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NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE

JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL



SLEEPWALKING INTO WAR:

THE ALLIED ENTRY INTO THE PACIFIC THEATER OF WWII.

By:

Wing Commander Michael Knapton MEng (Hons)

Royal Air Force

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**SLEEPWALKING INTO WAR:
THE ALLIED ENTRY INTO THE PACIFIC THEATER OF WWII.**

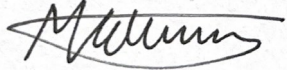
By:


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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

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Professor

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Eric Fowler, Colonel, US Army
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Still, I avow my hope and faith, sure and inviolate, that in the days to come, the British and American peoples will, for their own safety and for the good of all, walk together in majesty, in justice, and in peace.¹

Winston Churchill, address to Joint Session of U.S. Congress, December 26, 1941.

ABSTRACT

Allied intelligence indicated the likelihood of imminent and coordinated Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor on 7 December, the Philippines on 8 December, and British Colonies and key Royal Navy capital ships between 8-10 December 1941. However, strategic paralysis, influenced by political distrust following World War I (WWI) and economic competition with colonial powers, resulted in the U.S. sleepwalking into World War II (WWII) and, initially, an uncoordinated Allied military response. A breakdown in information flow resulted in warnings or indicators not being shared between strategic and operational levels of command. Further, Allied preparedness, critical to victory in all theaters of WWII, was poor.

China's ambitions are dismantling the bedrock of the democratic world order, threatening the long-standing peace among major powers. The implications of the U.S. and its Allies not achieving information advantage, being unable to interpret conflict indicators, and not having a coordinated and integrated coalition response are stark. The U.S. and its Allies must understand that a lack of a coordinated and immediate response would likely cause it to concede the great power competition to China. While deterrence through a credible coalition remains the priority, the U.S. and its Allies need to be in a “Fight Tonight” mindset backed by the readiness of the joint forces warfighting capability.

The lessons and recommendations identify that significant cooperation and coordination between partners must occur immediately to have the required level of effort available for a conflict response. Strategic paralysis and a delay in unlocking Allied warfighting capability, as happened in 1941, will result in operational failure and significant strategic consequences. Success, however, will likely require cross-government and multi-national Allied grand strategic planning to ensure the coalition and all its components are “Integrated by Design.”

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Dedication

For my family, particularly my daughters Lilly and Ava, who have had to develop a new level of understanding during prolonged periods of reading, researching, and writing required to produce this paper. Without family support, this would not have been achievable.

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Without the support of the faculty and staff at the Joint Forces Staff College, the research and writing of a paper such as this would not be possible. In particular, the advice and time dedicated by Dr. Jon Mikolashek, Dr. David Rodearmel, and Dr. Jeffrey Turner demonstrated that old dogs can learn new tricks. For their expertise and, most certainly, patience, I am indebted.

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Defensive warfare, therefore, does not consist of waiting idly for things to happen²

Clausewitz

INTRODUCTION

Key lessons from the WWII Indo-Pacific theater remain relevant today and are crucial to the U.S. and its Allies in preparing for future conflict. There are distinct similarities between Imperial Japan's expansionism throughout the early 20th Century and that of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the early 21st Century. Notably, both nations lack natural resources, inhibiting their desires for national-centered spheres of influence and a "window of strategic opportunity to strengthen their rule and revise the international order in their favor."³ Throughout the 1930s, Japan outlined its vision for an Asian-Pacific empire incorporating colonial and self-governed territories and expanded its Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (GEACPS). An academic study of the period from Japan's full-scale invasion of China in 1937 to 1942, when the tide turned in favor of the Allies, enables an assessment of Allied entry into the Pacific Theater of WWII. By drawing comparisons to the contemporary and analyzing whether relevant lessons have been learned, it is possible to identify recommendations that, if applied, will positively influence the preparedness of the U.S. and its Allies for conflict in the Indo-Pacific today.

In late November and early December 1941, Allied intelligence "of the special kind"⁴ indicated the likelihood of imminent and coordinated attacks against Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, British Colonies in Malaya, and key Royal Navy capital ships between 7-10 December 1941. Whether discounted or distrusted by the U.S. politically, there was no operational or tactical response. Strategic paralysis, influenced by political distrust following WWI and economic competition with colonial powers, resulted in the U.S. sleepwalking into WWII and, initially, an uncoordinated Allied military response. A breakdown in information flow resulted in warnings or indicators not being effectively shared between strategic and operational levels of command. Further, alliances were critical to victory in all theaters of WWII, but Allied preparedness for conflict in the Indo-Pacific was poor.

Given the importance of information in the contemporary world and the parallels to the 1937-42 period of study, it becomes critical to understand what indicators of Japanese intent were available preceding their attack and to provide an analysis of the preparedness of the Allies. Four distinct but progressively violent international diplomatic relations conditions of Peace, Competition, Crisis, and Conflict are the study's baseline. The situation in the Indo-Pacific was highly complex in the early 20th century, with competition between traditional European colonial powers and the emerging U.S. and Japan as regional competitors. Research and analysis identify where the geo-political warning signs of a crisis may have been missed and discuss how the conflict became inevitable.

Intelligence communities of the U.K. and U.S. had strategic information of imminent attacks by the Japanese, yet there was no operational reaction to these warnings. The presence of indicators in a geo-political and military context supports the phenomenon that the U.S. effectively sleepwalked into war. Surprise was vital to achieve Japan's strategic intent and to escalate from competition to conflict with a single, defining blow. Similarly, it seems likely that the PRC will seek an opportunity to escalate directly to conflict and invade Taiwan, which is “essential to realizing national rejuvenation”⁵ and aimed at “realizing PRC’s complete reunification.”⁶ Therefore, lessons about information advantage and missed indicators must be understood and applied to underpin the U.S. political narrative to “seize this decisive decade” in “lockstep with Allied and Partners.”⁷

Parallel research demonstrates a lack of Allied preparedness for coalition warfare in the Indo-Pacific WWII Theater. Within this context, examination of Allied relationships at the commencement of hostilities suggests this was a significant factor. When contrasted against the more effective and coordinated warfighting alliance that emerged during 1942 as Allied relationships developed and matured, the factors resulting in the lack of initial coordination provide valuable lessons. Applying and learning from this WWII historical case

study is critical to contemporary U.S. and Allied preparedness. Conclusions identify that despite the rhetoric of Allied nations' National Security Strategies (NSS),⁸ the U.S. and its Allies are not as prepared for a peer conflict as they should be. Strategic recommendations are provided, supporting the priorities of National Strategies and underpinning the conclusion that Allies at all levels must be "integrated by design." Ultimately, if you cannot deter or influence China in transitioning rapidly from competition to conflict, measures must be implemented to ensure effective Allied preparedness for coalition warfighting.

The democratic world order that has maintained Great-Power peace since 1945 is being eroded by the PRC. The implications of the U.S. and its Allies not achieving information advantage, being unable to interpret or respond to conflict indicators, and not having a coordinated and integrated coalition response are stark. Many scholars believe war with China is inevitable. Whether true or not, the U.S. must understand the impact that a lack of a coordinated and immediate response with its Allies would likely cause it to concede the great power competition to China. While deterrence through a credible coalition remains the priority, the U.S. and its Allies need to be in a "fight tonight" mindset backed by the readiness of the Joint Force (JF) warfighting capability.

The lessons and recommendations identify that significant cooperation and coordination between partners must occur immediately to have the required level of effort available for a conflict response. Strategic paralysis and a delay in unlocking Allied warfighting capability, as happened in 1941-42, would result in operational failure and significant strategic consequences. Success, however, will likely require cross-government and multi-national Allied grand strategic planning to ensure the coalition and all its components are integrated by design.

The Pacific theater of WWII witnessed some of the most intense and hard-fought battles in history. From sleepwalking into conflict in 1941, the U.S. and its Allies, through

perseverance, “strategic initiative, strategic acumen, intelligence apparatuses, resources and combat effectiveness,”⁹ ultimately turned the tide against the Japanese forces. The Indo-Pacific theater highlighted the importance of naval warfare, naval airpower, and innovative strategies such as island-hopping. Max Hastings, a renowned military historian, describes the Allied campaign throughout the Pacific in a book titled *Nemesis*, or “retributive justice,” according to dictionary definitions.¹⁰ He discusses the atrocities conducted by the Japanese and a “nation guilty of collective rejection of historical fact.”¹¹ The contemporary relevance is that it is more critical than ever for the U.S. and its Allies to be collectively prepared, trained, and ready to counter aggression and challenges to the Rules-Based International Order (RBIO); retributive justice is not an option.

CHAPTER 1: Imperial Japanese Expansion — A Challenge to Dominant Powers

The geo-political interwar period was highly complex, particularly the numerous interwoven pacts and alliances, colonial nations seeking to hold empires, and a strong U.S. isolationism movement. Analysis of the Japanese expansion throughout the Indo-Pacific region draws parallels to contemporary China. A lack of natural resources is a significant factor for the PRC today, as it was for Japan during the 1937-42 case study period. However, the application and increasing severity of sanctions by the U.S. effectively backed Japan into a corner, making conflict highly likely, if not inevitable. A better understanding of Japanese culture and evaluating the economic, diplomatic, and political indicators may have provided a better strategic picture. Additionally, U.S. and Allied awareness of the increasingly active Japanese military and information instruments of power demonstrates that all indicators of Japanese hostilities were available. These strategic warning signs were not responded to in 1941 - are the U.S. and its Allies better at reading such warnings today?

Following WWI, many anti-colonial feelings existed in the U.S., which continued throughout the 1920s and the Great Depression. A strong isolationist movement, rooted in a desire to maintain the U.S.'s non-intervention policy and keep the country out of foreign conflicts, gained traction in the decade leading up to Pearl Harbor. In effect, WWI fear plagued U.S. decision-making. "Isolationism remained a critical force in the 1940 presidential election,"¹² the strength of which caused President Roosevelt to controversially declare during a campaign broadcast, "I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again. Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars."¹³

Despite this significant internal political and populist pressure, Roosevelt won the 1940 election. His interventionist economic support to the U.K. continued. In March 1941, the Lend-Lease Act provided the U.K., which had used all its gold reserves and traded in significant assets such as British Petroleum, for critical resources to continue the war effort.

Until Tokyo and Berlin ended the argument in December 1941, isolationist movements in the U.S. remained a critical factor, strategically blinding the decision-makers. “Whatever the president’s personal wishes, Congress remained a critical check on U.S. policy.”¹⁴

Yet, cooperation, particularly intelligence sharing, with the U.K. was occurring but was shrouded in secrecy from prying eyes in the more conservative political opposition. “Roosevelt emphasized the need for absolute secrecy – for his domestic political reasons, not those of security.”¹⁵ While intelligence cooperation was happening, it was not as effective as it could have been, potentially due to lingering distrust at senior levels. Therefore, despite the somewhat obvious intent of Imperial Japan to become the dominant power in the Pacific and the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy signed in 1940, the general view in the U.S. was that “The British were far more likely than the Americans to be the victims of any anti-western aggression in the Pacific. Why should the U.S. be obliged to save the British Empire?”¹⁶ Ultimately, anti-colonial and isolationist sentiments impacted the ability of the Allies to plan effectively for conflict during the time of competition.

Different authors offer alternative and opposing views in the many books related to the much-studied Pearl Harbor and the events leading to the Japanese attack. Johns, a retired U.S. Army Aviator, authored a conspiracy-based book *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*. He considers that with the Lend-Lease Act, “President Roosevelt, aided by the Democratic majority in both Houses, enabled American military aid to warring nations [which] clearly breached international law, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was the natural response”¹⁷ This is inaccurate, but demonstrates a perspective the Japanese may have interpreted as provocation or pushing them from competition towards crisis.

Alternatively, the conspiracy account about *Operation SNOW* describes the espionage activities of Soviet agents and Communist sympathizers at the heart of the U.S. government, most notably Harry Dexter White, a top U.S. official accused of espionage for the Soviet

Union. He concludes that a “Soviet mole in FDR’s White House triggered Pearl Harbor.”¹⁸ Therefore, there are a multitude of differing accounts from different viewpoints discussing from the U.S. perspective how the nation ended up being attacked at Pearl Harbor, the sequencing of political and strategic events, and why the attack occurred. This is due primarily to the event's enormity and public outcry at the U.S. being attacked on its own soil.

The critical aspect to understand and consider is that despite the political theories and missed strategic indicators, operationally, the U.S. was taken entirely by surprise, awoken from national slumber and inactivity by the Pearl Harbor attack on 7 December 1941.

