

Japs Plan to Fight To the Bitter End

Enemy Prepares For Suicidal Defense of Homeland



(image added)

The jackpot question today is: How long will the Japanese continue to fight now that the Germans have been beaten?

Will the Nipponese warlords read the handwriting on the wall and capitulate before the combined Allied might smashes into their home islands? Will they surrender only after their cities have been reduced to rubble and their home army cut to shreds? Or will they attempt a last-ditch stand within their Asiatic mainland fortress of Manchuria even after Japan falls?

Here's the way the situation seems to stack up in the light of recent developments on the Japanese military, political, and home fronts:

There is no evidence to indicate the Japanese will quit before the invasion of Japan or even after it. High Japanese officials are pledged to a death defense of the homeland.

On Apr. 10, 1945, Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo, in his first announcement of the Suzuki government's war policy sounded a call for the people of Japan and occupied Asia to rally to an all-out defense of the empire against the "poisonous" Anglo-American power.

To Fight On

Two days later, Gen. Jiro Minami, president of the Political Assn. of Great Japan, the newly-created totalitarian party, supported Togo's stand with the statement that the association's policy is to "co-operate with the government in a vigorous prosecution of the war to victory."

More recently, the Japanese press has emphasized this determination to fight on. The influential Tokyo paper *Sangyo Keizai* said editorially on Apr. 30: "Japan will fight on regardless of any sudden changes in Europe."

Fight To the End

That the Japanese are preparing to turn their home islands into a fortress is indicated by other reports. On Mar. 22, Premier Koiso, who then headed the government, announced that "a new defensive structure is being built" to meet the approaching invasion.

Defense Plan

According to the plan, the homeland is to be divided into self-sufficient areas which would prevent the Allies from isolating important population regions. Quantities of food, munitions, weapons, and other supplies are to be distributed to key points, which would serve as centers of resistance.

To expedite the creation of this area-by-area system, a measure was rushed through the Diet which would permit the High Command to appropriate "all land, buildings, and materials" essential for defense needs.

To garrison this defense structure, the Japanese are readying an army estimated at approximately 4,000,000.

"The first part of our first-line forces for national defense," said Lt. Gen. Masaharu Homma in a Domei dispatch broadcast by the Tokyo radio on Apr. 17, "is to be played by the Army and Navy Corps, while reservists constitute a second line army." He added that the Civilian Volunteer Corps would form a "third-line army which should concentrate its efforts before the invasion in production."

To provide weapons for a force of this size, Lt. Gen. Reikichi Tada, former director of the Army Ordnance Depot, called for production of "close-quarter" arms that could be used by "all the Japanese people." He urged that Japan's small industries concentrate on manufacture of simple carbines, light machine guns, grenades, and other weapons which could be produced without interfering with the schedules of larger factories turning out heavy equipment.

Specialists

This desperate striving for production and organization is the reason for the recent shakeup in the Japanese Government. The Suzuki cabinet is actually a cabinet of specialists.

Their job, as indicated by the Domei Agency, will be to place "great stress on further strengthening of the home front, closer cooperation between the government and the people and completion of the mobilization of all resources and power of the country."

There is little reason to doubt in the face of this evidence that the Japanese do not intend to surrender before the assault on the home islands. On the contrary, all reports indicate that they plan to carry the struggle until to the bitter end.