

# JAPANESE POLICY AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

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## 1. POLICY MAKERS IN TOKYO

STEPHEN F. COHEN STATES IN AN ARTICLE IN *PACIFIC AFFAIRS* titled "Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army," "Little is known about the maneuvering and influence of the Japanese upon the creation and organization of the INA during the period Bose was its Commander."<sup>1</sup> This paper attempts to illuminate this phase of Japan's southward push during the Pacific War, focusing on Japanese policy. Actually Mr. Cohen's remarks apply equally well to the first INA commanded by General Mohan Singh. I must at this point acknowledge my debt to Dr. K. K. Ghosh who preceded me in the study of the INA and who since Mr. Cohen wrote has helped to dispel our ignorance.

Japan's wartime aims in India were never as clearly defined as in Southeast Asia. India was not embraced in the grand design for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Greater East Asia would sweep through Southeast Asia westward to the Indo-Burma border. Everywhere in Asia Western colonial rule would be driven out and independence movements encouraged. Asia for Asians became the goal and shibboleth. The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere would comprise an economically self-sufficient entity under Japanese tutelage. Both diplomatic and military means would be employed to realize the blueprint. Japan would guide Southeast Asia, but Japanese military administration would respect existing local organization and customs. By late 1941 control of resources necessary for the war effort became a focal point of the plan.<sup>2</sup>

Still, India bordered the Western perimeter of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. And Japan was at war with the colonial power occupying India; England must be expelled from India. As Japan wished to see England purged from Asia so also Indian nationalists aspired to free India. Japan had to reckon with India for the mutual advantage of both Japan and India.

What agencies or individuals in Tokyo would do the reckoning? The Foreign Ministry was one obvious possibility. Japan had no ambassador in India under England, but there were consuls in major Indian

<sup>1</sup> Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, winter 1963-64, pp. 411-429.

<sup>2</sup> Essentials of Policy Regarding the Administration of the Occupied Areas in the Southern Regions, Liaison Conference, Nov. 20, 1941, in Nobutaka Ike, *Japan's Decision for War*, Stanford University Press, 1967, pp. 251-253.

cities. In April, 1941, for example, Consul General Okazaki in Calcutta, in a secret communique to Foreign Minister Matsuoka, described the independence movement of the Forward Bloc, a radical party in Bengal. Okazaki suggested establishing contact with this left-wing party in India and also with its leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, currently in exile in Berlin. Going even further, Okazaki suggested, "We should secretly transport large quantities of weapons and substantially increase the actual strength of the Forward Block."<sup>3</sup> While Okasaki felt the movement would burgeon into a genuinely popular revolt, Japan should do her part by establishing contact with Bose and aiding his party. This early Japanese notice of Bose preceded by several months Major Fujiwara's remarks about Bose to the 8th Section, Second Bureau, IGHQ. But Okasaki's suggestions were not followed.

From Ambassador General Oshima Hiroshi in Berlin also came communiqués regarding the Indian revolutionary Bose and his desire to go to East Asia. By late 1941 Bose had already begun to visit Ambassador Oshima and military attaché Yamamoto Bin in Berlin with plans for military cooperation with Japan against England in Asia. The Foreign Ministry, then, learned of the presence of Bose in Berlin and of his political significance from sources both in India and in Germany. The Foreign Ministry, however, refrained from any positive proposal regarding India or Bose during 1941. And when war erupted, the initiative obviously lay with the military rather than the Foreign Ministry.

From within the cabinet Prime Minister Tojo made several declarations of policy toward India in early 1942. These pronouncements were articulated in speeches before the Diet. They represented official policy aims toward India. The statements were made during the four-month interval from January through April, and the timing of the pronouncements suggested that by late March or early April the fundamental lines of Japan's India policy had already been drawn.<sup>4</sup> Measures were later adopted to implement some of these policy goals. Announcements made by Tojo during 1943 and 1944 were designed to realize earlier decisions.