Many factors during the inter-war years allowed Japan to expand throughout the Indo-Pacific. Vast swathes of literature discuss the inter-twined and complex relations, including the detailed account by Frank in *Tower of Skulls*.¹⁹ He describes the pacts, alliances, ideologies, cultures, and power shifts before and after the coordinated Japanese attacks throughout the Southern Pacific and on Pearl Harbor. While the extent and coordination of these attacks may have been masked initially, the Japanese left sufficient indicators to the U.S. and its Allies. Ultimately, these attacks were targeted at specific strategic objectives, enabling the Japanese to achieve their political and economic end-state of capturing the oil-rich Dutch East Indies. Understanding how these signposts may have been missed and considering the viewpoint of all key stakeholders during the period of Japanese expansion enables the lessons to be applied within the contemporary context.

Colonial Orders and great power rivalry dominated relations between the Allies. Figure 1 portrays the geographic extent of Japan’s expansion in the Indo-Pacific to December 1941 and provides an excellent snapshot of the situation before the coordinated Japanese attacks. The British Empire, including Australia at the time, was the major power in the Southern Pacific, with the U.S. colony of the Philippines to the north. France and the Netherlands had fallen in 1940; Vichy France was entirely collaborationist with the Japanese

in French Indochina; the Dutch East Indies remained under Dutch colonial rule. Figure 2 represents the disposition of the majority of U.S. and Allied forces on 1 December 1941.

Post-WWI, economic rivalry between the U.S. and the U.K. within the Indo-Pacific and a strong, if not hypocritical, anti-colonial national narrative led to tensions. This was a stable relationship built on trust and certainly not strained, as was framed by some historians who “exaggerated the importance of the differences.”²⁰ The fates of the U.K. and the U.S. were tied together, where trust and “honest disagreements about the best policy options”²¹ are considered strengths rather than weaknesses. As an Alliance, the U.S. dominated the Eastern Pacific, with an increasing reliance on trade with Australia. Through the U.K., the Dominions aligned (Colonial nations of Australia, Canada, and N.Z. tied to the U.K. politically and economically). This Allied backbone should have been able to assess and share indications and intelligence of Japan’s imperialist expansion intent, their imminent attacks, and their shifting of the situation directly from competition to conflict.

The U.S. and Roosevelt remained stubbornly neutral to the emergence, rise, and expansionist intent of the Nazi ideology throughout Europe. For 45 years they watched, and even supported for a time after WWI, Imperial Japan’s expansion in the Indo-Pacific and provided only a limited response to the invasion of Manchuria in 1931. This prolonged neutrality in the face of European and Indo-Pacific expansionist autocracies played a significant factor in deafening U.S. senses that war was inevitable and approaching.

Frank's account evidenced Japan’s intent to become the dominant power in the Pacific and significant factors that should have provided warning or indicators to the Allies.²² Their expansion from 1895-1941 prior to challenging European colonial powers or the U.S. and the proximity of their empire is portrayed in Figure 1. Significantly, before the period of study, the invasion in 1931 of the natural-resource-rich Manchuria for economic and strategic gains was the first real demonstration of Japan’s imperial ambition and strategic aim of regional

dominance. Following the League of Nations' condemnation of Japan's invasion of Manchuria, on 27 March 1933, "the Japanese withdrew from the League and renounced the three Washington treaties signed in 1921."²³ While the invasion led to the U.S. imposing some sanctions against Japan, it was not an effective economic deterrent for further aggression. The Japanese Foreign Minister, Yosuke Matsuoka, demonstrated utter defiance during his speech to the League, "announcing Japan's departure with pride."²⁴ Collectively, these events were, however, a key indicator of the timeline they were working towards as they grew the Imperial Japanese Empire.

If these indicators were not significant enough, the Japanese full-scale invasion of China demonstrated without question their GEACPS intent. This conflict between Japan and China, the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), demonstrated to the Allies the barbaric nature of "institutionalized Japanese brutality."²⁵ This ruthlessness would continue during every battle of the Pacific until the Japanese unconditional surrender in 1945.

The growing Anglo-American-Chinese alliance is worth unpacking since the Chinese had fixed substantial Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) forces in China. After the IJA invaded in 1937, the U.S. and U.K. provided China with some military and financial assistance but were reluctant to get involved in a direct conflict with Japan. In 1938, the U.S. Senate passed the Neutrality Act of 1937, prohibiting the sale of arms to any country engaged in a war. This act impacted Japan significantly. However, the U.S. continued to provide China with non-military assistance, such as loans and medical supplies. The 1941 Lend-Lease Act restricted the impacts of the neutrality constraint on Allies and allowed supplies to be provided to China via the British and the Burma Road. According to James F. Byrnes, the U.S. SoS, 1945-1947, "the U.S. had a vital interest in seeing China survive as a free and independent nation. If China were to fall, the consequences for the U.S. would be serious indeed."²⁶

By 1939, there was essentially a stalemate between Japan and China. War continued to absorb vast resources from both nations, something the Japanese could ill afford. Given this climate, the final and critical action in making war inevitable was the increasingly severe and crippling sanctions imposed on Japan by the U.S. between 1931-41. “The July 1941 freeze on Japanese assets and embargo on all exports was decisive in committing Tokyo to fight since 80 percent of its oil supplies came from the U.S. and Dutch East Indies.”²⁷ Thus, from the Japanese perspective, the U.S. had chosen sides by cutting off their vital resources while supplying the U.K. and China. Japan was reaching a desperation point.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Mao Zedong, had ceased its internal civil war with the ruling Chinese Nationalist Party under Chiang Kai-Shek. Initially, the Soviet Union supported the Chinese struggle but mostly aligned with CCP ideology. Japan had a border skirmish with the Soviet Union in 1938 before the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact of 13 April 1941,²⁸ which remained until hostilities erupted in 1945. The Neutrality Pact was significant as it allowed neutrality between the states amid rising tensions in European and Pacific theaters but further complicated the intertwined global relationships. However, it also made it clearer (at that stage) to the Allies who the enemies were. Since the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed in 1939, aligned the Soviet dictatorship with Nazi Germany before the invasion of Poland, and the Soviets now had a Pact with Japan, it was clear who the global adversaries were.

The primary impact of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact was to enable numerous Japanese (and Soviet) troops positioned on the border to be relocated where needed. There were two second-order impacts, however, that affected the U.S. and its Allies. First, under the terms of the Pact, Soviet support to China ceased such that China was now entirely reliant on the U.K., and later the U.S., for its war supplies. Second, with Japan extremely short of resources, it would require expansion northwards or southwards. Despite the IJA seeking an

expansion North, this Pact politically limited this option since an invasion of the Soviet Union would risk their vast resources being unleashed on the Japanese. The Pact, therefore, provided a significant indicator to the U.S. and Allies as to Japanese GEACPS intent and isolated a key ally in China. Through their territorial gains in 1941-42, “Japan gained the raw materials it needed: 88% of the world’s rubber, 54% of its tin, 28% of its rice, large supplies of its tungsten, magnesium, and iron ore along with the oilfields of the Dutch East Indies.”²⁹

However, it was the Japanese signing of the Tripartite, or Axis, Pact on 27 September 1940, with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, that perhaps sealed the ultimate fate of imperial Japan in 1945.³⁰ In doing so, Matsuoka “showed his talent for coercive diplomacy,” claiming that this “would end any American threat to Japanese imperialism.”³¹ Crucially, the Tripartite Pact supported the U.S. and U.K. rhetoric of an encapsulated global conflict critical to Churchill’s narrative in securing U.S. economic and resource support to the U.K. The path to conflict was marked by complex relationships and developing inter-theater Pacts. The Japanese narrative was one of a nation fixed on a conflict with the U.S. and European colonial powers in the Indo-Pacific.

For the Allies, Operation BARBAROSSA, which commenced on 22 June 1941, was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it muddied the waters in terms of the complexity of global alliances within the Indo-Pacific Theater. On the other hand, it provided much-needed relief to the U.K. since Hitler had opened a second front to the East against the Soviet Union. By necessity, not choice, an Anglo-Soviet alliance was agreed in late June 1941 as a pragmatic response to a common enemy — Nazi Germany. It established the basis of what would become the Allied Powers but also complicated WWII's Indo-Pacific Theater.

Two other geographical areas were significant in the Indo-Pacific Theater of WWII and remain so today. First, Formosa (Taiwan) provided the Japanese with a secure stepping-stone from which to mount the offensive to the south in 1941, particularly to the Philippines.

It also formed a critical line of defense for the expanding Japanese empire and harbors for its small but vital merchant and cargo vessels and to conduct naval operations. Contemporarily, Taiwan remains politically and geographically significant. Its capture by the PRC would enable them to project power forwards, add a line of defense, and gain the leading microchip-producing nation in the world in terms of quality and quantity. The PRC narrative indicates they seek an opportunity to escalate directly from competition to conflict and invade Taiwan to “realize national rejuvenation”³² and, with it, “PRC’s complete reunification.”³³

Second, one of the most overlooked Indo-Pacific regions of WWII was Burma and India. Particularly, the Burma Road was critical to enable supplies to reach, or not reach, China. Many historians certainly present them as secondary to the naval warfare and island-hopping of the Central Pacific campaign. However, several factors made Japanese expansion and the subsequent Allied campaigns in these areas crucial. It provided another axis on which an already stretched JIA had to fight - and fight hard they did. Significantly, it shaped the post-WWII political landscape due to a “legacy of anti-European imperialism that continued after the war and led to the eventual withdrawal of all colonial governments in the following decades.”³⁴ Thus, by simply replacing European imperialism with Asian imperialism, Japan failed to capitalize on its strategy of a GEACPS. However, for various reasons, the Allies failed to respond to indicators of further Japanese expansion to capture colonial nations, and it is evident that an element of distrust between the U.S. and U.K. during the interwar years impacted Allied preparedness for coalition warfare. There were opportunities to collectively assess indicators and warnings, coordinate effectively, and identify and capitalize on the over-extension of Japan in every direction.

There are different narratives of the events, however. By late 1940, two things were evident in the Pacific. First, the stalemate in China “had drained Japanese resources,” and U.S. sanctions made Japan “desperate for raw materials.”³⁵ They, therefore, needed

significant economic expansion to the resource-rich islands to the south and, with it, control of the Pacific. Second, Japanese expansion would replace the colonial past with a new world order. In hindsight, it may be clear that a clash of cultures could not be averted. Still, it also suggests the possibility of other indications the Allies missed that made the sudden jump from competition to crisis to conflict inevitable.

Japan aligned its naval strategy with Mahan, the renowned U.S. naval strategist, who approached sea power as Jomini, a military theorist of the Napoleon era, did on land. “Mahan’s thesis was that sea power had been the determining factor in establishing the great empires of the past.”³⁶ Japan sought to emulate the theorist’s principles and establish regional command of the sea. In “July 1899, an Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) officer wrote to Captain Mahan”³⁷ following the publication of his book *The Influence of Sea Power on History*. The Japanese became “faithful students of the U.S. naval historian.”³⁸ The U.S. and Japanese were thus aligned doctrinally. “Roosevelt, a close friend and student of Mahan, understood the importance of sea power, and it was no accident that during his administration, steps were taken to strengthen the Navy.”³⁹ There was a stark difference between the nations, however. The Japanese command structure had a distinct lack of clear civilian control. Therefore, the IJN had considerable sway in developing the Japanese national strategy. An alignment with Mahanian U.S. Navy doctrine for over 40 years preceding their attacks in December 1941 was possibly the first missed indicator of them seeking control of the sea.

Japan intended to use their battle fleets to “seek out and destroy [the] enemy battle fleet”⁴⁰ in Pearl Harbor (U.S. Navy) and Malaya (Royal Navy), in line with Mahan’s doctrine to “concentrate one’s naval forces at the decisive points to destroy or master the enemy’s battle fleet.”⁴¹ While this indicator may not have seemed relevant before December 1941, it gave the U.S. and its Allies a clear signal that they would seek to reproduce this strategy in future battles. Therefore, IJN’s overemphasis on offensive tactics would leave them

vulnerable to attrition and superior Allied intelligence, which would be their strategic undoing. This was demonstrated when the tide turned in the Indo-Pacific, and this time, the “pillar of fire was from Japanese aircraft carriers burning and sinking after the pivotal naval battle of Midway on 4 June 1942.”⁴²

Japan felt antagonized and provoked by the U.S. Following the invasion of China in 1937, the U.S. increasingly provided supplies critical to the Chinese war effort. This, along with surplus military equipment from the British Empire, was critical to keeping China in the war and fixing Japanese forces. In his book, *Reassessing Pearl Harbor*, Johns considers that “the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was the natural response” to the U.S. sending “military aid to warring nations.”⁴³ It was undoubtedly a factor in Japanese decision-making. However, the armament supply to China, through the back door or under the Lend-Lease Act, with the U.K. as the broker and the Burma Road as the supply line, was considered antagonistic. Since Japanese diplomatic messages were intercepted, decrypted, and read, it is clear that the political and strategic indicators of an enraged Japan were there.

