit
- iii) Political intelligence
- iv) Security (*Kempei Tai* and Security Section of the 18th Area Army)
- v) Main issues occurring in neighbouring commands

¹⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*

- vi) General war situation and appraisal of Japanese-Siamese relations (talk by Colonel Yano)
- vii) Information collection methods
- viii) Propaganda coordination¹⁵¹⁶

The purpose of these intelligence conferences was to gain an overall picture of the general intelligence situation, with Colonel Yano at first giving a presentation, followed by an open forum in which the attendees could explain their present operations, raise queries or express opinions.¹⁵¹⁷

During his interrogation, although Colonel Yano did not explicitly state so, the interrogators felt he was not convinced of the import, nor usefulness, of these conferences, in particular in regard to the improvement of relations between relevant organisations, which seemed to be more an exercise in semantics for the benefit of SAA HQ.¹⁵¹⁸

Furthermore, Yano's interrogators felt that Yano's representation of these conferences having been "business-like" in manner fell short of the actual case. These meetings were thought, rather, an exercise in futility, "the improvement of friendly relations between the staffs of such organisations" thought to be never more than "an impressive phrase for the notion of HQ Southern Army".¹⁵¹⁹ These conferences would be referred to by one source as a "new propaganda song, never before heard in Bangkok, which was tried out at the conference to test its effectiveness".¹⁵²⁰ Finally, conferences were not held at regular junctures, and the attendance of civilian propaganda services would presumably quell open discussion of confidential matters.¹⁵²¹ Thus were later attempts at greater cohesion across Japanese intelligence organisations in Southeast Asia less effective than hoped for.

¹⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29

¹⁵¹⁷ TNA: WO 203/6315, Interrogation of Major Oba Hiraku, *op. cit.*, p. 19

¹⁵¹⁸ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Masatoshi, *op. cit.*, p. 29

¹⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

Weakness of the *Chōsa Han*

In regard to counterintelligence, but for the conferences described above, the *Chōsa Han* maintained little to no liaison with the Special Branch of the *Kempei Tai*. In fact, both organisations generally disliked the other. This situation was exacerbated by Lieutenant Negi, of the *Kempei Tai*, having greater success in obtaining political intelligence, despite presumably being outside his scope of duties.¹⁵²²

Lieutenant Colonel Ishida assumed command of the Bangkok *Chōsa Han* on his transfer there in April 1945. Ishida would spend his first month analysing the work done until then by the *Chōsa Han*, and examined the existing intelligence situation in Siam. Ishida would not be satisfied by the work of *Oba Kikan*, finding fault in their methodology, both in the writing of reports and in their information-gathering activities. For example, the *Oba Kikan* had discovered nothing of British intelligence activities, and heard only rumours of an American-sponsored Free Thai movement.¹⁵²³ However, although the existence of an “Anti-Japanese Group” was known, and that propaganda publications were being disseminated, no investigation had been made while *Oba* was operational commander.¹⁵²⁴ In relation to reporting, Ishida found fault in that sources of information were not named; nor were attempts made to verify the accuracy or reliability of the information. Of note, Ishida would not confront *Oba* directly in regard to these concerns, but would rather deal directly with *Oba*’s subordinates. For this reason, *Oba* would dislike Ishida; a feeling that was apparently mutual.¹⁵²⁵

Chōsa Han would immediately become an independent formation following Ishida’s arrival, reporting to Southern Army HQ, and yet, for convenience, reports would continue to be submitted to *Gi Butai*, as their contents were still of consequence to the latter.¹⁵²⁶