Major policy decisions on India also emanated from Liaison Conferences and Imperial Conferences. Liaison Conferences included important members of both the cabinet and military high command, including the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Army and Navy Chiefs of Staff and Vice-Chiefs of Staff. The Liaison Conferences were inaugurated by cabinet order in the late 1937 to provide liaison between the Cabinet and military on crucial policy questions. For a time conferences

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<sup>3</sup> Gaimusho, Indo Mondai [India Problem], Secret Communique from Okasaki to Matsuoka, nos. 11975, 11978, 11979, Apr. 30-31, 1941.

<sup>4</sup> Interviews with Col. Ozeki, formerly of the 8th Section, IGHQ, on July 15, 1967, Hashima, Gifu Prefecture, and Lt. Gen. Arisue, former chief, Second Bureau, IGHQ, on Aug. 19, 1967, Tokyo.

lapsed, but they were resumed in November 1940 and thereafter continued until 1944.<sup>5</sup> A major decision reached at a Liaison Conference was not final until ratified at an Imperial Conference, i.e., the Liaison Conference plus the Emperor and President of the Privy Council. This Imperial ratification in effect made the decision irrevocable.

Still another government agency directly under the Prime Minister's office was concerned with Japanese policy in Asia. This was the Total War Research Institute, created in 1940 to do research on total war and to train officials. This agency was the brain child of two generals: Lt. Gen. Tatsumi Eichii, Section Chief in the European and American Section, IGHQ, and Lt. Gen. Iimura Minoru, Chief of Staff of the Kanto Garrison in Manchuria. Gen. Iimura was appointed director of the Institute in January 1941 and remained in that post until October of the same year. Gen. Tatsumi, former military attache in London, envisaged an agency on the same pattern as the Royal National War Institute in England. Topics for study by the Institute were selected at the discretion of Gen. Iimura, though the choice reflected the concerns of the military which he represented. Iimura reported directly to the Prime Minister, at that time Konoe. During August, 1941 (following discussion by the Army and Navy), the Institute held a map maneuver on the problem of what would happen should Japan advance South in search of oil. The study postulated Soviet entry into the war; the conclusion was that Japan's material strength would be deficient, and the cabinet and Planning Board would be impelled to resign. Bureau chiefs of several cabinet ministries participated, and many top-ranking military officers observed the maneuver, including War Minister Tojo.<sup>6</sup>

The Institute also autonomously devised plans for the independence of Asian nations from Western colonial rule and their incorporation into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The Total War Research Institute drew up a Draft Plan for the Establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere on January 27, 1942. This plan envisaged a Greater, Smaller and Inner Sphere; India was to be included within the Greater Sphere, or sphere of influence.<sup>7</sup> Policies recommended by the Institute were later implemented by military administration in Southeast Asia, though Iimura testified at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal that the military had no special interest in the Institute.<sup>8</sup> There was, however, no separate focus on India in the studies and maneuvers of the Total War Research Institute during 1941. A Greater

<sup>5</sup> Ike, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

<sup>6</sup> Correspondence with Lt. Gen. Iimura, Aug. 21, 1967, Japan.

<sup>7</sup> International Military Tribunal for the Far East, Exhibit 1336.

<sup>8</sup> International Military Tribunal for the Far East, Exhibit 3030, Iimura testimony.

Willard H. Elsbee, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements*, Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 20.

East Asia Military was also created during the war to handle problems relating to the rest of Asia; no records of this ministry are extant.

Besides these agencies General Staff Headquarters of course had a direct concern with India policy during the war. Army Chief of General Staff Sugiyama Gen took a special interest in India, derived from his two-year assignment in India as military attaché. Sugiyama, like Tojo and Shigemitsu, developed a special sympathy for Subhas Chandra Bose. Under the Second Bureau (Intelligence) of IGHQ, headed by Lt. Gen. Arisue, was the 8th Section, whose purview included India. The 8th Section was the official repository of intelligence on India. From among staff officers of the 8th Section Major Fujiwara was selected to establish liaison with and encourage the Indian independence movement in South-east Asia. Fujiwara was dismayed by the lack of information on India available in IGHQ at the time of his assignment in October 1941. Within the 8th Section Lt. Col. Ozeki was assigned to deal with the Fujiwara Kikan and its successor organizations, the Iwakuro Kikan and Hikari Kikan in the field. 8th Section chiefs, for example Col. Nagai Yatsuji, were at times called on to deal with the Indian National Army or with Bose. Civilian specialists on India — on whom there were very few in Japan — were also consulted by the 8th Section during the war.