This was further exacerbated by the increasingly severe sanctions the U.S. and the Allies imposed. These were fully justified as a deterrence measure. However, from the psyche of Imperial Japan, it was tantamount to an offensive action or an act of war. The final measure imposed by the U.S. was to cut off the one thing that impacted Japan’s expansionist strategy more than anything: their oil supply.

Militarily, the Japanese considered the U.S. moving forces into the Pacific aggressive and antagonistic. By “January 1940, Roosevelt had already instructed the U.S. Navy to shift the battlefleet to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.”⁴⁴ Therefore, from a Japanese perspective, the U.S. escalated the situation from competition to a crisis. The U.S. oil embargo on Japan, with the knowledge that they had between 12-18 months of reserves, implies that the U.S. accepted the inevitability of war when the sanctions were placed. Put another way, the inevitability of

war effectively became a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Japanese were “galvanized by the judgment that oil starvation would make an attack essential within the next 18 months unless the U.S. reversed its economic sanctions.”⁴⁵ The military, economic, and political indicators were available but either missed or ignored, or the threat from the Japanese was not considered sufficient. This view is backed up using recently declassified evidence. In *Operation Snow*, Koster states that in December 1941, “Henry Stimson, the secretary of war, knew that war was about to break out”⁴⁶ from the decoded Japanese diplomatic signals. Further, evidence shows that “Washington sat on this information – apparently because they wanted some sort of war but did not expect the severity of Pearl Harbor.”⁴⁷

However, the U.S. Congress *Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack* in 1946 “concluded that the diplomatic actions of the U.S. provided no provocation whatever for the attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor.”⁴⁸ This implies the indicators of Japanese escalation were missed as, at the time, the U.S., outwardly at least, and the Roosevelt government did not consider their actions antagonistic. Given the conservative isolationist movements within the U.S. throughout this period, it also shows that strategic paralysis and political disbelief led to the indicators being ignored. Finally, this further demonstrates that within the highly complex international environment, when one side is “embarked on a career of conquest no less ambitious nor avowed than that of the Nazis,”⁴⁹ then any actions to oppose them will be treated as a provocation or a threat to their ambition.

Japan needed a solution. Facing the starvation of the resources to fuel their expansion, conquering and raping the Dutch East Indies of its natural resources was the only feasible option. This was their strategic end. Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Marshal Admiral of the IJN and architect of the surprise attacks, considered that in order to achieve this aim, they needed to accomplish a series of operational objectives. Due to the distance involved, they needed to take Malaya and the Philippines as staging posts for this assault, in addition to halting the

abilities of the Allies to resupply China through Burma. An assault on U.S. territory of the Philippines would likely draw the U.S. into the Indo-Pacific War, and the U.S. Pacific fleet had approximate parity with the IJN but with significantly more ships in construction.⁵⁰ Therefore, the U.S. Pacific Fleet needed to be removed as a threat, so the plan for a deliberate and surprise attack on Pearl Harbor to eradicate the fleet at anchor was formulated and coordinated with the other attacks.

Operation Snow discusses a Communist mole inside the White House pushing the U.S. down the path of war with Japan to promote a post-war era of Communist supremacy led by the Soviet Union.⁵¹ *Reassessing Pearl Harbor* considers that through the Lend-Lease Act or sanctioning of Japan, Roosevelt effectively declared war on Japan. There are certainly elements of truth in each account told from different perspectives. Understanding the differing narratives is essential when identifying missed indicators by the U.S. and Allies. Analysis indicates that the primary lessons don't change regardless of rhetoric.

Unlike its European Allies, U.S. territory had never been threatened or attacked throughout WWI and the Nazi expansion in Europe during WWII. There was an aura of national denial that anyone could pose such a threat – after all, who would have the audacity? This is a decisive factor in misinterpreting or simply missing indicators and warning signals of Japanese intent. This explains why the threat of the Japanese attacks was not relayed from the political or strategic levels to the operational level within the U.S.

Sleepwalking can be defined as being neither asleep nor awake but not fully aware of what is happening. Typically occurring during the deepest stage of non-rapid eye movement sleep, the brain is not fully awake, and the body is relaxed. As a result, sleepwalking people may not be aware of their surroundings or actions. Due to various political, public, military, and economic factors, nationally, the U.S. was collectively guilty of sleepwalking into the Indo-Pacific Theater of WWII. Of its Allies, the U.K., with its sense of colonial arrogance

and already heavily engaged in Europe, similarly failed to comprehend the indicators and warnings sufficiently and slumbered into the Indo-Pacific conflict.

Contemporarily, for the U.S. and its Allies to avoid sleepwalking into the subversive war that the PRC is waging, they must apply the lessons from the past but understand that the very nature of war has changed. The RBIO faces a deliberate strategic threat in the contemporary environment through the PRC's Unrestricted Warfare (UW)⁵² and increasing grey zone⁵³ activities. In the 1930s, it was difficult to comprehend the rise of fascism and imperialism. Since the 2010s, the U.S. has struggled to comprehend and accept that its adversaries think differently. Following the shock and awe of Desert Storm in 1991, the PRC realized it was significantly outmatched militarily by the U.S. Using the rhetoric of "national rejuvenation and its return to the world stage as the proud middle kingdom,"⁵⁴ they are subversively attempting to reconfigure the world order by exploiting traditional Western beliefs. They are building capabilities that limit U.S. and Allied military effectiveness through UW and grey zone activities. In short, this is the combined and unrestricted use of anything non-physical and often non-attributable, designed to maximize the harm to the U.S. anywhere and everywhere.⁵⁵ For the PRC, this creates the conditions required for their military to be effective – for example, to invade and seize Taiwan.

The PRC continues to expand and build its empire throughout the South Pacific with the 10-dash line – the former 9-dash line was increased to surround Taiwan in 2023. This geographic area formed the heart of the Japanese GEACPS expansion and is critical to the PRC's ability to assert control and influence in the region. Figure 5 shows a side-by-side comparison of Japanese expansion through 1942 against the PRC's 10-dash line in 2023, designed to legitimize their expansionist aims against repeated UN condemnation of their illegal activities.⁵⁶ In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled against the validity of PRC's territorial claims in the South China Sea. They are becoming increasingly aggressive

in controlling the area and using UW and grey zone activities to coerce other nations to concede their territorial claims over disputed territories vast distances from the PRC.

In line with the regional expansion, Xi Jinping's government's signals and messaging are comparable to those from Imperial Japan in the 1930s and 40s. The U.S. and its Allies missed, or at least did not respond effectively, to the warnings and indicators of Japan's increasing aggression towards them. The result of these missed indicators was that Japan took the opportunity to escalate from competition directly to conflict with its coordinated attacks on Pearl Harbor and South Pacific territories. The PRC has provided political warnings and indicators. Jinping considers that "the Party has led the people in independently blazing the path to success over the past century, and the success of Marxism in China has been realized by Chinese Communists through our endeavors."⁵⁷ Identifying and interpreting the internal and covert indicators within the CCP is essential to understanding the PRC's proximity to escalating from competition to conflict with the U.S. to realize their political ends.

It is clear that Japan over-extended its GEACPS geographically against the resources available (Figure 3). For example, their defense-in-depth would have been less stretched if they had limited their expansion in the Central Pacific to the Mariana Islands rather than the Marshall and Gilbert Islands. This was a weakness the Allies exploited in WWII. Similarly, the U.S. and its Allies must seek to understand the weaknesses in the PRC's global expansion through their Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), particularly given the economic slowdown and ever-increasing requirement to provide protection globally. Further, the weaknesses within the formalized BRICS⁵⁸ relationship and the informal BRICS+ must be understood to exploit key alliances underpinning PRC's expansionist aims or to seek opportunities to understand indications of PRC posturing for conflict.

In 1941, the Allies did not have a standard set of indicators to signal the heightening of the threat posed by Japan through warning levels. Contemporarily, there remains limited

standardization of indicators and warnings between the U.S. and its Allies for national threats within operational theaters or even the unclassified Tesseract (terrorist) national warning systems (Figure 6). This demonstrates a lack of commonality amongst allies. This can lead to confusion or, more critically, personnel missing indicators. Threat warnings should be sharable at the lowest classification, with the indicators and information that make up the common picture at higher classifications behind the warnings.

Recommendation 1: Standardized warning indicators should be agreed upon, developed, and released — initially at FVEY or AUKUS, then to other allies and partners.⁵⁹ This is critical and will require internal pan-governmental work and external pan-national agreements. Using the precedent set by the U.S. in sharing intelligence on Russia before they invaded Ukraine in 2022, consideration must be made to roll it out to non-FVEY partners, take their input, and push wider as an accurate, sharable, and effective product.

Several critical global events informed the PRC's grand strategy. They orchestrated their diplomatic, information, military, and economic instruments of national power to set the conditions to realize specific objectives to meet their political aims. The key events were the collapse of the Soviet Union, Desert Storm, the 1998 and 2008 financial crises, and China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001. Their Indo-Pacific expansion through UW and grey zone activities, their global BRI, and their significant investment in their military, particularly the development of joint warfighting capabilities, are clear indicators of them backing their political intent through actions.

Therefore, a grand strategy is paramount to the U.S. in the contemporary environment, and its closest Allies need to align similarly. Internal political wranglings with different parties controlling the House of Representatives and the Senate is the very democracy the nation strives to protect. "Around the world, the need for U.S. leadership is as great as it has ever been."⁶⁰ However, without a grand strategy underpinning U.S. national

identity and the RBIO other nations look to the U.S. to protect, the sinusoidal political environment in tune with the presidential cycle provides significant opportunity for adversaries to target the U.S. Particularly, it blinds and numbs U.S. senses for significant periods that allow an adversary to act, and with it a real danger of sleepwalking into another conflict in the Indo-Pacific.

CHAPTER 2: Information Advantage and Intelligence

Analysis of primary and secondary source material demonstrates that intelligence regarding the coordinated Japanese attacks was available at the strategic level. This critical information was either not passed to the operational level, ignored, or untrusted. The result was that the U.S. was unprepared for Japanese aggression, which, when coupled with missing the indicators, caused them to sleepwalk into the conflict. By better understanding the U.S.-U.K. special relationship, it is possible to gain Allied information advantage before conflict in the contemporary Indo-Pacific. The lessons were evidenced by comparing this with the Allies' use of information and intelligence progressively through 1942, when it became a decisive factor for successful operations. Finally, contrasting Allied joint intelligence effectiveness with that of the Japanese separate strands for the IJA and IJN demonstrates the effectiveness of Joint and shared information to create a warfighting advantage.

Learning historical lessons and applying them to contemporary situations provides national leaders and commanders with evidence that information advantage is directly linked to warfighting advantage. Today, Allied dominance of full-spectrum warfare provides deterrence or, if required, enhanced lethality and survivability during a peer conflict. Crucially, information advantage must be applied pan-alliance, particularly given the maturing threat from the PRC's exploitation of disruptive technologies and its increasingly aggressive application of grey zone activities.

Achieving an information advantage over one's adversary and the ability to influence decision-making through intelligence is critical. It allows for effective strategic and operational planning within the adversary's OODA loop. The U.S. Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack in 1946 learned that British Ultra (codebreaking at Bletchley Park, U.K.) had decoded Japanese signals in the Pacific and were providing information to the U.S.⁶¹ Ultra was typically referenced as information in the "special"

category. When giving evidence, Secretary of War George Marshall stated, “We had full information of the strength of their forces in advance.”⁶² His awareness of the utmost secrecy of Ultra and Magic to protect the U.K. and U.S. decryption capabilities is further evidenced by his letter to Governor Dewey on 25 September 1944, stating, “What I have to tell you is of such a highly secret nature.”⁶³ Despite reference to Ultra during the investigation, the capability remained secret until the U.K. declassified their WWII code-breaking in the 1970s.

Evidence demonstrates that decoded Japanese ciphers were provided to Washington and Manila. On 21 and 26 November 1941, Ultra information was passed warning the U.S. on the build-up of Japanese forces, their disposition, and likely intended Allied targets. Further and more conclusive decryption was provided on 2 December, detailing “Japan envisages early hostilities with Britain and the U.S. Japan does not, repeat, does not intend to attack Russia but will act in the South.”⁶⁴ Further details of Japan’s planned, coordinated attacks named Pearl Harbor as a likely target, along with the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, and the Royal Navy capital ships Repulse and Prince of Wales. The concluding words to the telegram on 2 December, to “consult with G-2, as security Ultra at stake if this evidence is made public,” indicate the U.K.’s desire to suppress the existence of their ability to read Japanese ciphers.