¹⁵²² TNA: WO 203/6315, Interrogation of Major *Oba Hiraku*, *op. cit.*, p. 19

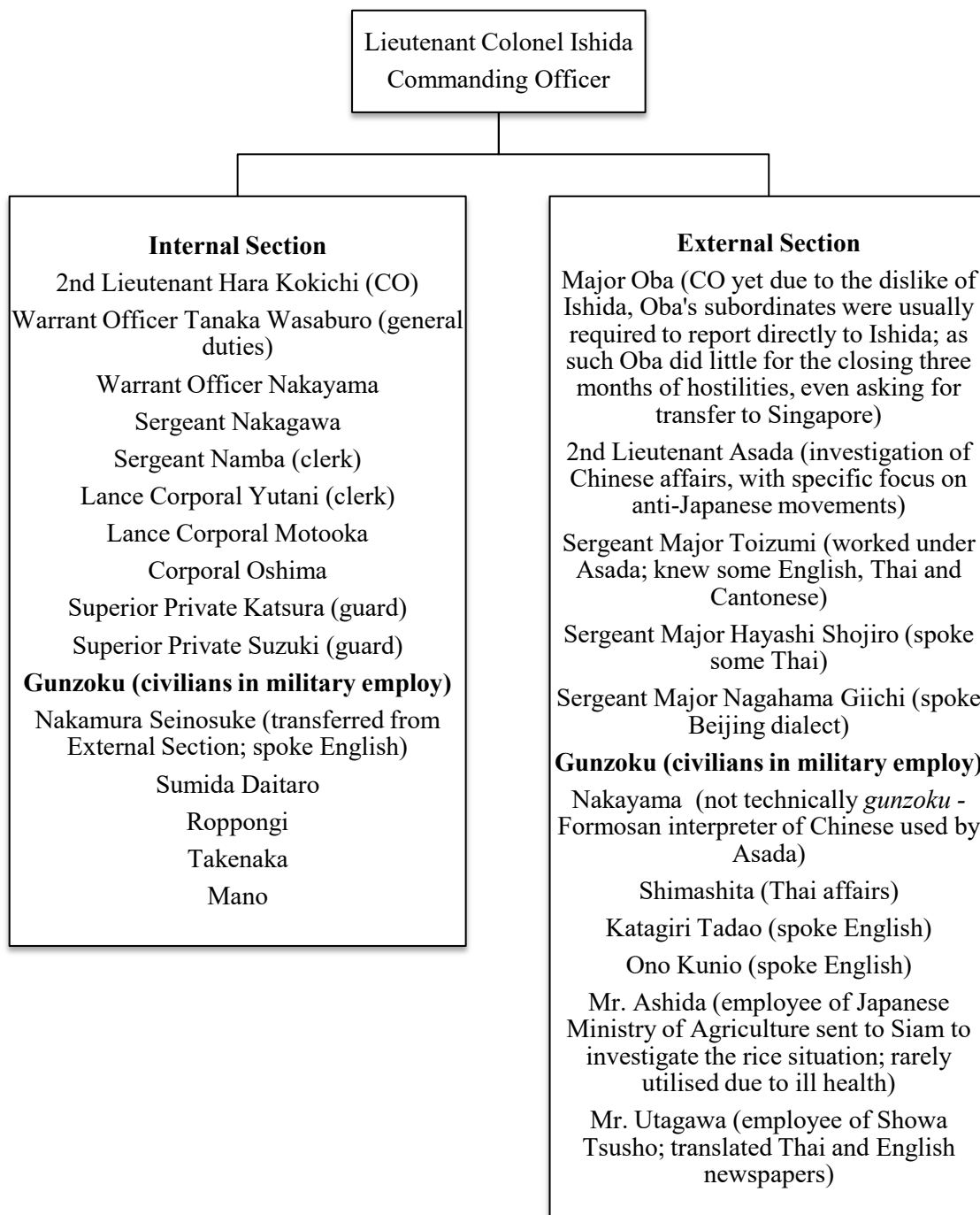
¹⁵²³ *Ibid.*, p. 20

¹⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21

¹⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21

Chōsa Han would be reorganised following Ishida's arrival:¹⁵²⁷



The external section's most important new function was the investigation of Chinese affairs by Asada. Oba knew little of Asada's work, due to the latter reporting directly to Ishida. Oba believed, however, that at the time of surrender, Asada had only completed his preparations for investigation and

