

Messing with Japanese Minds

Solid research backed up a US Army psychological warfare unit's propaganda pamphlets in August 1945.

Daily Collation Summaries from the collection of Darrell English.



This American propaganda leaflet dropped on Japan in 1945 suggested the clock was running down on the Empire of the Sun.

While the Allies battled Japan with bullets and bombs, they also fought a battle for the minds of Japan's people. This was psychological war—psywar. It was meant to shake Japanese soldiers' and civilians' faith in their leaders, in Japan's ability to win the war, and in the reliability of official information.

"Two policies were central to Allied psywar operations: to tell the truth and to refrain from criticizing the Japanese emperor," writes historian Allison B. Gilmore in *You Can't Fight Tanks with Bayonets*. American propaganda was based on solid research.

Collector Darrell English of North Adams, Massachusetts, gave *America in WWII* a look at some of the research behind the psywar. His collection includes secret Daily Collation Summaries prepared by a 20-man psywar detachment working for General Headquarters, US Army Forces in the Pacific. This small unit headed by a captain researched, wrote, illustrated, and printed propaganda.

The Daily Collation Summaries provided facts to power propaganda. Each summary listed objectives such as "Show Hopelessness of Supply Problem," or "Show Incompetent Leadership on Home Front." Under each objective were three columns: source, data, and remarks. The sources included interviews with prisoners, news reports from Japan, and more.

What follows is the daily collation summary for August 12, 1945.

AMERICA IN
WWII

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PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE BRANCH
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DAILY COLLATION SUMMARY

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Objective: Show Hopelessness of Supply Problem (2)

12 Aug 45

Source	Data	Remarks
ABC Daily Monitor 25 July 45 C-6 (u)	a. In a commentary in English to the United States on 24 July, Tokyo Overseas quoted MAINICHI as saying, "The first task in defence of aggression on the homeland is to <u>concentrate large forces of men and material at any given point swiftly and without hitch. Mobility is the overriding demand, and in the mainland battle, an efficient network of transportation must be considered part of military strategy.</u> Contrary to a battle on an island, production work must go on and so must food distribution. By forming the combat corps there is no fundamental change from the former practice, but the primary effect will be preservation and improvement of the corps in a productive sense. On the other hand, the army command must be trusted to tackle the task with wisdom."	ABC on 3 June 45 told how air raids are disrupting transportation, but the Japanese government claims quick repair. GID Report No. 435 on 3 April says that transportation in Japan's Inner Zone is the "only factor which might conceivably cause a sudden complete breakdown in the Japanese war machine."
ABC Daily Monitor 25 July 45 B-2, p. 1 (u)	b. Domei news in English Morse on 24 July regarding Tokyo: "As a measure to ensure sure and prompt delivery of important postal matter, the government decided to inaugurate, as from 26 July, an 'official business postal' service. Under this system, special attention will be given to urgent postal matters sent to or from government offices. . . services, municipalities, factories, transport agencies and others engaged in war-important business."	That the army has taken charge of the Jap land express transportation was announced by the Japanese Home Radio Service on 30 June 45.
ABC Daily Monitor 27 July 45 C-4 (u)	c. In English to the United States on 26 July, Tokyo Overseas announced, "It has been customary for the Labor Service Corps throughout the Japanese prefectures to go to Manchukuo every spring to engage in farming on national service farms set up all over Manchuria and to return to Japan at the end of the harvest time. <u>But this year all the Labor Service Corps will remain in Manchukuo to assist in the productive field during the off-season.</u> "	The Manchukuo Labor Service Corps announcement might indicate (1) inadequacy of supply lines with the homeland; (2) necessity for increased production other than where B-29 bombs may fall,

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Objective: Show Inadequacy of Land Forces (4)