Therefore, there was “ample warning that Japan was going to war in 1941” and “evidence that Japanese signals had been decoded.”⁶⁵ However, the information was not acted on, and the U.S. military operational readiness was not increased in either Hawaii or the Philippines. The U.S. subsequently declared war on Japan on 8 December 1941, the day after the Pearl Harbor attack and the day the Japanese invasion of the Philippines commenced.

The Japanese decision and timing for the coordinated attacks were set in early October 1941 and approved by Emperor Hirohito on 5 November 1941. The fleets sailed from Hitokappu Bay, Northeastern Japan, on 26 November 1941. The fleet traveled in

secrecy for two weeks, splitting Eastbound and Southbound in virtual radio silence, meaning Allied decisions needed to be made from the limited intelligence updates available. Decoded Japanese military signals or sightings of the carrier groups may have put the U.S. fleet on heightened alert in Pearl Harbor but were too late to prevent the move from competition—or crisis—to conflict. Until this point, a combination of information was used to paint a fuller picture of Japan and potentially signal its intent. Electronic intelligence information was combined with information publicly available (newspapers), through human contacts (business personnel), or from undeniable economic information.

Conflict with the U.S. was not in Japan's interests. Strategically, however, they were backed into a corner by the U.S. sanctions and oil embargo. What is notable and was available through a combination of sources to the Allies were the internal conflicts of interest within the Japanese military. The IJA, predominantly fighting in China, was intent on economic expansion into the Soviet Union. Coincidentally, the IJN was pursuing a Pacific expansion - and a conflict with the U.S. and its Allies. An operational decision to achieve a strategic goal before they ran out of oil was taken, and the sway of Yamamoto and the IJN was decisive. The Philippines and Malaya were important land masses to stage an attack on the Dutch East Indies; crippling the U.S. Pacific fleet in Pearl Harbor was essential to gain freedom of the Pacific for six months, considered sufficient to achieve their strategic success.

Therefore, Japanese activities, strategic indicators, and decoded signals information throughout 1941, particularly in response to the crippling U.S. sanctions, were perhaps the key indicator of the transition from competition to crisis and the subsequent and inevitable conflict. The inward-looking U.S. and its isolationist and anti-colonial movements were likely key factors in discounting or not considering such indicators valid due to the source of information. “Even the best intelligence can be worthless if it is not acted upon or is used improperly.”⁶⁶

Although not immediately apparent, the Allies almost certainly already had an information advantage over the Japanese at the onset of hostilities. Unfortunately, the inability to understand their advantageous position in this respect and the lack of processes and procedures to exploit the information and intelligence was strategically limiting to such an extent that it was negated. If one characterizes information advantage as only achievable if all the indicators are being considered, the U.S. and Allies missed key indicators, which marked the loss of the opportunity to seize or create an advantage in the Indo-Pacific.

However, as the U.S. and its Allies entered the conflict, information advantage was swiftly achieved and, with it, a decisive military advantage. This was arguably the difference in allowing the Allies to turn the tide in the Pacific War. Judge et al. support his view: “Superior strategic acumen, supported by good intelligence and enacted with combat-effective forces that could be sustained over time, enabled the Allies to bring about a fundamental shift in the dynamics of the Pacific War.”⁶⁷

The Pearl Harbor attack by the IJN achieved the element of surprise. However, it has to be considered a strategic failure due to doctrinally-restricted tactical decision-making. The attack was “purely a supporting operation to (1) protect the drive south for oil and raw materials and (2) recuring sea lanes to transport the resources.”⁶⁸ Yamamoto’s primary aim at Pearl Harbor was to cripple the “fleet in being” (battleships) according to Mahanian doctrine. A successful attack would “gain six months”⁶⁹ for the Japanese to achieve their expansionist aim and, ideally, force the U.S. to negotiate for peace. “Yamamoto’s gamble required courage; retaining command, Admiral Nagumo favored caution.”⁷⁰ In not driving home the significant IJN advantage with further waves of attack to seek out the USN carriers and target the vital oil storage and dockyards in Hawaii, this caution was the naive tactical application borne of the rigidity of the battleship-focused doctrine. The oil and dockyards proved essential six months later, before the Battle of Midway, for the U.S. More critically, though,

analysis of the attack enabled the U.S. and Allied to understand its adversary, the rigidity of its Mahanian doctrine, and the lack of understanding that it is carriers and not battleships that could deliver the decisive blow.

In December 1941, the U.S. additionally understood that its intelligence organization, particularly the under-resourced code-breaking capabilities, was significantly lacking. The U.K. considered the ability to fundamentally 'read other nations' mail' and electronic military signals a critical facet of a joint intelligence picture. However, in the U.S., economic strain from the Great Depression and isolationist movements who believed that the U.S. should not involve itself in foreign affairs led to the Black Chamber codebreaking unit being disestablished in the 1930s.⁷¹ The realization of the capability gap and subsequent funding of the Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Ocean Area (JICPOA) in 1942 was decisive and a critical force enabler that underpinned *The Turn of the Tide in the Pacific War*.⁷²

“JICPOA’s all-source intelligence influenced the Central Pacific island-hopping campaign under Admiral Nimitz.”⁷³ It was established to provide centralized intelligence support for the Pacific Theater of WWII. Critically, JICPOA collaborated closely with the U.K.’s Far East Combined Intelligence Centre (FECIC) and effectively shared intelligence and information such that the Allied battlefield picture was joint and collaborative, enabling commanders to make decisive decisions. In response to the U.S. adaptive use of carriers to support the Doolittle raid using twin-engine USAAF B-25 bombers on 18 April 1942, the Allies decrypted IJN military code and understood the Japanese intent to invade and capture Midway, extending their defensive perimeter to guard against a repeat.

Nimitz directed that Spruance command the carrier task force and assigned him Operational Plan 29-42, “governed by the principle of calculated risk – avoidance of exposure of his force to surprise attack without the prospect of inflicting greater damage to the enemy.”⁷⁴ While there were elements of luck, such as spotting the IJN carrier group to

provide an opportune moment to launch an attack, Spruance understood the IJN doctrine and that their battleships would be some 300 miles behind their carriers and unable to mass their firepower on the USN carriers.⁷⁵ Spruance made a critical and correct decision not to pursue the IJN carriers and risk jeopardizing his fleet against the IJN battleships with a significant numerical, firepower, and night-fighting advantage. For the U.S., Midway “shifted the balance of sea power in the Pacific in their favor,”⁷⁶ where information advantage and understanding one's adversary enabled strategic success. Ultimately, a U.S. theorist provided the backbone of success to the U.S. by impacting the Japanese senior commanders who remained committed to husbanding their battleships to save them for the great fleet battle and “deliberately closing their eyes to the very lesson the success at Pearl Harbor had taught.”⁷⁷

Contemporarily, the PRC understands that their limitation has been a lack of joint doctrine. They are putting significant effort and regularly exercising their joint forces in mission rehearsals for an attack on Taiwan. Figure 7 depicts a major PRC joint exercise conducted around Taiwan on 11-16 September 2023. In their efforts to emulate Western doctrine, strategy, and tactics, they employ former Western (including the U.S. and U.K. personnel) as instructors within their forces.⁷⁸ One must assume that in doing so, they are developing Western joint doctrine and interoperability in a similar way that Japan developed Western doctrine during its imperial expansion. Therefore, with this understanding and the ability to observe their conventional military tactics through intelligence and collection capabilities, the U.S. and Allies can prepare to win a conventional military fight.

However, the PRC is also developing UW and grey zone capabilities that limit U.S. military effectiveness. This is the combined and unrestricted use of anything non-physical and often non-attributable, designed to maximize the harm to the U.S. and its Allies anywhere and everywhere.⁷⁹ A similar level of understanding of these activities must be achieved to avoid sleepwalking into strategic defeat without a shot being fired. In other

words, information advantage and strategic advantage can only be achieved by Allies understanding PRC's UW capabilities, their weaknesses and vulnerabilities, and then developing counters. Sun Tzu's adage "Know the enemy and know yourself"⁸⁰ has never been more applicable.

Information comes in many guises and underpins contemporary strategic approaches and military operations. It reinforces national policies, political strategies, public opinion, and all military activities. It is increasingly weaponized by adversaries who seek to bend the narrative to favor their strategic goals. However, information and intelligence being used to provide a military advantage is not new. Sun Tzu wrote, "foreknowledge must be obtained from men who know the enemy situation."⁸¹ This remains critical today. Thus, key lessons from the Indo-Pacific Theater of WWII must be applied across today's Allied JF warfighting capabilities to ensure that information advantage is achieved.

In December 1941, intelligence that could have and should have been passed to operational and tactical levels of command was available strategically. This may have enabled the U.S. fleet to avoid being caught napping and at anchor. A prolonged period at standby or action stations may have been unsustainable. However, extended air, surface, and sub-surface search patterns could have identified the Japanese fleet approaching and enabled an effective and immediate response. As it was, the decoded signal information was not passed to commanders in Hawaii to allow them to take any action. "Washington sat on the information," having received the transcripts and interpreting that, "*this means war*, at nine o'clock in the evening of 6 December – ample time to get a warning to Pearl Harbor – but nobody telephoned Hawaii from the White House."⁸² Whether politically and strategically expecting some kind of war, the attack would have occurred anyway without the U.S. paying such a cost. A consideration as to why the intelligence was not passed may be down to the source of this information. Because the intelligence source was the U.K.'s Ultra, and the U.K.

would be significantly advantaged by the U.S. entering the war, there may have been sufficient distrust to consider it valid. Or it may have been considered it a strategy to force the U.S.'s entry into WWII. However, the lesson remains that information from multiple sources critical to informing operational and tactical decisions must be understood, provided promptly, and formatted to enable or improve decision-making.

A critical lesson from the subsequent Allied Indo-Pacific campaign is that intelligence must be a joint entity. The formation of the top secret JICPOA meant that the U.S. “never lost a Central Pacific battle because Nimitz and his lieutenants had a very good picture of the enemy situation.”⁸³ On the contrary, “the Japanese fought the Pacific War with a disjointed intelligence system.”⁸⁴ Noncooperation in shared intelligence between the IJA focused on the Soviet Union, and the IJN focused on the U.S. and its Allies, only exasperated the situation. Joint Intelligence combining multi-source and allied information remains critical today.

Internal information, misinformation, and disinformation from insider threats were critical to the internal U.S. narrative. *Operation Snow* discusses a Soviet spy ring at the heart of Roosevelt’s government, which may have deliberately provided some information and other disinformation to lead Japan into war with the U.S. and ensure the Soviet Union would not be attacked. The U.S. political environment during the inter-war years had opposing views on what the national strategic goals should be. This environment was ripe for differing political parties to be susceptible to misinformation or disinformation to support their rhetoric. It also provided levels of strategic blindness and paralysis of decision-making.

Today, this lesson should be at the forefront of political minds because adversary states such as the PRC and Russia significantly emphasize Information Warfare (IW). Inward-facing campaigns such as “America First,” without being underpinned by an apolitical national grand strategy, leave the U.S. susceptible to adversary IW. Any abuse of executive power within a presidency or a debacle, as occurred with the Capitol Building

being stormed during the opening of the 118th Congress, entrenches polarization and leaves the nation susceptible to adversaries. The key takeaways are that personal motives within politics prevent progress, and the U.S. is vulnerable without a grand strategy.

Information in the form of data is critical to modern warfighting platforms. They sense, ingest, react to, and crucially share data to create a warfighting advantage and common battlefield picture. As systems-of-systems, data is operationalized as mission data, linking multi-spectral sensors to kinetic and non-kinetic weapons and defensive countermeasures. In short, data provides platform lethality and survivability. Like in WWII, the ability to share information (data) at the speed of relevance within the coalition and to interpret and respond to this information provides the advantage. Over-classification, or a self-perceived lack of credibility of the source of the information, impacted the Allies prior to the Japanese attacks in WWII. Relating this to today, it is vital to include pan-platform data within the information domain, as it is the difference between winning and losing.

There are mechanisms to share, but no single data owner. The U.S. and U.K. “special relationship” is centered around information and intelligence sharing. This bilateral relationship is at the heart of further multilateral and coalition information-sharing agreements. However, critical issues remain with over-classification and an inability to share effectively and quickly. The primary consideration is that different governmental departments or organizations own different information. Even the differing services within the U.S. or U.K. have other information owners. This is already one of the most significant limiting factors for effective Allied operations.