¹⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22

had uncovered nothing new. Investigation of Siamese affairs would continue as before, although only now, and due to Ishida's dissatisfaction with information already obtained under Oba, a great deal of effort was put into verifying its reliability.¹⁵²⁸

Ishida would often meet his old friend Lieutenant Colonel Komura of *Hikari Kikan*, and Oba knew Captains Kiyono and Obase of the *Hikari Kikan* on a social basis. No official connection existed however between *Hikari Kikan* and *Chōsa Han*.¹⁵²⁹

Reports went via safe-hand and the *Chōsa Han* had no wireless facility.¹⁵³⁰ No reports went to Tokyo.¹⁵³¹ During Ishida's time in Bangkok, signals of importance from Ishida were sent "by favour" of 18th Area Army HQ as Ishida was not authorised to originate signals. Colonel Yano, head of SAA HQ's Intelligence, during interrogation stated he too was unaware from which sources Lieutenant Colonel Ishida drew information.¹⁵³² From April 1945, due to Ishida's transfer to Bangkok, the usefulness of *Chōsa Han* to SAA HQ was diminished.¹⁵³³

Oda Kikan

Following *Chōsa Han*'s establishment as an independent formation under direct responsibility of Southern Army GHQ, the 18th Area Army Chief of Staff sought one intelligence officer to remain under his command.

Lieutenant Oda had previously, if only for a short time, operated under Captain Oba, but by 1945 already acted under direction of Lieutenant General Hamada, Chief of Staff. With extensive experience in intelligence operations in Siam, Oda was subsequently detached from the *Chōsa Han* and would form the *Oda Kikan*, using the name Kusumoto for covert reasons. Oda would have only a few subordinates, and his *Oda Kikan*, operating as a *Gi Butai* SSO, was initially tasked with the investigation of: i) general conditions

¹⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23

¹⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-23

¹⁵³⁰ TNA: WO 203/6312, Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Ishida Shoichi, *op. cit.*, p. 29

¹⁵³¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵³² TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Muraiji, *op. cit.*, p. 11

¹⁵³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12

within Siam, without specialisation in the affairs of Government, and ii) anti-Japanese societies and their activities, utilising both Siamese and Chinese in the gathering of information. Despite their similarities and connection through Oda, Oda *Kikan* maintained no connection with the *Chōsa Han*.¹⁵³⁴ The latter would retain responsibility for information related to economics and politics.¹⁵³⁵

Oda would, in the final days of the conflict, be transferred to Saigon, attached to Southern Army GHQ, to analyse and study the methods by which the Japanese had “dealt with the French” in French Indo-China, returning to Bangkok to advise the Chief of Staff on how he might overcome the Siamese, were they to revolt.¹⁵³⁶ “Figure Na” (*Nago Sakusen*) was to be the operation that would bring into effect similar conditions in Siam as those in French Indo-China that “called for” the *coup d’état* in March 1945. Plans for this operation, including operational execution, were in only an elementary phase at the time of Japan’s surrender, however, and the Siamese Government would only just escape being deposed.¹⁵³⁷

In Southeast Asia, the IJA, even were it to be inclined to incorporate the lessons learnt in Manchuria by the *Kantōgun*, had simply not had time to sufficiently plan its intelligence operations and structure. Efforts undertaken were ultimately ineffective and abortive.¹⁵³⁸ Overlap continued, in terms of intelligence organisations and their respective duties, as did a dual command structure, with command echelons receiving reports only on what lower level intelligence echelons felt was important. To the detriment of the Japanese Secret Service, the position of intelligence in the Imperial Japanese Army remained secondary to operations.¹⁵³⁹ Communications between intelligence departments and between Japanese imperial armed forces, despite their shared aims, continued to be near non-existent.¹⁵⁴⁰ The Japanese term used for intelligence (*jōhō*) means both intelligence and information. A lack of

¹⁵³⁴ TNA: WO 203/6315, Interrogation of Major Oba Hiraku, *op. cit.*, p. 20

¹⁵³⁵ TNA: WO 203/6315, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Masatoshi, *op. cit.*, p. 4