12 Aug 45

Source	Data	Remarks
<p>G-2 Special Report No. A-218, 14 Jul 45, p. 10, (s)</p>	<p>With Russia's declaration of war, the Kwantung army and Japan's system of conscription are of interest. According to a PW interrogation:</p> <p>The assignment of men conscripted in Manchuria direct to the Kwantung army units began in 1941. The Japanese in Manchuria were required to register temporary residence. Reservists, who had served a term in the army and who had been returned to civil life, were required to register temporary residence if away from home for more than two weeks. Children born in Manchuria were registered permanent and temporarily at the parent's respective permanent and temporary places of domicile. Upon coming of age, men were summoned for military physical examination. Reports were returned to the divisional district of their permanent domicile in Japan, where classification was made and whence notification of time and place of report was sent to the conscript. Prior to the war, conscripts were allowed to signify preference as to branch of service and area of service. Such preferences were granted or refused according to the exigencies of the time.</p>	<p>Although this PW was examined in Manchuria, he was in Japan at the time of his call-up. He could not explain why he had been ordered to report directly to Manchuria while others in the same classification were processed at the regiment's replenishment unit in Japan.</p>
<p>G-2 Special Report No. A-217, 17 July 45, p. 26, (s)</p>	<p>Another PW, who was attached to the 2 Inf Regt. of the 14 Div. in Manchuria, stated that his division, while stationed in Manchuria, received replacements only from the Utsunomiya District; that it did not train men to be sent to other units. All replacements (recruits and those who already had completed their basic) received the same training in Manchuria. In 1943-44 approximately 80% of the replacements were recruits.</p>	<p>This information was based primarily on his training while at an NCO school in 1940; but PW added that tactics have not changed up to March 1944, when he left Manchuria for Polesiu.</p>

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Objective: Show Incompetence of Military Leadership (8)

12 Aug 45

Source

Data

G-2 Summary,
6 Aug 45,
P. 4, (s)

An analysis of Tokyo Broadcasts 25 and 26 July 45:

The Japanese claim that the effect of Allied bombing has been to steel and stiffen Japanese resistance. The Japanese people are warned of bigger and more vigorous air raids and naval shelling and that as a result the transportation system will break down. This gloomy realism is offset by reassuring statements; that the system of fortification now completed is designed to offset the breakdown of transportation; that "many new weapons" for a counterattack are now on the secret list; that aircraft production figures are much higher than is generally believed; that underground factories are in operation; that stocks have been accumulated to offset the blockade; that industries and installations have already been transferred to safe regions; that defensive strategy will make full use of the mountainous terrain and finally, "If the enemy is afraid to land for fear of coming face to face with the Japanese, we shall wait 20 years, 30 years or even 50 years".

The heights of self-deception reached by the Japanese are well illustrated by the following examples:

This is how a "military correspondent" proves that Okinawa was a Japanese victory.

"If we quietly analyze the whole course of the Okinawa operation we find that it was a victory. We must not only think about the things that appear on the surface. In this respect it is significant that in the United States, who has won on the surface, there is severe criticism. It was a great wound to America to have suffered a big blow at Okinawa to the center of her Pacific front-line power....Thus we can point out besides the physical war result, that we can count as invisible results such things as having caused the enemy to be scared of our Special Attack Corps, thus it can be said that the Okinawa operation was a big operational victory."

The growing fear and panic in the Japanese mind may be deduced from the advice that "the aggressor is to be awaited not only with arms, but with a calm mind that controls them." The leaders are doing everything to stimulate resistance and to maintain themselves in power. (Analysis by ATIS GHQ)

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Objective: Show Incompetent Leadership on Home Front (9)

12 Aug 45

Source	Data
AAF Intell. Sum. No. 283 4 Aug 45 p. 36 (s)	<p><u>Tokyo Housing Problem</u></p> <p>a. Each inhabitant of the 1,200 emergency houses to be built in Tokyo will have 27 square feet of living space which he can call all his own, according to available information on Japan's attempts to ease the housing shortage which has resulted from Allied bombings. A typical house for 29 persons will have two rooms, one of 216 square feet and the other of 324, or a total of 540 square feet. The dimensions of the smaller room will probably be 12 by 18 feet and the larger 12 by 27 or possible 18 by 18. A small kitchen and cupboard space for bedding will increase the over-all square footage to 648.</p>
AAF Intell. Sum. No. 283 4 Aug 45 p. 50 (s)	<p><u>Remember the Reichsmarks</u></p> <p>b. Tokyo, 23 July, Domestic: "On 20 July, at a regular cabinet meeting, Finance Minister Hirose reported on the inflation problem now confronting Japan. He said that the government is responsible for the present inflation. However, the government, although trying to avoid it, possibly cannot do it."</p>