Recommendation 2: Nationally, information should be provided its own domain with a single owner at the strategic level. Militarily, information, intelligence, and data should be collectively owned by a clearly defined owner. Complementary to Recommendation 1, the single data owner will enable threats and warnings from multiple coalition sources, some

better than the U.S., to be combined into a single picture and provide effective coalition reporting in a standard format. Over-classification needs careful consideration when reporting timely indicators and warnings. If higher classification is essential, a collective Allied ability to encrypt and distribute information without relying on national classified IT systems will enable the passing of timely information, including data for warfighting platforms.

A casing point to demonstrate that an issue exists is that a Secret/Releasable Annex to this study cannot be written to provide evidence to back up contemporary lessons or recommendations. This highlights the underlying issue that significantly impedes the ability to work effectively as a coalition and share information. Wider than affecting academic studies, this impacts interoperability and the ability to conduct coalition warfighting.

To overcome the current limitations, nationally, the U.S. and its Allies must be integrated by design. This must be incorporated from strategic to tactical levels, including all domains and systems. Without planned integration, interoperability and interchangeability will remain significantly limited when conducting coalition warfighting. The PRC does not have such constraints. However, this needs to be initiated with immediate effect. Reactive or retrospective information sharing is too late. The U.S. and its Allies must be ready to fight tonight – the only way to ensure warfighting is effective is to have identical information provided to key Allied platforms and, critically, mechanisms to share new information when it becomes available. This may be a new, lethal mode the enemy uses to target an Allied platform on Day 1 of a conflict. Strategic failure is losing another Allied platform to the same enemy system on Day 2 through the inability to share information.

Recommendation 3: Integrated by design should be implemented through strategic coherence. This needs to be instigated at the conception of any system and will require sharing information at all stages to achieve effective operational and tactical integration,

interoperability, and interchangeability. Essentially, systems would be designed to be integrated from the drawing board to the operator.

Whether during contemporary global competition, crisis, or conflict, the ability to collect, distribute, and exploit information and data promptly is critical. Currently, information collection capabilities far outstrip the ability of the U.S. or its allies to process and interpret it. For example, a formation of F-35 aircraft will collect terabytes of data every single sortie. The capability and capacity to identify and understand which facets of data may be critical to enhance the lethality and survivability of subsequent formations of F-35s is severely limited. However, the criticality of accurate updates to the mission data based on the information identified post-sortie cannot be underestimated. This is as essential to achieving an information advantage on the modern battlefield as having effective intelligence or winning the narrative.

Recommendation 4: Efforts should be made to create a standalone environment with key Allies (initially AUKUS or FVEY) to test the ability of “Big Data Analytics” and Artificial Intelligence to identify critical information and disregard the irrelevant from vast datasets. This may be the only way to make sense of the whole information environment in a timely fashion and to provide the U.S. and Allies with a framework for gaining and retaining information advantage across the instruments of national power.

CHAPTER 3: Missed Opportunities of Alliances

In December 1941, the U.S. and its Allies were unprepared for coalition warfighting despite having all the individual warfighting elements available. As such, the whole was significantly less than the sum of the parts, resulting in an uncoordinated response to the Japanese attacks and an inability to orchestrate combat mass effectively. This lesson was, however, learned swiftly, such that by the end of 1942, the U.S. and its Allies had turned the tide of the war in the Indo-Pacific. The contrast in allied coordination over that year was considerable, which provides a pivotal link to the contemporary problem faced in the “decisive decade.”⁸⁵ Had the Allies been prepared (through information advantage, training, mission rehearsals, etc.), there could have been an immediate and coordinated reaction when the Japanese moved from competition to conflict. The same must be true today; an effective alliance that is credible and integrated by design will not only provide deterrence to the PRC but will be prepared to fight tonight.

The U.S. and Allies missed a significant opportunity at the fall of France to apply Anglo-American pressure on the French to move their (considerable) naval fleet to the Pacific. Rather than leave a dormant and threatening fleet to either be used by the Germans, scuttled, or put out of action by the Royal Navy as occurred with Operation CATAPULT on 3 July 1940. The “Free French” government should have been diplomatically persuaded to move their Navy to the Indo-Pacific and towards French Indochina. This would act as a more significant deterrence against Japanese expansionism and allowed the Free-French government to contest the puppet Vichy French protectorate of Indochina. Crucially, this would have provided a more significant Allied fleet in the Indo-Pacific and potentially a more considerable deterrence to the IJN. The biggest lesson for the contemporary is that Allied Commanders, ideally under a single supreme commander, need to jointly prioritize

critical assets between theaters and potentially compromise (selfish) national interests against an allied Grand Strategy.

Similarly, Churchill's constant requests to Roosevelt to provide USN support to the British Empire in Singapore and Malaya were turned down. This may not have deterred Japanese expansion, but it would have significantly added risk and cost to their strategy and prevented the USN fleet from being caught at anchor in Pearl Harbor. Deterrence, however, lies in the mind of the deterred, not the deterrer, so it is critical to understand one's adversary's history and culture for deterrence to be effective. The lesson is that there was wholly a lack of Allied deterrence provided by the assets in Theater, and there was potential to be better prepared defensively in December 1941. In this context, *The Origins of the Grand Alliance* outlines that "within a coalition, national interests and policies must meld to create a grand strategy, which then guides the coalition strategy that balances ends, ways, and means to place battles and campaigns in their proper context."⁸⁶ Allied preparedness for coalition warfare and the inability to deter Japanese expansion in the Indo-Pacific was impacted by a lack of trust during inter-war years, the British clinging to its Empire, and the inward-looking U.S. However, the relationship between the leaders was strong, and "by 1945, the Anglo-American military coalition, the core of the Grand Alliance, had created, modified, and adapted all the organizations, processes, and systems necessary to fight the war together."⁸⁷

The lack of a coordinated alliance in the face of the "Rising Sun"⁸⁸ may seem alarming. However, it is understandable since the early 20th Century had seen great power competition erupt into WWI, the subsequent League of Nations emergence and dissolvance, and the Great Depression. Thus, the close ties seen today were not so well developed leading up to WWII in the Indo-Pacific. Hastings supports this, stating that "Americans, from their President to soldiers and airmen, were almost universally antipathetic to the British Empire,

and resented committing their country's resource to its resurrection.”⁸⁹ The result was that an Allied military or numerical advantage was not achieved for almost two years, elongating the hostilities. The initial lack of preparedness was swiftly overcome such that the “forces of the Anglo-American coalition within the Grand Alliance had fought a global war on three continents and in a dozen major theaters of operation.”⁹⁰ This mutual trust behind the special relationship between the nations still resonates today and forms the backbone of the Anglo-American relationship.

The U.S. and its Allies missed combat mass and coordination at the outbreak of war in the Pacific. While an alliance framework was in place, cooperatively aligning the ways and means would have made a credible difference. Combat mass is the capability of amassing coordinated firepower to overcome the enemy, as was demonstrably achievable from mid-1942 despite the Europe-first strategy of the Allies. This may have deterred Japan but would undoubtedly have enabled the “tide to turn” more quickly, with fewer lives lost compared to the elongated campaign. Some decisive victories were achieved in this period. The Battle of Midway, which dealt pivotal and crippling losses to the Japanese carrier and naval fleets in June 1942, was won largely due to intelligence advantage and decisive leadership. Midway gave the U.S. and Allies the initiative and ability to commence a counter-offensive, albeit without military superiority. Further Allied successes in Guadalcanal and Samoa in 1942-43 were won through strategic initiative, intelligence, and command.

The Dominion nations of the British Empire played crucial and decisive roles in all theaters of WWII. Allied relations and collaborative warfighting between the U.S., U.K., and Dominions in the Pacific were effective once collaboration commenced in earnest. However, these relationships at the operational level were not without strain. U.S.-Australian relations offer good insight and an example of how personalities and leaders influence the effectiveness of an alliance. Japanese expansion threatened to isolate Australia and cut the

trade route with the U.S. Initially, while the fighting was in defense of Australia and close proximity to its sovereign territory, all was good. However, there was an increasing divergence of interests. “The domination of HQ by the U.S. Army and the lack of a joint staff despite MacArthur being ordered to create one in 1942 did cause problems. Inevitably, the Australians got the short stick of this relationship.”⁹¹ The lack of a truly integrated staff throughout the Indo-Pacific campaign hampered coordination. This was exacerbated by MacArthur continuing to manipulate logistics and joint force resources, starving the Australian Army holding critical South Pacific locations of supporting assets.⁹² Therefore, the personal desires and blinkered focus of a single leader can adversely affect the ability of the entirety of a coalition to conduct effective, integrated warfare.

At the strategic level, despite numerous books and articles focusing on the negatives of U.S.-U.K. interactions, relationships were strong. Sarantakes, an associate professor at the U.S. Naval War College, supports this, arguing that “while other narratives focus on political conflict between the U.S. and the U.K., they were merely honest disagreements essential for effective alliances,” which are critical facets of the developing “special relationship.”⁹³ He further analyzed that alliances are bigger than conflict, or indeed battles. He concluded that the U.S.-U.K. coalition was an alliance that worked and stemmed from the relationship between Churchill, Roosevelt, and later Truman. Contemporarily, the relationship fostered throughout WWII remains one of strength. The ability to act as the conscience and question at the political and strategic level is an advantage and something adversaries such as the PRC or Russia do not have.

In 1941, however, the U.S. certainly had an element of strategic blindness, which led to missing indicators and warnings of the imminent Japanese attacks and the subsequent national paralysis. The U.K. was focused on national survival against the Nazis in Europe and had an aura of colonial arrogance and superiority. While they considered the threat posed by

the Japanese significant, they assessed that their experience of defending their colonies from national uprisings was sufficient. Had there been a reaction to the indicators, there was potential for the U.S. and Allies to coordinate effectively during the period of competition before the outbreak of conflict. This provides a fascinating consideration regarding enabling, activating, and prioritizing alliances. Consider Indonesia, for instance, in the contemporary environment and the PRC's 10-dash line. A critical partner of the West in the Indo-Pacific, but notoriously and historically inscrutable. The U.S. and its Allies must embrace the partnership of a nation like Indonesia and collectively understand strategic indicators of the growing PRC threat. This would make an incredibly valuable, though admittedly challenging, research project.

To conclude about strategic Allied coordination, it is worth highlighting a meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt at the White House on 20 June 1942. During the meeting, Churchill learned of the British capitulation in Tobruk in the North Africa campaign. He received word of some 25,000 British troops surrendering to Axis forces, significantly affecting the reputation of the British, and said, "Defeat is one thing. Disgrace is another."⁹⁴ Roosevelt, having witnessed the U.S. suffering at the hands of the Japanese in Pearl Harbor and being defeated by a significantly smaller Japanese invasion force in the Philippines on 6 May 1942, surrendering over 76,000 U.S. and Filipino soldiers, obviously understood the feeling. After a few moments of silence, Roosevelt "simply asked, 'What can we do to help?'"⁹⁵ The empathy between the two leaders at this point was decisive. The nations had already formed a powerful bond over the last year. This moment not only cemented the special relationship between the countries but galvanized the leaders into a political and strategic bond based on trust and mutual support that would see the Allies turn the tides in all theaters of war and provide post-war stability as the world transitioned into the Cold War.

This relationship and the wider Allies and partners are the asymmetric edge for the U.S.-led RBIO facing the challenge and pacing threat from the PRC. The security, prosperity, and even the diplomatic future of the international order depend on the alliance being at the strength it was on 20 June 1942.

From a Japanese perspective, fighting without regional allies, they over-extended. This is linked to their doctrine and the lines of defense taught in the U.S. (West Point) at the time, but they projected too far into the Pacific. Using Figure 3 for geographical context, it is assessed that their strategic position would have been stronger had they limited their expansion to the Marianas Islands and not pressed through the vast ocean to the Marshall Islands. Thus, Japan executed a flawed, over-aggressive, and wholly inflexible strategy based on offensive tactics and over-extended their defensive perimeter. This resulted in a dilution of force concentration around their resource area and a limited ability to protect the merchant ships carrying vital natural resources. The Japanese relied on fear, honor, and the belief that they had moral and spiritual superiority. This may have enabled tactical commanders to extract the most from their personnel, but belief alone cannot succeed strategically.

Contemporarily, with the PRC seeking to increase its global influence, including partnering with nations who have historically been Western-aligned, alliances with these nations must be approached with optimistic caution. It already largely occurs, and there are levels of trust between nations and governments. Alliances such as AUKUS fall within the more extensive FVEY security arrangements but with different levels of sharing or access. Since information advantage is directly related to warfighting advantage for the U.S. and its Allies, the ability to effectively share information, data, and intelligence amongst wider partner nations and potential partner nations without risking compromise is a huge challenge. This challenge is necessary to promote the integrated design philosophy.