¹⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4

¹⁵³⁷ TNA: WO 203/6313, Interrogation of Colonel Yano Masatoshi, *op. cit.*, p. 27

¹⁵³⁸ Kotani, *op. cit.*, p. 108

¹⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

obvious differentiation between raw information and a true intelligence product meant that often data was presented to senior officers and policy-makers without prior analysis. Furthermore, leading operational authorities often simply ignored intelligence work.¹⁵⁴¹ Japan never overcame this inflexibility in its command structure. Despite a growing understanding of the need for, and adoption of, non-conventional means (exacerbated as Japan's position in the Pacific theatre weakened), the inability to utilise intelligence in a timely fashion, and the limited timeframe available to incorporate new methodologies and training, undoubtedly contributed in no small part to Japan's defeat.

¹⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 150

Conclusion

Following the Meiji Restoration, Imperial Japan's ambitions in mainland Asia were aided by a large number of, if initially disenfranchised in their homeland, highly motivated members of feudal Japan's samurai class now seeking their fortunes elsewhere in Asia. Forming "patriotic societies", these organisations were led by talented, charismatic and influential leaders and ideologues, with access to both military and political figures. These groups, including the *Genyōsha* (Dark Ocean Society) and the *Kokuryūkai* (Black Dragon Society), would develop an infrastructure, often under the guise of cultural institutions (including the *Tōa Dōbunkai*), capable of training a large cohort of information-gathering "intelligence" officers. Staffed by talented individuals, these well-funded, if informal, intelligence networks across Asia would provide Japan with, through elementary means, extensive amounts of information to support what would ultimately amount to theatre-level operations through the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. Furthermore, efforts of these societies would assist Japan in its successful annexation of Korea through their contacts with the *Tonghaks*.

The success of these early developments in Japan's informal intelligence apparatus would, however, create problems later, exacerbated by the influence held by figures such as Tōyama Mitsuru and Uchida Ryōhei over key political figures. First, there would come to be an over-reliance on these informal networks. With information provided being deemed adequate, the Japanese would not seek to improve intelligence products through the establishment of an analytical core. Second, the formal Japanese military intelligence apparatus at this time lacked formalised training, relying predominantly on intelligent and talented individuals, centred on military attachés posted abroad, who were earmarked for higher officer later within the Imperial Japanese Army. Many of these officers would come to sympathise with, and be influenced by, the leadership of Japan's patriotic societies, even becoming members themselves. Finally, politicisation of the intelligence corps would occur, leading to agenda-driven information-gathering and

subsequent politicisation of intelligence products produced. Japan's intelligence apparatus' would consequently over time become desirous and willing to become involved with political intelligence operations, with early intelligence officers rising to high office, including Tanaka Giichi, who would later become Minister of War and Prime Minister of Japan.

At Japan's highest echelons, a continued reliance on the knowledge and experience of a select few would remain of importance in governmental policy-making following the restoration of the emperor. The *genrō*, Japan's elder statesmen, principally made up of the Satsuma and Chōshū clans integral to the Meiji Restoration, meant the majority of information-analysis and policy-making resided in the same body; predominantly military men vehemently opposed to party politics. Furthermore, despite improvements in the military intelligence structure in its formation of geographic sections, information analysis here also resided with a limited, if experienced, number.

Imperial Japan would have little reason to improve on its hybrid system of intelligence through the First World War, and no preparatory intelligence would be undertaken. The Anglo-Japanese alliance would serve the needs of both the UK and Japan, but on a *realpolitik* basis. As the Siberian Intervention was undertaken, however, Japan's machinations in Siberia would become evident to its western allies, and intelligence cooperation with the UK in particular would become increasingly strained, impaired by suspected Japanese support, either formally or through its "patriots", of Indian sedition. As Japan increasingly sought political control over territory in mainland Asia it would adopt a divide-and-conquer strategy, supporting small centres of authority toward the aim of combining these later under Japanese control. These efforts were led by the *tokumu kikan*, or special service organisations, a Japanese initiative centred on small groups of intelligence officers making contact with key political figures; a system integral to Imperial Japan's later political aims in Asia.

