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MINUTES OFPACIFIC CONFERENCE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA29 SEPTEMBER - 1 OCTOBER, 1944PART II - FUTURE OPERATIONS

7-1 15. Admiral King stated that he, personally, believed that, if the BONINS were taken alone, they would become a liability. One of the reasons for advocating the FORMOSA Operation is support to CHINA. He does not believe that KYUSHU should be taken until it can be followed very soon by the so-called TOKYO PLAIN Operation. If resources were not available for FORMOSA, he would rather take KYUSHU than LUZON. The main difficulty is the fear of large casualty lists.

Admiral King then gave a brief review of his dealings with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on future PACIFIC Operations.

Admiral Cooke summarized the various Joint Chiefs of Staff papers and proposed directives in connection with future PACIFIC Operations.

Admiral King stated that, at his proposal, the Joint Logistics Committee made a survey of resources available for the FORMOSA Operation. The report of this committee is very discouraging. They state that resources are not available for this operation and that resources will not become available unless GERMANY "folds up" a long time ahead of the proposed date. This paper has also brought about the thought that FORMOSA might have to be by-passed.

Admiral Nimitz stated that General Buckner is convinced that he needs a certain number of men, equipment, etc., and that he (Admiral Nimitz) is in no position to dispute these figures. Admiral Nimitz then submitted to Admiral King a Memorandum recommending changes in the proposed directive for future PACIFIC operations and stated that this recommendation was based on the non-availability of resources and to the very favorable results of our recent carrier attacks. (Recommendation - Support SWPA LUZON Operation, target date 20 December; NANPO SHOTO, target date 20 January, by POA forces; NANSEI SHOTO, target date 1 March, 1945, by POA forces.)

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Admiral Nimitz stated that the proposal for the STHPA Forces to work up through the PHILIPPINES from LEYTE by shore-to-shore operations was discussed with the President and General MacArthur in July. General MacArthur stated that he could not do these operations. Accordingly, because of insufficient resources for FORMOSA, he (Admiral Nimitz) came to the view that the best way to keep pressure on the Japanese was for him to support the LINGAYEN GULF operation proposed by MacArthur and to take NANPO SHOTO and NANSEI SHOTO with POA forces.

Admiral Sherman stated that, if a positive directive were given immediately for FORMOSA and the resources were available, it would be 1 March before we could get ready. This is caused by the size of the operation, - stockpiling of equipment, etc. Also, the cargo shipping picture is not as good as it was.

Admiral Cooke stated that, if shipping only was holding up the operation, he was quite sure that sufficient shipping could be obtained. He feels that it is very undesirable to throw out the FORMOSA Operation because later developments might show that it can be done.

Admiral King asked if we get MacArthur in LEYTE and hold him there, would it be possible for FORMOSA Operation if his remaining forces were transferred to CINCPAA.

Admiral Cooke stated that the Army contends that there are insufficient resources even if we do that.

Admiral King asked, on the basis that there were insufficient resources to do FORMOSA, whether LUZON is the only operation we can do, and, if so, what would we do after LUZON? We cannot remain idle. You propose the RYUKYUS and BONINS. However, there is the danger of the BONINS becoming a liability after we take them.

Admiral Sherman stated that they hoped to eliminate the air in FORMOSA, as they had done in the PHILIPPINES by carrier strikes; also that a carrier strike against JAPANESE EMPIRE is being planned for 5 November. - He read Admiral Halsey's despatch setting forth proposed operations in support of LEYTE Operation. - We expect to take IWO

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JIMA with two divisions and send in a large number of construction personnel to build up fields rapidly. Then, on 1 March, assuming that FORMOSA air is neutralized by carrier strikes assisted by shore-based air from LUZON, it is expected that we can take OKINAWA. We believe the air situation there will develop favorably for us also. The enemy has to come beyond effective fighter protection range.

Admiral Nimitz stated that he still feels about CHINA as does Admiral King, and is of the opinion that we should get as far north as the mouth of the YANGTZE RIVER on the CHINA COAST, or even farther. If we go to KYUSHU, there will be fanatical civilians there to oppose us in addition to the defense forces; whereas, in CHINA the people will not be unfriendly.

Admiral King recalled that the Japanese had to forego an attack on the MARIANAS because of lack of shipping. With regard to your proposed operations, it may be that they will find shipping for an attack. Also, they have their fleet.

Admiral Nimitz said he hoped the Japanese fleet would attempt to interfere with the operations, as this would give us the opportunity we have been waiting for. However, if the Japanese fleet does not come out, we can soon put in a large amount of air, - bombers, torpedo planes, fighters - and they will be destroyed if they attack.

Admiral King asked if you go to OKINAWA, why go to BONINS?

Admiral Nimitz replied that these islands will give fighter protection to B-29's and the Army Air Force is anxious to obtain this protection.

Admiral Cooke remarked that during October, November, and December we will not be fighting Japanese air very much, but if we go to IWO JIMA in January we will bring them into combat again.

Admiral Sherman said that, from April to June we did not destroy much Japanese air; then we did not hit them again heavily until September. This operation will set up a place where we can wear them down continuously.