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Objective: Encourage the People to Save Themselves and Country (11)

12 Aug 45

Source

III Amphibious
Corps, G-2 Re-
port, 5 July 45

(c)

Data

The following summary of psychological warfare trends, discerned during the Okinawa operation, are to be considered in planning for future operations:

(a) Analysis of the Trend toward Mass Surrenders -- The following are suggested as factors which produced the trend toward mass surrenders on Okinawa:

(1) There were large numbers of unarmed, poorly-trained, rear area troops and Home Guardsmen who were not professionally nor spiritually prepared to carry out an effective defense. Until the last phases of the operation they were needed to perform supply, transport, and depot duties, and had virtually no time for organization and training as combat units. This is in contrast to small island garrisons previously encountered which were better armed and had practically no rear area troops.

(2) Surrenders were induced by the presence of civilian refugees, the example set by them in surrendering, and the opportunity provided enemy troops to surrender with civilians or disguised as civilians. 34.4% of the PsW taken in the Corps sector were dressed in civilian clothes.

(3) Japanese officers were unable to maintain as close control over their men as in the fighting on more restricted land masses. Captured orders reveal considerable concern over stragglers, and Japanese MP's and unit patrols were assigned to round up these stragglers and return them to front-line units.

(4) One of the major motivations for an all-out last ditch stand at the end of the campaign had been almost eliminated. The Japanese soldiers could see for themselves that U.S. forces had not been seriously weakened by Japan's battle of attrition on Okinawa, and that their resistance had not weakened American determination to defeat Japan, nor slackened the tempo of that offensive. In short, the Japanese are losing the hope that we will tire, and in return are visibly tiring out themselves after many years of unprofitable warfare. It is perhaps significant, then, that the operation did not end in the traditional "banzai" charge.

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Objective: Encourage the People to Save Themselves and Country (11)

12 Aug 45

Source

(Cont'd)

Data

Ibid

(b) Future Trends -- In planning psychological warfare programs for future operations, it is important to note that each of the above-mentioned factors will be more pronounced in operations in the Japanese Homeland:

(1) The number of rear area troops will be even greater as the size of the enemy ground forces encountered increases. In addition there will be depot and administrative units, and various sizeable organizations of Home Guardmen and other patriotic groups.

(2) The surrendering of Japanese civilians will influence Japanese soldiers more strongly than did the surrendering of Okinawans.

(3) The larger combat area will make control of men by officers more difficult, and stragglers will have more opportunity to mingle with civilians.

(4) When Japanese are falling back in the homeland, they will be demoralized to see their homeland being occupied.

(c) Future Objectives -- Operations on the Japanese mainland will undoubtedly call for a change of emphasis in the present objectives of psychological warfare, and this change may also affect the use of psychological warfare on the Corps level. Hitherto the mission of psychological warfare has been primarily to bring in prisoners of potential intelligence value, and secondarily to lower enemy morale and undermine his combat efficiency. Henceforth, the morale-breaking potentialities of psychological warfare may well become the objective or primary concern even to a Corps, while intelligence objectives will become more limited and less vital as the war nears its conclusion. To accomplish this mission of undermining enemy morale, our psychological warfare program must be wider in scope, and more intensive in application.