In China, Japanese "patriots" and "advisors", intelligence officers both formal and informal, would assist the ultimately failed revolution of Sun Yat-sen and throughout China's subsequent period of warlordism. Such "assistance" would, however, play all sides, and always be directed to Japan's advantage, despite outward assurances of the Foreign Ministry whose

diplomatic line would ultimately falter before the military's own, operating in opposition. Imperial Japan's "China Policy" would in time become increasingly driven from the ground up through the subjective views of each advisor as they came to be increasingly sympathetic with the cause with which they were attached. Over time, cliques would form within these "China Specialists", including within the China Section of IJA GHQ that had become increasingly separated from other areas of Japanese Intelligence even as it became more experienced and specialised. As the older generation of China specialists rose to higher office, predominantly predisposed to continued assistance to China's warlords including Wu Pei-fu and Chang Tso-lin, so too would Japan find itself increasingly wrong-footed, as the Nationalist cause in China under Chiang Kai-Shek rose to prominence, immune to Japanese overtures, given its overwhelming anti-imperial, and anti-Japanese stance. As China specialists increasingly found themselves posted to the Kwantung Army, so too would they find themselves in a field formation, semi-autonomous in nature, increasingly willing to drive their own agendas in northern China.

Japanese military control over territory in Manchuria had been rapidly followed by such economic and financial concerns such as the South Manchurian Railway Company (*Manshū Tetsudō*). The SMR had, in time, developed its own research organs, aimed at the development of Manchuria. Reports of the SMR, although detailed, would be more in line with academic standards, missing the requisite brevity and timeliness required of a modern intelligence product. As a primarily economic concern, the SMR would never specialise nor be involved in surreptitious information-gathering, and despite extensive research and information-gathering no intelligence cycle would ever be formed; a failing mirrored throughout all Japan's intelligence organisations. Importantly however, in the absence of other intelligence reporting that was similarly intrinsically analysed and detailed, this form of intelligence product would come to be highly valued by Japan's premier field formation, the *Kantōgun*, that would eventually subvert the SMR "intelligence" section for its own ends. Such detailed analysis would aid Japan's overarching aim of political control of the region.

By the 1930s, factions had risen within the Imperial Japanese Army. Additionally, the IJA now held considerable experience in political operations. Within Japan's China specialists, now predominantly with the Kwantung Army but with a considerable number of sympathisers in Tokyo, thought as to proposed future action had become increasingly homogenised. Key intelligence officers would launch what would amount to black flag operations to instigate conflict in Manchuria; these were conducted to justify military occupation and eventual annexation, as had occurred earlier in Korea. These operations would be in direct opposition to then official policy, however political indignation at this insubordination would be heavily tempered through the sympathy of many important personages in Tokyo, and a closing of ranks of the military in the face of civilian government criticism. Military factionalism would lead to government by assassination in Tokyo, exacerbated by the support of Japan's ultranationalist patriotic societies. Paradoxically, as these coups increasingly sought greater political ends, the February 26 Incident signalled that enough was enough. Military factionalism would thereafter come to an end, with the only true casualty being civilian government of Japan, this now held by a unified military presence, including many members of Japan's politicised intelligence corps.

Although internal dissension in Tokyo had stopped full annexation of Manchuria, Japan's establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo would, for a time, prove to be a success. At all levels of government, and especially so in terms of intelligence, Japanese would hold all positions of real power, if at times acting as nominal second-in-command in outward appearance. The *tokumu kikan* would come to the fore of Japanese political intelligence, initially preparing the ground for military occupation, but later coming to be the instruments of political control. In terms of traditional military intelligence, in the tactical sense, the *Kantōgun* would continue to use elementary means of intelligence against the USSR, while at the same time operating what equated to be a peacetime intelligence system. Unfortunately, Japan's Special Service Organs, the forerunner of a modern, adaptable intelligence system, would be raised and disbanded according to the situation on the ground, and would be required to cover an extremely broad spectrum of intelligence duties, all without sufficient training. Experience in the field

can only go so far. Subsequent intelligence failures would lead to a disastrous underestimation of Soviet ability and intentions. Improvements made to the intelligence system in Manchuria following Japan's defeat at Nomonhan, including greater cooperation between different intelligence organisations, would not occur rapidly enough to have any credible effect in other theatres of conflict that Japan now found itself.