Two key takeaways must be considered and applied to the contemporary environment when partnering nations. First, during 1937-41, the U.S. saw the relationship as purely a ‘give-take’ scenario. This was primarily to appease the conservative isolationist movements and promote U.S. neutrality. It also meant that significant opportunities were missed whereby the U.S. and Allies could exploit the Chinese relationship to better prepare for conflict. For example, the U.S. and U.K. should have sought to increase their understanding of successful defensive tactics against the Japanese and applied them from December 1941 throughout the Indo-Pacific. Today, the U.S. and its Allies must understand and compete with, but be prepared to win against, the PRC militarily and across its UW and grey zone activities.

Second, the U.S. failed to comprehend the complex strategic environment within China between the CCP, the Nationalists, and the Soviet Union. This would have enabled a better recognition of which forces were engaged in fighting the Japanese and fathom that the CCP was seeking to exploit the U.S. to their own selfish advantage. The ability to conduct an effective strategic analysis, describe a desired political end-state, and ask, “And then what?” is perhaps a golden lesson for the contemporary environment where the PRC seeks to undermine and challenge U.S. alliances and partnerships. Had the U.S. considered Liddell-Hart’s theory that “the object in war is a better state of peace,”⁹⁶ then the return to a Chinese civil war, the spread of postwar Communism, and the current PRC challenge to the international order may have been avoided.

The PRC’s ambition is clear. Its Grand Strategy states that it intends to become the world’s leading superpower by 2049.⁹⁷ Within the Indo-Pacific, its increasing use of UW and grey zone activities put it on a collision course with many other nations.⁹⁸ The Philippines had previously distanced itself from the U.S. politically but is being drawn closer due to the adverse impacts of Chinese strategy. Their merchant and supply vessels regularly clash with the aggressive tactics of the Chinese Coastguard within its territorial waters and the disputed

South China Sea. Some believe this will lead to miscalculations and potential military action.⁹⁹ The 10-dash line is but a line on a map, and under the United Nations *Law of the Sea*,¹⁰⁰ an independent Arbitral Tribunal delivered a unanimous decision, which is final and binding on the Philippines and the PRC. In its ruling, the Tribunal firmly rejected the PRC's expansive South China Sea maritime claims as having no basis in international law.¹⁰¹ As demonstrated in Figure 5, the comparison to Japanese expansion is stark. The resulting military encounter would be equally stark if competition were forcibly turned to conflict by the aggressive action of the PRC, such as invading Taiwan.

Maintenance of the global status quo and the U.S.-led democratic international order and avoiding conflict with the PRC are priorities for the U.S. and its allies. The national security strategies of key allies and partners all broadly align and state that the PRC provides the pacing global threat.¹⁰² In particular, “around the world, the need for U.S. leadership is as great as it has ever been.”¹⁰³ The U.S. DoD's *Annual Report to Congress* about military and security developments involving the PRC highlights that the increasing civil-military fusion and modernization are of particular concern.¹⁰⁴ This demonstrates that PRC's UW and use of the grey zone are understood as being a problem and a cause for potential apprehension. However, this also reveals the areas in which the U.S. must increasingly work more closely with its Allies and partners to understand and counter. This must not be conducted from a purely military viewpoint. To contest the PRC globally across its BRI, BRICS+, UW, and grey zone activities, the U.S. will rely on its Allies across the diplomatic, information, military, and economic spectrum.

Recommendation 5. The U.S. integrates closely with Allies to understand, compete, and contest with the PRC across the fused civil-military domain. This will enable a global U.S.-led coalition to counter the PRC's use of UW and the grey zone. Recommendations 1-3 enable the achievement of this and provide a basis to train, exercise, and mission-rehearse

across the full spectrum of civil-military domains. Ultimately, should military action be required, the U.S. and its Allies will be able to win militarily, but more importantly, to win the subsequent peace.

The importance of coordinating activities and developing alliances and partnerships in the decisive decade means that the words in national strategies must be translated into credible capabilities across the instruments of power. Militarily, it is essential to ensure allied warfighting is effective not only to serve as a deterrence but also to induce and compel adversaries as a coordinated civil-military relationship. Learning the lessons of the lack of preparedness for Allied entry into WWII in the Indo-Pacific and taking contemporary actions provides the best chance to avoid repeating mistakes.

Thus, actions are required to turn NSS intent into a prepared, coherent, and credible coalition capable of conducting interoperable and interchangeable operations. This initially requires increasing and enhancing the internal coordination between U.S. military services and commands and external coordination with close Allies. The aim would be to build on solid foundations of integration, remove unnecessary duplication of effort, and focus the scarce resources into a coherent Allied warfighting capability. Establishing an alliance integrated by design can then be fielded wider to envelop all other Allies and partners. The PRC already considers the U.S.'s global alliances and partners a threat. Expediting these into a credible, prepared, and integrated warfighting capable coalition offers the best form of deterrence. However, as in 1941, some significant barriers and policies currently do not allow for the level of integration required. The combatant commanders and the politicians they serve must understand the risks of not doing this.

During the period of competition in the Indo-Pacific between 1937-41, the U.S. and Allies missed opportunities to prepare for crisis or conflict. In today's climate of global competition, the near-term period must be used to ensure that coalition processes, procedures,

tactical training, operational rehearsals, and implementation of technological advances are all achieved. The key is to be ready, trained, and integrated by design as an alliance with a fight tonight mentality. “What if” questions should be commonplace, and the U.S. should not shy away from difficult questions and decisions. Inter-service and inter-nation rivalry are hindrances to preparedness. This is a key lesson from the WWII case study and is relevant to the contemporary.

Currently, within the U.S., there is a strong and vocal right-wing voice, causing fractions internally, dividing opinion, and weakening Alliances externally.¹⁰⁵ Campaigns based on America First policies serve to alienate the nation and provide a rhetoric baseline for competitor disinformation campaigns. Like Russia, the PRC are watching the development of U.S. hard-right nationalists in a similar way that the world viewed the U.S. isolationist movements throughout the 1930s and up to Pearl Harbor. Now, more than ever, the U.S. needs a Grand Strategy based on long-term national interests and maintaining the democratic international order with the U.S. in a pivotal role. The alternative is for the PRC to capitalize and seize their moment to “return to the world stage as the proud Middle Kingdom.”¹⁰⁶

CONCLUSION

During the global WWII conflict, the Allies faced an exceedingly complex global environment with many interwoven pacts and alliances. The Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan in 1940. The non-aggression treaty between Japan and the Soviet Union in 1941. The Chinese Nationalists operating alongside the CCP, supported by the Soviet Union, in their conflict with Japan. *The Tower of Skulls* summarizes these intertwined relationships by linking war's sweeping political, economic, social, and military facets and effects, such that the geographically separated wars in the European and Pacific theatres combined into one World War.¹⁰⁷

Similarly, this narrative was used by Churchill and Roosevelt to frame the hostilities in very different Theaters as a single world event. Despite U.S. “public opinion remaining stubbornly opposed to fighting until December 1941,”¹⁰⁸ this narrative was critical because it enabled sufficient political and public support to be gained, particularly to counter the isolationist movement. This rhetoric allowed the passing through Congress of the Lend-Lease Act in March 1941 and, with it, the provision of vast resources, military equipment, and supplies to the U.K. This was vital to the survival of the U.K. Without it, there was a danger of the war effort in Europe crumbling and an inability to use the U.K. to mount an offensive in 1944 as part of the successful Europe-first strategy. Critically, this would have had a significant second-order effect on the subsequent war in the Indo-Pacific Theater and enabled Nazi Germany to threaten the U.S. from the Atlantic.

Evidence identified that political and economic competition during the inter-war years between the U.S. and colonial powers and the isolationist movement in the U.S., desperate to avoid being dragged into another conflict, dumbed the senses at the political level. Warnings and indicators were missed, disregarded, or downplayed. Ultimately, this resulted in the U.S. sleepwalking into WWII.

In late November 1941, information was available at the strategic level from decrypted Japanese signals of their intent and intended targets for their coordinated attacks in December 1941. Therefore, the U.S. and its Allies had a combination of socio-political, economic, and intelligence indicators and warnings before the coordinated Japanese attacks. In disregarding the credibility and failing to heed these indicators and warnings, the immanency of the Japanese attacks and their assessed locations were not relayed to operational commanders. Crucially, this handed Japan the advantage of surprise, with devastating results. Fortunately for the U.S., IJN's blinkered following of Mahanian doctrine during the Pearl Harbor attack and all subsequent battles means that they missed their key lesson that "aircraft carriers had far surpassed the dreadnoughts as sources of sea power."¹⁰⁹

"The most important relationship the U.S. had was with the U.K and the British nations of the Commonwealth."¹¹⁰ Despite this and the strong political relationship between the leaders, there remained sufficient national and political distrust in the U.S. following WWI, coupled with the strong isolationist movements Roosevelt had to placate. This significantly influenced Allied preparedness for the Indo-Pacific Theater of WWII. The U.K. had been at war with Nazi Germany since 1939 but had not given up on its Far Eastern colonies. In the Indo-Pacific, an element of colonial superiority and arrogance remained such that the Japanese threat was somewhat overlooked. Overall, this resulted in the U.S. and U.K. missing the opportunity to effectively prepare for conflict and coalition warfighting during times of peace or competition.

The result was strategic paralysis and an initial uncoordinated Allied response. This lack of coordination was due to not having built strong and effective international relationships and credible warfighting capabilities during the inter-war years. However, joint intelligence proved a critical enabler to allow the U.S. and Allies to reclaim the initiative in the Pacific and eventually achieve victory. The rise of the PRC as the contemporary pacing

threat and their colonialization of vast swathes of the earth in the search for resources draws several parallels to Japanese Imperialist expansion. Particularly when studying the Indo-Pacific region, the comparison with PRC's 2023 10-dash line is stark. Western Allies must understand the lessons leading to WWII to avoid sleepwalking into the decisive decade.

Having awoken from slumber at war in the Indo-Pacific, the U.S. and Allies successfully countered Japanese aggression, employing various innovative strategies and ultimately securing victory. The Pacific theater's legacy is a testament to the human spirit, strategic maneuvering, and the transformative power of a unified multinational coalition. Notably, the lessons in missed indicators and warnings for the situation progressing from competition through crisis to conflict remain true.

Many of the lessons identified are enduring; understanding them is useful for today's decision-makers. Particularly pertinent is the requirement for the U.S. to have a Grand Strategy that persists despite the changing political environment and presidential leadership. Jinping's dictatorship over the PRC does not suffer political turbulence, and he has set the Grand Strategy to achieve "national rejuvenation"¹¹¹ by its centenary in 2049. Most daunting is the PRC's civil-military fusion leading to its UW and grey zone activities, which seek to undermine the U.S. and Allies and negate or reduce coalition warfighting capabilities. Complementary to learning the lesson from WWII in the Indo-Pacific, five recommendations are provided in Annex B. These seek to address contemporary issues that impact Allied effectiveness, interoperability, information sharing, indicators, warnings, and the preparedness for and ability to compete in the civil-military domain.

WWII demonstrated that the key to successful alliances was the personal relationships that forged them. Perhaps the best example is that between Churchill and Roosevelt. Following somewhat strained relations between the U.S. and the U.K. during inter-war, the Japanese broke down all political barriers in one decisive move. Churchill rallied the two

nations by delivering a keynote address to U.S. Congress on 26 December 1941, less than three weeks after the coordinated Japanese attacks on the U.S. and U.K.¹¹² The two leaders were “supremely confident of victory in Europe and Asia,” with Churchill reporting back to the King that “after many months of ‘walking out,’ Britain and America were ‘now married.’”¹¹³ The critical lesson from this frankly bleak period in the history of both nations is that relationships like this must be embraced during peace and competition in order to win during war. Now is the time to maximize the potential of alliances, as our adversaries will dictate the timing of the next conflict.