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Admiral Sherman also stated that, if OKINAWA is taken on 1 March, this will put us in a position to open up the MARITIME PROVINCES in May if this is necessary.

A general discussion then ensued about proper sea-way to be opened up. It was generally agreed that the probable best route was through the NORTHERN KURILES.

Admiral King stated that the Combined Chiefs of Staff had accepted a modus-operandi for the defeat of JAPAN which included going into the JAPANESE MAINLAND - KYUSHU and TOKYO PLAIN. He is of the belief that it is unwise to go into KYUSHU unless we go very shortly thereafter to TOKYO PLAIN also.

Admiral Nimitz asked if the Combined Chiefs of Staff think we should go to the COAST OF CHINA.

Admiral King said that this was implied, but not actually stated. He believes the air and sea blockade of JAPAN, which was approved, implied going to CHINA COAST.

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In connection with the British, Admiral King remarked that they wished to deploy 1,000 Lancasters in the PACIFIC against JAPAN. These planes can duplicate the performance of B-29's by refueling in the air. Fields would have to be found and they don't exist.

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Admiral Sherman stated that General Harmon believes that a number of additional fields can be built in the RYUKUS, but they will be required for our own aircraft.

c. It was decided that the destruction of ports in FORMOSA was desirable if FORMOSA is not occupied.

d. For LEYTE requirements see CINCPOA's despatch 290138.

e. A carrier strike is being planned on JAPAN proper for about 5 November.

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A draft directive for future operations in the PACIFIC to CINCSWPA and CINCPOA was submitted and approved for submission to Joint Chiefs of Staff.

At this time Admiral Nimitz asked what was the national policy regarding CHINA.

Admiral King summed up that:-

- (1) Chiang Kai Shek represents FREE CHINA; and
- (2) We are endeavoring to give CHINA all the lend-lease aid possible.

A general discussion took place at this time regarding the Marine Corps set-up. Admiral Sherman pointed out that one of the big problems was the utilization of all six Marine divisions within a period of 40 days for IWO JIMA and OKINAWA operations. He further stated that the policy of replacement of Army troops in the PACIFIC is not being carried out as if being done in EUROPE.

Admiral King desires to be informed officially that the War Department does not approve of this replacement policy in the PACIFIC. He further stated that, regardless of the Army's policy, he had directed that the Marines employ the replacement methods used by the Army in EUROPE.

16. (a). No comment. (British Fleet in POA)

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(b), (c), and (d). Admiral King stressed very strongly that the British should be told what they can get - and not ask them what they want. The command set-up is to be completely under CINCPOA.

Admiral King further pointed out that CINCPOA could use the units and parts of the British Fleet as he desired. He advised that they should be used as complete units and not mix them, and also advised against using them in support of American assault forces.

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16. (c). Admiral Nimitz stated that the Third Fleet was scheduled to cover the occupation of LUZON and the Fifth Fleet will be employed for the IWO JIMA and OKINAWA operations.

Admiral King inquired as to the advisability of using the Fifth Fleet Commander for the supporting forces in the LUZON Operations and the Third Fleet Commander as the Covering Force - standing by for the Japanese Fleet. He also asked about Halsey being under Spruance for the operations against IWO JIMA and OKINAWA, or FORMOSA.

Admiral Nimitz stated that he was against this idea at present.

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17. No special comment was made on this item, except that Admiral Spruance pointed out that they could always use DE's. (Redeployment on defeat of Germany).

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18. (a) Admiral King questioned the advisability of laying down any more of the present type cruisers.

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(b) It was decided to reclassify the BIRD Class AVP's and they would be employed as they are at present without alterations. They are not to be counted as AVP's.

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(c) Admiral Sherman stated in connection with more Escort Vessels for SWPA that the lines of supply to SWPA have now become more nearly direct and will proceed through the CENTRAL PACIFIC AREA. As a result, it was pointed out that there will be a need for more escorts.

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Admiral King desires a Memorandum brought to him to clarify the escort situation in view of this change in shipping routes.

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VCNO
DCNO (air)
19. (a) General Leavy reported the following progress in construction of VLR airfields in MARIANAS:-

First field on SAIPAN already operational; second field operational 3 October.

First field on TINIAN operational 26 October; second field operational 26 December.

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First field on GUAM operational 29 October; second field operational 1 February, 1945; third field operational 1 March, 1945.

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Admiral King reaffirmed that the first four VLR groups had priority - other groups, up to twelve, will have to be keyed in with the other current operations.

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Admiral Nimitz said that General Harmon had informed him that the arrival of B-29's is as follows:- First five planes will arrive PEARL HARBOR 20 October with approximately five arriving each day thereafter until 9 December when he expects to have a total of 204. The crews of these planes will be composed of old B-24 crews who have been rehabilitated. Admiral Nimitz also stated that General Harmon said that the handling of B-29's is very tricky.

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Admiral Sherman mentioned that General Harmon had pointed out that he felt it would be necessary for all of FORMOSA to be held in order to use VLR groups there because their rate of climb is so slow that they would be in danger of anti-aircraft fire from Japanese held areas.

19. (b) This is an information item and is mentioned on Page 7, under Item 15. (*Use of Lancasters*)