In China, Japan's out-dated intelligence system continued to operate. Political intrigue would be practiced by such figures as Doihara Kenji and Takaji Wachi, with very limited success. Japan would increasingly find itself in a military quagmire in China, unaided by the complacency within its intelligence apparatus that had developed following the ease with which Japan had occupied Manchuria. Japan would underestimate the political vacuum that existed in China, and would consistently try to install puppet regimes sympathetic to Japanese aims. As had occurred in Manchuria, *tokumu kikan* continued to be raised and disbanded, irrespective of its success or failure, leading to a dilution of an already limited, if experienced, intelligence corps. *Tokumu Kikan*, as an overarching departmental title responsible for a number of smaller organs and their political intelligence operations, would undergo several organisational changes during its short life span, culminating in the *Renraku Bu* (or Liaison Department), as the *Ume Kikan* had some limited success in the establishment of the Wang Ching-wei puppet government. Considerable overlap would occur between intelligence organs, but without sufficient collaboration and cooperation.

In terms of leadership, successful intelligence officers would find themselves now with operational commands, irrespective of their lack of experience in this area; a move considered a promotion in terms of prestige. Despite often disastrous results, these officers would continue to find themselves in influential positions, the respect offered seniority in Japan a cultural trait of leadership. In Tokyo, the old guard of intelligence officers now found themselves in key roles in government and able to influence overall policy. With the decentralisation of the intelligence structure as a whole, the *tokumu kikan* came to predominantly operate under Japan's Area Armies in the field, but under the aegis of 2nd Department (Intelligence) of IGHQ. This meant that these primary intelligence organisations now operated

under what was, in effect, a dual command structure, and across a vast disparity of roles. This would exacerbate the impact of a lack of uniformity, efficiency and efficacy, as upper echelon leadership and policy was essentially dispensed with.

Japan's patriotic societies continued to assist, for example, through the Ōkawa *Juku* of Ōkawa Shūmei. However, Japan was now beginning to realise, if belatedly, that its patchwork system of intelligence apparatus was inadequate and unable to solve its "China Problem". Efforts in 1938 to develop a truly modern intelligence and espionage training establishment, the Nakano School, would be led by a more experienced and progressive cadre of intelligence officers, of whom many were formerly employed by *tokumu kikan*, who were now able to put their experience to good use in the development of a truly modern intelligence apparatus. These efforts would, however, come too late. Graduate numbers would be too small to have any sizeable effect on the ground, and these officers would not rise to a high enough rank to be able to influence central intelligence policy.

Japan's advance into Southeast Asia did not allow sufficient time to develop a deeper, more effective, intelligence system. *Ad hoc* arrangements were hastily put in place, but with an inadequate understanding of local populations and their political structures. Belated efforts to induce cooperation of indigenous groups and local ethnic Indians, under intelligence organs including the Fujiwara *Kikan*, Iwakuro *Kikan*, and Minami *Kikan*, were often at odds with policy emanating from Tokyo, and even with that of Japan's Southern Area Army. Exertions of these groups were, despite their limited successes, ultimately abortive, and promises made to groups, including the Indian Independence League, the Indian National Army and the Burma Independence Army, would be broken, leading a great number to turn against their *prima facie* benefactors. Japan's stated desire to create a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere was thus undermined.

In regard to counterintelligence, the *Kempei Tai* also delivered a saturation effect on the ground, yet it too lacked sufficient training, covered too wide a range of duties, and proved in time to be equally inefficient and ineffectual. Belated efforts to create specialised counterintelligence units in the form of *Chōsa Han* came too late, and these were staffed by too few, and

had little to no effect. With delineation of roles still lacking, these groups would, in time, become just another of the innumerable inexperienced, untrained “intelligence units” available to the Japanese; more information-gathering groups than anything else.