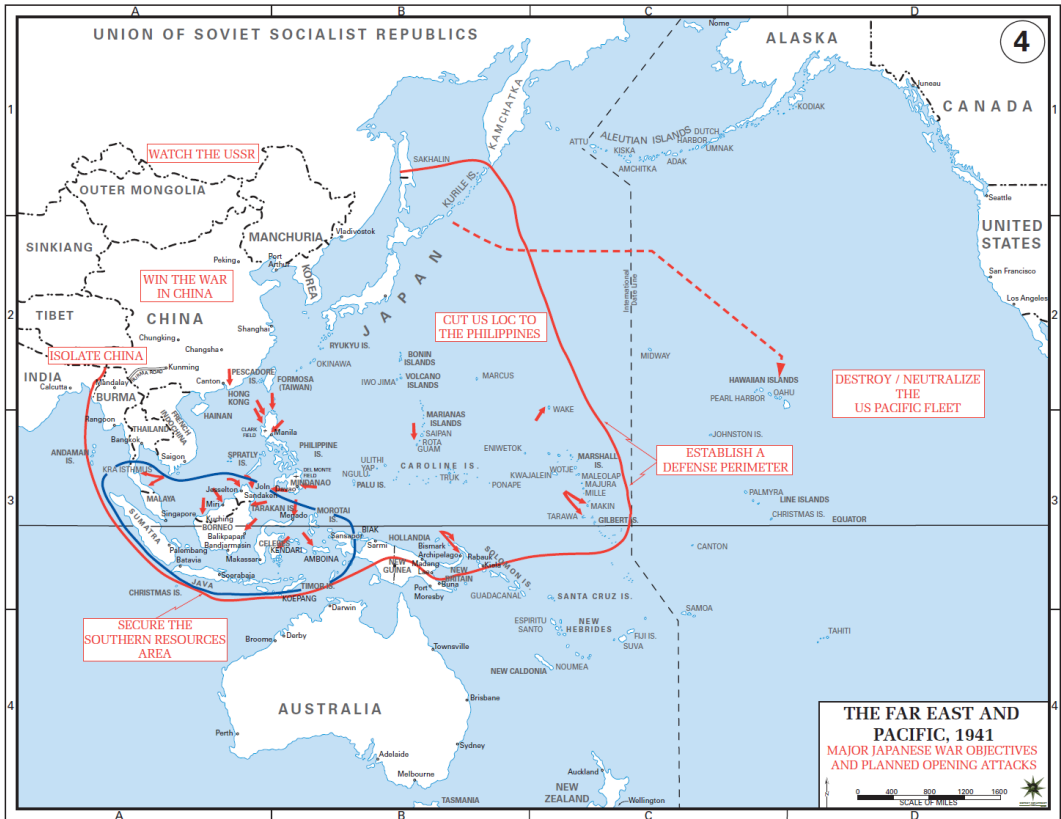


Figure 3: Major Japanese War Objectives and Initial Coordinated Attacks.
 (Source: U.S. Military Academy West Point)

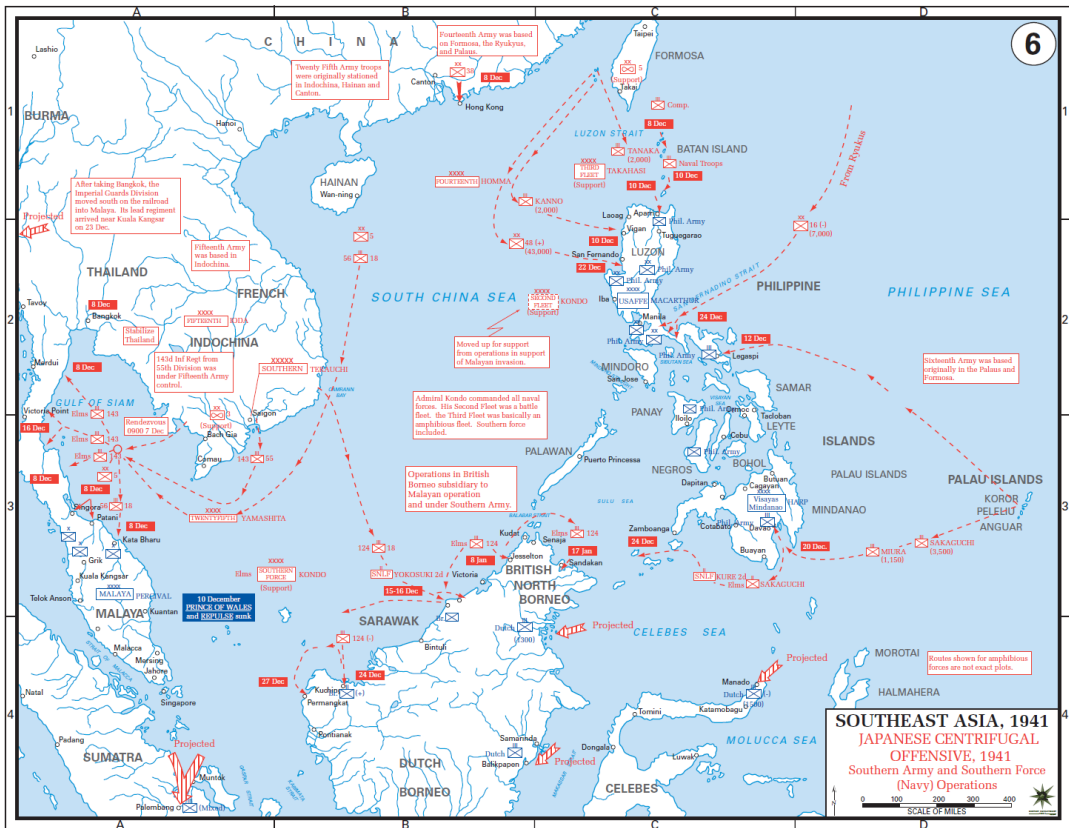


Figure 4: The Japanese planned Offensive to capture the Resource-Rich South Pacific.
 (Source: U.S. Military Academy West Point)



Figure 5: Side-by-side comparison of the Japanese expansion to 1942 and PRC's expansion and resource control plans to their 2023 10-dash line.

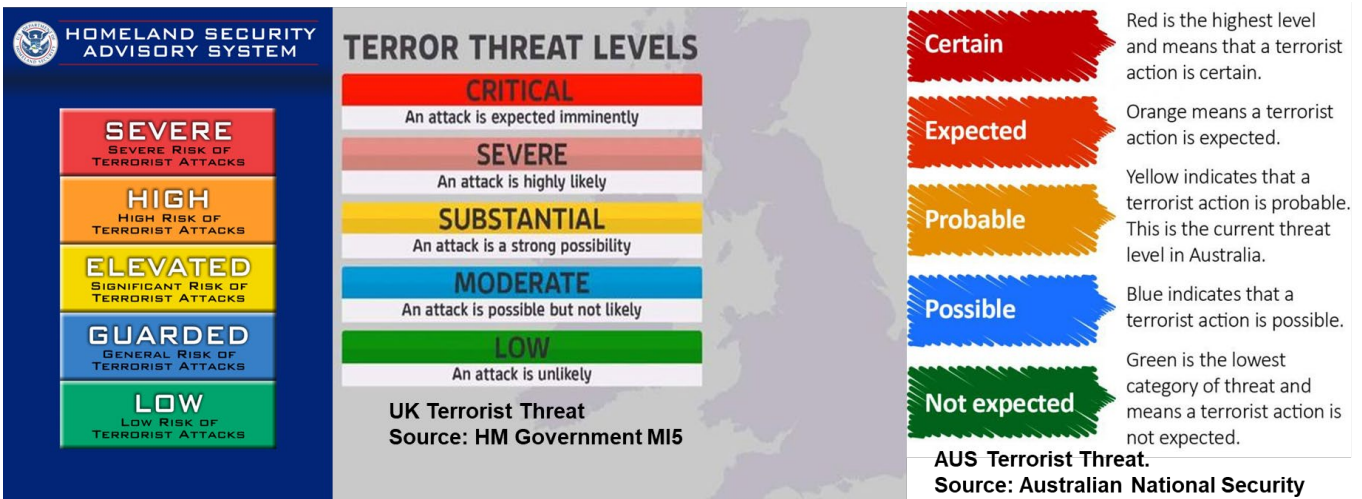


Figure 6: U.S., U.K., and Australian differences in Indicators, Warnings, and Reporting for National Terrorist Threat Levels.

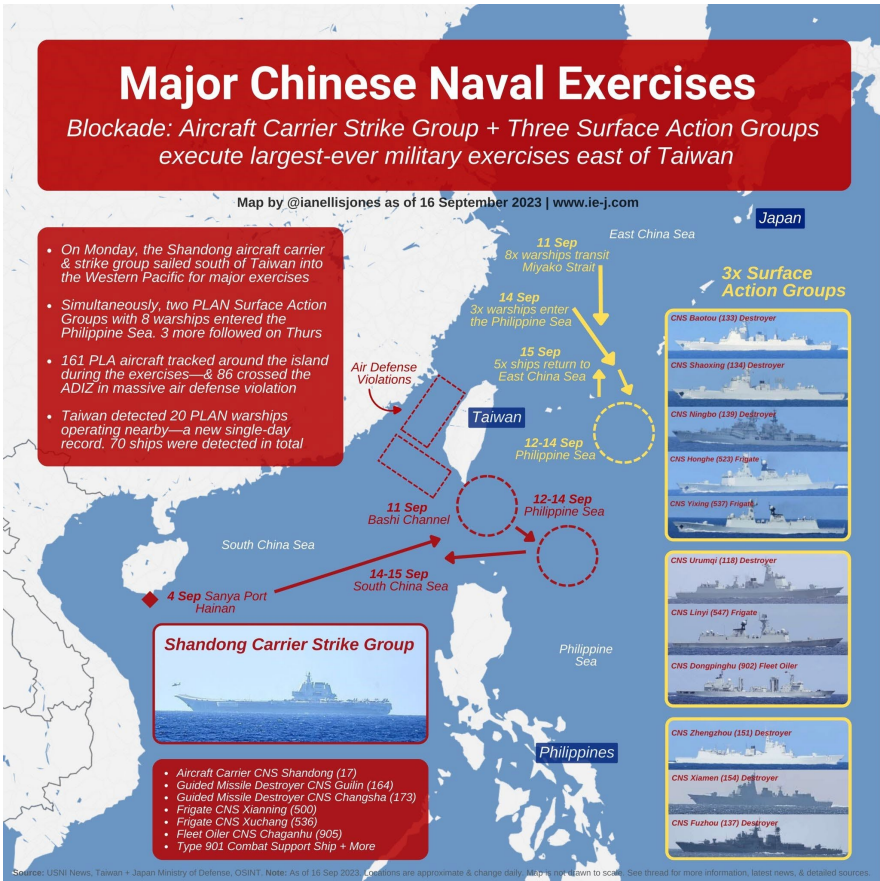


Figure 7: Major Chinese Joint Exercise conducted around Taiwan 11-16 Sep 2023.

Annex B - Recommendations

Summary of Recommendations			
#	Chapter	Title	Recommendations
1	1.4	Standardized Threat Warnings and Indicators.	Standardized warning indicators should be agreed upon, developed, and released – initially at FVEY or AUKUS, then to other allies and partners. This is critical and will require internal pan-governmental work and external pan-national agreements. Using the precedent set by the U.S. in sharing intelligence on Russia before they invaded Ukraine in 2022, consideration must be made to roll it out to non-FVEY partners, take their input, and push wider as an accurate, sharable, and effective product.
2	2.4	Create an Information domain at the strategic level with a single owner.	Nationally, information should be provided its own domain with a single owner at the strategic level. Militarily, information, intelligence, and data should be collectively owned by a clearly defined owner. The single data owner will enable threats and warnings from multiple coalition sources, some better than the U.S., to be combined into a single picture and provide effective coalition reporting in a standard format. Over-classification needs careful consideration when reporting timely indicators and warnings. If higher classification is essential, a collective Allied ability to encrypt and distribute information without relying on national classified IT systems will enable the passing of timely information, including data for warfighting platforms.
3	2.4	Alliances be integrated by design.	Integrated by design should be implemented through strategic coherence. This needs to be instigated at the conception of any system and will require sharing information at all stages to achieve effective operational and tactical integration, interoperability, and interchangeability. Essentially, systems would be designed to be integrated from the drawing board to the operator.
4	2.4	Big Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence test environment.	Efforts should be made to create a standalone environment with key Allies (initially AUKUS or FVEY) to test the ability of ‘Big Data Analytics’ and Artificial Intelligence to identify critical information and disregard the irrelevant from vast datasets. This may be the only way to make sense of the whole information environment in a timely fashion and to provide the U.S. and Allies with a framework for gaining and retaining information advantage across the instruments of national power.
5	3.3	Understand, compete, and contest the fused Civil-Military Domain as an Alliance.	The U.S. must integrate closely with its Allies to understand, compete, and contest with the PRC across the fused civil-military domain. This will enable a global U.S.-led coalition to counter the PRC’s use of UW and the grey zone. This should provide a basis to train, exercise, and mission-rehearse across the full spectrum of civil-military domains. Ultimately, should military action be required, the U.S. and Allies will be able to win militarily, but more importantly, to win the subsequent peace.