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Objective: Encourage the People to Throw Themselves on the Mercy of Western Powers (12) 12 Aug 45

Source	Data
KROX, 9 Aug 45; Sheet 59,60 (u)	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>JAPAN'S REACTION TO THE ATOMIC BOMB</u></p> <p>a. Tokyo in English, 8 Aug 45: "With the gradual restoration of order following the disastrous ruin that struck the city of Hiroshima in the wake of the enemy's new type bomb on Monday morning, authorities are still unable to obtain a definite checkup of casualties sustained by the civilian population.</p> <p>"Medical relief agencies that were rushed from neighboring districts were unable to distinguish, much less identify, the dead from the injured.</p> <p>"The impact of the bomb was so terrific that practically all living things, human and animals, were literally seared to death by the tremendous heat and pressure engendered by the blast. All of the dead and injured were burned beyond recognition.</p> <p>"With houses and buildings crushed, including emergency medical facilities, authorities are having their hands full in giving every available relief possible under the circumstances.</p> <p>"The effect of the bomb was widespread. Those outdoors were burned to death while those indoors were killed by the indescribable pressure and heat."</p>
Ibid.	<p>b. Tokyo G.E.A. Service, 8 Aug 45: "During the morning of August sixth, the greater part of Hiroshima city was destroyed by the enemy from his raid in which a new type of bomb was employed, and the number of dead and wounded within the city has reached a staggering total.</p> <p>"The damage wrought by this new bomb is tremendous; gruesome sights resulting from the might of the new bomb cannot be truly described.</p> <p>"Details are being investigated at present.</p>

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Objective: Encourage the People to Throw Themselves on the Mercy of Western Powers (12)

12 Aug 45

Source	(cont'd) Data
	<p>"The corpses of those asphyxiated presents a scene similar to the aftermath of street fighting.</p> <p>"The destructive power of the new bomb is considerable *****. Those outside houses were burned to death while those inside were asphyxiated by the concussion of the blast.</p> <p>"The barbarity of enemy America and Britain, who use this type of bomb so unconcernedly, stirs our blood to indignation."</p>
Ibid.	<p>c. Tokyo in French 8 Aug 45, in reporting on the effects of the bombing on Hiroshima said, "the destructive power of these bombs is indescribable, and the cruel sight resulting from the attack is so impressive that one cannot distinguish between men and women killed by the fire. Corpses are too numerous to be counted."</p>
Ibid.	<p>d. Tokyo, 8 Aug 45: "The enemy's resorting to the new type of bomb in his recent air attack on Hiroshima was bitterly denounced by all metropolitan papers this morning as another manifestation of the enemy's diabolic nature, of his having no scruples about massacring civilians in order to attain his end.</p> <p>"All dailies prominently carried yesterday's (7 Aug 45) Imperial headquarters announcement revealing that enemy aircraft had dropped a new type bomb on Hiroshima last Monday, causing extensive damage to the city."</p>

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Objective: Show How Military Gangsters Have Betrayed the Emperor (16)

12 Aug 45

Source

Data

G-2 Special
Report, A-
217, p. 8
(s)

The following results of G-2 interrogations are pertinent to current conditions. The prisoners are considered "reliable" and their views on post-war, Allied-controlled Japan reflect the general consensus of opinion.

The people as a whole hate war and will cooperate with the Allies in keeping the military from rising again to start another war, says a P/W. The people secretly loathe the war machines, but for many years have been unable to keep down its growth and power. Once the military is crushed the people will desire Allied help in suppressing it forever. A certain strain of society will need a system of re-education as the military has glorified war and the Japanese soldier.

Since his political views clash with the present government in Japan, the P/W desires to see the military blotted out. He is ready to assist the Allies in setting up a new system of government in Japan and knows that the military's lust for power and annexing other countries' territory has caused the war. His views of America have not changed since becoming a prisoner as he has always known America to be interested in her own, and outside countries' welfare.

Another P/W thinks that America will win the war and that the Allied forces can land on Japan proper, but only after having suffered heavy losses. The Emperor will not flee to Manchuria. P/W realizes that Japan's place as a world power is definitely lost and believes that if the emperor is removed from power conditions will become extremely chaotic to a degree never before seen. The best way to insure peace is a just economic settlement. An Imperial Edict would be sufficient to cause the soldiers of the South Sea islands to cease fighting.

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