Overall, despite a prolific, even saturated, presence on the ground, Japanese intelligence lacked sufficient formal training. Skills and talent were to be developed through experience. Across the intelligence system, considerable overlap in jurisdiction occurred between different organisations. Although perhaps meant to ensure that no stone remained unturned, without sufficient liaison or collaboration between organs, friction and even rivalry ensued. Although rich in personnel, experience and finance remained deficient, and agents coopted by the Japanese would be of low character; willing to act as double-agents and to provide questionable, or even manufactured, information, often to settle scores, or simply to enrich themselves. This inadequacy would only be exacerbated by the lack of a trained analytical corp and systematised reporting, the latter of which had been selective and only on matters considered of import at lower echelons. Japan may be the envy of the world in terms of loyalty to the state, as shown by the patriotic societies of the late 19th and 20th centuries. In terms of intelligence, however, zeal may be a double-edged sword. Without a suitable objective intelligence and analytical corp, intelligence officers and their intelligence products may become politicised, driving particular agendas of a variety of decision-makers. Some may even seek to become the latter, to a nation’s detriment.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Organisation of the Manchurian Foreign Office, reported in the Manchurian-Chinese Government Register for 1942 (*Manka Shokuin Roku*)

Note: Ethnicity of staff is based on name and birthplace

- Minister – Chinese
- Vice Minister – Japanese
- General Affairs Department – Chinese
 - Miscellaneous Affairs Section – Japanese
 - Documents Section – Japanese
 - Protocol Section – Japanese
 - Other Officials in General Affairs Department
 - Councillors – 1 Japanese, 1 Chinese
 - Private Secretary – 1 Japanese
 - Administrators – 4 Japanese, 3 Chinese
 - Translators – 1 Japanese
- Political Affairs Department – Japanese
 - Section I – Japanese
 - Section II – Japanese
 - Section III – Japanese
 - Section IV – Japanese
 - Other Officials in Political Affairs Department
 - Commissioners – 1 Chinese
 - Assistant Commissioners – 1 Japanese
 - Administrators – 14 Japanese, 4 Chinese
- Office of Foreign Office personnel specially dispatched to Harbin
 - Commissioners – Japanese
 - Administrators – 2 Japanese
- Embassies and Consulates Abroad
 - Embassy to Japan
 - Ambassador – Chinese
 - Councillors – 2 Japanese, 1 Chinese
 - General Affairs Department
 - General Affairs Section – 1 Japanese
 - Political Affairs Section – 1 Japanese
 - Educational Affairs Department
 - Educational Affairs Section – 1 Japanese
 - Training Section – 1 Chinese
 - Economics Department
 - (Money) Exchange Section – 1 Japanese

Industry Section – 1 Japanese
 Government Supplies Section – 1 Chinese
 Other Officials
 Commissioners – 1 Chinese, 3 Japanese
 Assistant Commissioners – 8 Japanese
 Second Private Secretary – 1 Japanese
 Osaka Consulate General – 1 Japanese
 Consul – 1 Japanese
 Vice-Consuls – 2 Japanese, 1 Chinese
 Embassy to China (Nanjing)
 Ambassador – 1 Chinese
 Councillors – 1 Japanese, 1 Chinese
 Commissioners – 2 Japanese, 1 Chinese
 Assistant Commissioners – 1 Japanese, 1 Chinese
 Legation to Italy
 Minister – 1 Chinese
 Councillor – 1 Japanese
 Second Private Secretary – 1 Chinese
 Legation to Germany
 Minister – 1 Chinese
 Councillor – 1 Japanese
 Commissioners – 2 Japanese, 1 Chinese
 Assistant Commissioners – 1 Japanese
 Consulates General to Germany
 Hamburg – 1 Japanese
 Warsaw – 1 Japanese
 Legation to Spain
 Minister – 1 Chinese (Minister to Italy)
 Commissioner – 1 Japanese
 Legation to Hungary
 Minister – 1 Chinese (Minister to Germany)
 Commissioner – 1 Japanese
 Legation to Romania
 Minister – 1 Chinese (Minister to Germany)
 Consulate (in China)
 Consul – 1 Chinese
 Vice Consuls – 2 Japanese
 Consulate (in Soviet Russia)
 Consul – 1 Chinese
 Vice Consuls – 1 Chinese, 1 Japanese
 Beijing Commercial Representatives Department
 Commercial Representative – 1 Japanese
 Administrators – 7 Japanese, 1 Chinese
 Tientsin Office Chief – 1 Japanese