Notes

Abstract

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- ⁴⁴ Murray and Millett, *War to Be Won*, 165.
- ⁴⁵ Murray and Millett, *War to Be Won*, 172.
- ⁴⁶ John P. Koster, *Operation Snow: How a Soviet Mole in FDR's White House Triggered Pearl Harbor* (Washington, DC: Regnery Pub, 2012), 154.
- ⁴⁷ Koster, *Snow*, 154–55.
- ⁴⁸ “Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack: Report of the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack” (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, July 20, 1946), 49.
- ⁴⁹ “Investigation,” Report of the Joint Committee, 47.
- ⁵⁰ **IJN Fleet:** 10 carriers, 10 battleships, 35 cruisers, 110 destroyers, 18 submarines. (Under construction: 4 carriers, 2 battleships, 10 cruisers, 20 destroyers, 30 submarines). **USN Pacific Fleet:** 5 carriers, 4 battleships, 24 cruisers, 90 destroyers, and 28 submarines. (Under construction and destined for the Pacific: 10 carriers, 13 battleships, 27 cruisers, 111 destroyers, 52 submarines).
- ⁵¹ Koster, *Operation Snow*.
- ⁵² Liang Qiao and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare: China's Master Plan to Destroy America* (Pan American Pub., 2000), chap. 8.
- ⁵³ U.S. Department of Defense, “Military and Security Developments Involving the PRC - 2022: Annual Report to Congress,” Annual Report to Congress, 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/Spotlights/2022-China-Military-Power-Report/>; Viet Tuan, “China's Grey Zone Tactics Show It's Not Acting in Good Faith,” *VNExpress International*, April 2, 2021, <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/china-s-gray-zone-tactics-show-it-s-not-acting-in-good-faith-4256055.html>.
- ⁵⁴ McMaster, “How China Sees the World: And How We Should See China.” 5.

⁵⁵ Joseph Bosco, “China Has Declared Information Warfare Against America — Biden Must Respond Vigorously,” *The Hill*, June 22, 2021, <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/559455-china-has-declared-information-warfare-against-america-biden-must>; Derek S. Reveron and Jon Lindsay, “China: Cyber Threat and Cyber Threatened,” Atlantic Council, August 7, 2012, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/china-cyber-threat-and-cyber-threatened/>; U.S. Department of Defense, “Military and Security Developments Involving the PRC - 2022: Annual Report to Congress.”

⁵⁶ UN Security Council Statement S/2018/16 - statement, issued 13 February 2018, expresses “serious concern” about PRC’s militarization of the South China Sea; UN General Assembly Resolution A/75/222 - resolution, adopted on 18 December 2020, calls on all parties to the South China Sea dispute to “refrain from actions that could escalate tensions in the South China Sea.” The resolution also calls on PRC to comply with its obligations under international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

⁵⁷ Jinping, “Transcript: President Xi Jinping’s Report to China’s 2022 Communist Party Congress.”

⁵⁸ BRICS+ is an intergovernmental organization designed to promote mutual economic benefits and challenge the Western financial system. Original BRICS members – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa. On 1 January 2024, this became BRICS+ with new members – Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE. Saudi Arabia were invited to BRICS+, but as of 29 January 2024 is not yet a member.

⁵⁹ FVEY is the Five Eyes partnership between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K., and the U.S. AUKUS is the trilateral partnership between Australia, the U.K., and the U.S.

⁶⁰ The White House, “National Security Strategy,” 2.

⁶¹ “Investigation,” Report of the Joint Committee.

⁶² “Investigation,” Report of the Joint Committee, 1128–29.

⁶³ Worth, *Secret Allies*, 156.

⁶⁴ “Investigation,” Report of the Joint Committee, 203–4.

⁶⁵ Worth, *Secret Allies*, 181.

⁶⁶ Jeffrey M. Moore, *Spies for Nimitz: Joint Military Intelligence in the Pacific War* (Naval Institute Press, 2004), x.

⁶⁷ Judge, House, and Mansoor, *The Turn of the Tide in the Pacific War*, 210.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 138.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 138.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 136.

⁷¹ David Kahn, *The Codebreakers: The Story of Secret Writing*, [Rev. ed.]. (Scribner, 1996).

⁷² Judge, House, and Mansoor, *Turn of the Tide*.

⁷³ Moore, *Spies for Nimitz*, xiv.

⁷⁴ Carpenter, *Rhetoric*, 147.

⁷⁵ The IJN used the aircraft from their carrier force to screen and protect their battleships for the decisive sea battle, so situated them approx. 300 miles in front. The U.S. and Allied adapted their doctrine and tactics understanding that it was the carrier and not the battleship that was decisive. They therefore used the battleships to screen and protect their carriers and mass their AAA firepower where it was needed.

⁷⁶ Carpenter, *Rhetoric*, 148.

⁷⁷ Carpenter, *Rhetoric*, 142.

⁷⁸ Mark Landler, “China Recruiting Former R.A.F. Pilots to Train Its Army Pilots, U.K. Says,” *The New York Times*, October 17, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/17/world/europe/china-recruit-uk-military-pilots.html>; Gordon Corera, “Ex-UK Pilots Lured to Help Chinese Military, MoD Says,” *BBC News*, October 18, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63293582>.

⁷⁹ Bosco, “China Has Declared Information Warfare Against America — Biden Must Respond Vigorously”; Reveron and Lindsay, “China: Cyber Threat and Cyber Threatened”; U.S. Department of Defense, “Military and Security Developments Involving the PRC - 2022: Annual Report to Congress.”

⁸⁰ Wu Sun et al., *The Art of War*, 29. Aufl, Oxford Paperbacks (London Oxford New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), 84.

⁸¹ Sun et al., *The Art of War*, 145.

⁸² Koster, *Operation Snow*, 154–55.

⁸³ Moore, *Spies for Nimitz*, 237.

⁸⁴ Judge, House, and Mansoor, *The Turn of the Tide in the Pacific War*, 74. In the early 1920s, the US government established a codebreaking unit known as the Black Chamber, led by cryptologist Herbert Yardley. The Black Chamber achieved notable successes in deciphering the diplomatic communications of foreign powers, but its operations were highly secretive and lacked official sanction from the U.S. military or government.

⁸⁵ The White House, “National Security Strategy,” 2.

⁸⁶ William T. Johnsen, *The Origins of the Grand Alliance: Anglo-American Military Collaboration From the Panay Incident to Pearl Harbor*, Battles and Campaigns (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2016), xx.

⁸⁷ William T. Johnsen, *Grand Alliance*, xx.

⁸⁸ Sarantakes, *Rising Sun*.

⁸⁹ Hastings, *Nemesis*, 63.

⁹⁰ William T. Johnsen, *The Origins of the Grand Alliance : Anglo-American Military Collaboration From the Panay Incident to Pearl Harbor*, xix.

⁹¹ Peter J. Dean, *MacArthur’s Coalition: US and Australian Military Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, 1942-1945* (University Press of Kansas, 2018), 336.

⁹² Dean, *MacArthur’s Coalition*, 336–37.

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- ⁹³ Sarantakes, *Allies Against the Rising Sun*, 7–9.
- ⁹⁴ Winston Churchill, *The Second World War. Vol. IV: The Hinge of Fate*, vol. IV, 1951, 160.
- ⁹⁵ Downing, *1942*, 259.
- ⁹⁶ Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 338.
- ⁹⁷ China Ministry of National Defense, “China’s National Defense in the New Era,” ed. Li Jiayao (Ministry of National Defense, China., July 24, 2019); Jinping, “Transcript: President Xi Jinping’s Report to China’s 2022 Communist Party Congress.”
- ⁹⁸ Qiao and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare: China’s Master Plan to Destroy America*; Tuan, “China’s Grey Zone Tactics Show It’s Not Acting in Good Faith”; Robert Stanley Spalding, *Stealth War: How China Took Over While America’s Elite Slept* (Portfolio/Penguin, 2019).
- ⁹⁹ Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, “South China Sea: Why the Philippines and China Are on a Collision Course,” *BBC News*, October 23, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-67191205>.
- ¹⁰⁰ United Nations, “Law of the Sea: Bulletin No. 91,” Law (New York: United Nations, 2017), https://www.un.org/depts/los/doalos_publications/LOSBulletins/bulletinpdf/LOS_91_WEB.pdf.
- ¹⁰¹ Antony J. Blinken, “Sixth Anniversary of the Philippines-China South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal Ruling” (US Secretary of State, July 11, 2022), <https://www.state.gov/sixth-anniversary-of-the-philippines-china-south-china-sea-arbitral-tribunal-ruling/>.
- ¹⁰² The White House, “National Security Strategy”; Government, “HM Government Integrated Review Refresh 2023: Responding to a More Contested and Volatile World”; Australian Government, “National Defence: Defence Strategic Review 2023” (Australian Government, Defence, 2023), <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/reviews-inquiries/defence-strategic-review>; Hayashi Yoshimasa, “National Security Strategy of Japan” (National Security Council, December 16, 2022); Republic of Korea Office of the President, “The Yoon Suk Yeol Administration’s National Security Strategy: Global Pivotal State for Freedom, Peace, and Prosperity” (Office of the President, June 2023).
- ¹⁰³ The White House, “National Security Strategy,” 2.
- ¹⁰⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, “Military and Security Developments Involving the PRC - 2022: Annual Report to Congress,” III–VII.
- ¹⁰⁵ James Landale, “Electoral Politics Begin to Bite into Ukraine Support,” *BBC World News*, October 2, 2023, Online edition, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66981840>.
- ¹⁰⁶ McMaster, “How China Sees the World: And How We Should See China.,” 5.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ganser, *Tower of Skulls: A History of the Asia-Pacific War, Vol 1 (July 1937 - May 1942)*, chaps. 1–5.
- ¹⁰⁷ Downing, *1942*, 33.
- ¹⁰⁷ Downing, *1942*, 142.
- ¹⁰⁸ Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, 189.
- ¹⁰⁹ Carpenter, *Rhetoric*, 153.

¹¹⁰ Sarantakes, *Allies Against the Rising Sun*, 7.

¹¹¹ Jinping, “Transcript: President Xi Jinping’s Report to China’s 2022 Communist Party Congress.”

¹¹² Churchill, *Address to Congress*.

¹¹³ Downing, *1942*, 33.

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Vita

Wing Commander Michael “Knappie” Knapton, Royal Air Force Student, Joint Advanced Warfighting School (JAWS) Joint Forces Staff College, National Defense University

Wing Commander Michael Knapton is a Fast Jet Navigator with almost 2700 hours on the Tornado F3 and GR4, over 1000 hours of which were on combat operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria/Iraq. His previous tour was O-5 Command of the Australia, Canada and UK F-35 Reprogramming Laboratory (ACURL), based at Eglin AFB in Florida, USA.

Knapton joined the RAF in 2001 and, on completion of flying training in 2004, was posted to the Tornado F3, serving on 43(Fighter) Squadron, based at RAF Leuchars. During his time on the force, he became the Squadron Electronic Warfare Instructor (EWI), completed Quick Reaction Alert duties in the UK and the Falkland Islands, and participated in numerous multi-national exercises in the Middle East and Europe.

In 2008, Knapton converted to the Tornado GR4 and was posted to IX(Bomber) Squadron, based at RAF Marham. Within 2 months, he was deployed on combat operations in Iraq and subsequently in Afghanistan. He was the Squadron EWI for the initial strikes on operations in Libya in 2011. In 2012, he was posted to XV Squadron as an Instructor and afterward onto the Qualified Weapons Instructor Course, from which he was promoted to O-4 later that year.

In 2013, Wing Commander Knapton was posted to No.1 Group based at RAF High Wycombe before returning to the Tornado GR4s in 2015 as the Executive Officer of 31 Squadron at RAF Marham. Over the next 3 years, he deployed to RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus, multiple times in support of operations in Syria and Iraq and commanded the Tornado GR4 operational detachment twice.

With all his aircraft types now confined to history as museum pieces, Knapton was promoted to Wing Commander (O-5) in 2019 and moved into the UK Air and Space Warfare Centre as the desk officer for UK Combat Air and Weapons. He was selected for command and became Officer Commanding ACURL in 2020, a multi-national unit of over 125 personnel from Australia, the U.K., and the U.S. responsible for providing and enhancing the combat effectiveness of F-35 through mission data - linking sensors to weapons.

Wing Commander Knapton is married to Laura and has two daughters, Lilly and Ava (aged 9 and 7). He is keen on all sports, but particularly rugby, skiing, golf, cycling and swimming. When time, energy or injury don't allow his own participation, he now enjoys providing a personal taxi service and being entertained by his daughters' activities, particularly the young ballerinas or gymnasts in the making.