Administrator – 1 Japanese
Tsinan Office Chief – 1 Chinese
Shanghai Commercial Representatives Department
Commercial Representative – 1 Chinese
Administrator – 1 Japanese
Nanjing Office Chief – 1 Japanese¹⁵⁴²

¹⁵⁴² “Memorandum re. Organisation of Manchurian Foreign Office...”, 21 August 1945 - Folder Manchuria, Box No. 12, Japanese Activities in the Far East - Java to White Russia, Oriental Desk (Op 16-B-7-0), 1936-46, Office of Naval Intelligence, Sabotage, Espionage, Counterespionage Section (SEC), Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives at College Park, MD.

Appendix B. The Organisation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1942

- a) Secretariat
- b) Diplomatic Bureau
 - i) Planning Section
 - ii) Greater East Asia Section
 - iii) Soviet Russia and Finland Section
 - iv) European Countries (other than those under other Sections) and their possessions in Africa and the Pacific
 - v) Britain and its Dominions (except for Canada), India, Ceylon, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Iraq, Cyprus, Palestine, Syria & Lebanon, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Egypt, Liberia, British Colonies and Mandates in Arabia, the Pacific and Antarctic Oceans, and matters concerning Mohammedans
 - vi) Canada, Newfoundland, the USA and her possessions
 - vii) Remaining countries and areas around the world
- c) Commercial Bureau
 - i) General Policies and Trade
 - ii) Commercial Negotiations with other countries
 - iii) Passports, Commerce, Commercial Information
- d) Investigation Bureau
 - i) Investigation and collection of materials for Diplomatic History
 - ii) Investigation of Soviet Russia and Western Asia
 - iii) Collection of Information
 - iv) Information and Propaganda for Foreign Countries
- e) Treaties Bureau
 - i) Conclusion and ratification of Treaties
 - ii) Juridical Affairs¹⁵⁴³

¹⁵⁴³ TNA: WO 203/6319, Interrogation of Consul-General Minoda Fujio, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22

**Appendix C. The organisation of the Greater East Asia Ministry
(as at November 1942)**

- a) Minister's Secretariat
 - i) Archives and Documents Section
 - ii) Personnel Affairs Section
 - iii) Accounts Section
 - iv) Telegraph Section
 - v) Investigation Bureau
 - vi) Private Secretary
- b) General Affairs Bureau
 - i) General Affairs Section
 - ii) Economic Affairs Section
 - iii) Investigation Section
 - iv) Discipline Section
 - v) Examination Section
 - vi) Industrial Affairs Section
 - vii) Colonial Affairs Section
 - viii) Cultivation Affairs Section
- c) Bureau of China
 - i) General Affairs Section
 - ii) Institution Section
 - iii) Control Affairs Section
 - iv) Financial Section
 - v) Agricultural & Forestry
 - vi) Commerce & Industry
- d) Bureau of Manchuria
 - i) Administration Section
 - ii) Supervision Section
 - iii) Cultural Affairs Section
 - iv) Financial Section
 - v) Industrial Section
- e) Bureau for South Seas Region
 - i) Administration Section
 - ii) Supervision Section
 - iii) Cultural Affairs Section
 - iv) Financial Section
 - v) Industrial Section¹⁵⁴⁴

¹⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22