These were the major official sources in Tokyo from which policy decisions on India emanated during the war. There were others who influenced India policy, several of them private individuals. Notable among these was Toyama Mitsuru, the renowned patriotic society leader, who had contacts with Indian revolutionaries, such as Rash Behari Bose. Toyama advocated Pan-Asianism in all its varieties, starting soon after the turn of the century. He went beyond the ideology of Pan-Asianism to actively protect revolutionaries from all parts of Asia.

Another constant factor affecting Japan's project was the traditional ideology of the Japanese Army. The Army traditionally was oriented northward, toward Soviet Russia and North China, rather than Southward. The north was always the major legitimate concern of the Army, the direction from which Japan had to be on guard. Assignment of the best officers in the 'thirties to Manchuria and North China, especially to the Kwantung Army and the Kanto Garrison, reflected this orientation. This was true through most of 1941. "In Manchuria there were many superior officers, but in the South Fujiwara was a single player," observed Ishikawa Yoshiaki, interpreter for the Kikan throughout the war.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. ISSUES AND POLICIES

The first hypothesis to emerge regarding Japanese policy toward India is that Japan at no time planned a major invasion of India or

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<sup>9</sup> Interview, July 13, 1966, Tokyo.

actual incorporation of India into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, contrary to the suspicions of many Indians in the independence movement. There were, however, several indications of more limited concern with India in late 1941 and early 1942. Decisions reached in Liaison Conferences and speeches in the Diet by Prime Minister Tojo revealed this concern.

On November 15, 1941, an Imperial Conference decision, the "Plan for Acceleration of the End of the War with America," called among other things for "1) separation of Australia and India from Britain, and 2) stimulation of the Indian independence movement."<sup>10</sup>

One problem concerning policy toward India was the estimate of the Gaimusho that the Indian National Congress was opposed to Japan. A corollary of this was the postulate that, even if the Indian independence movement should succeed, it would be difficult for Indian revolutionaries to establish a stable, orderly state. Nor would it be possible for Japan to control a nation of four hundred million in addition to her other commitments in Southeast Asia.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, it lay within the realm of feasibility for Japan to launch a vast propaganda effort to encourage Indian disaffection from Britain.

Tojo declared in the Diet early in 1942 "Within the liberation of India there can be no real mutual prosperity in Greater East Asia," and further, in April, "It has been decided to strike a decisive blow against British power and military establishment in India."<sup>12</sup> This constituted a general policy statement rather than a directive to the Operations Bureau of IGHO; Tojo gave no suggestion of its tactical or even strategic implementation. Tojo mentioned India in Diet speeches on January 17, February 12, February 14, March 11-12, and April 4. Repeatedly he called on Indians to take advantage of the war to rise against British power and establish an India for Indians. Tojo also stated he hoped India would cooperate in the "establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." This pronouncement too was never alluded to again, either generally or in further explanation.

At several points it was conceivable that a Japanese invasion of India might have succeeded had it been planned. The optimum time was in the spring and summer of 1942, following Japanese successes in Malaya and Burma, when Japanese air, sea and land power could not have been checked by the British. But Japan passed up the opportunity. Japan made no concerted attempt to establish a base in Ceylon or Calcutta, though Ceylon had been mentioned in Tokyo as a desirable base.

<sup>10</sup> Ike, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

<sup>11</sup> Secret document signed Ott, Tokyo, Jan. 7, 1942. IMFTE Exhibit 1271.

<sup>12</sup> Tojo speech in the Diet, early 1942, in the Boeicho Senshishitsu [Defense Agency, War History Library]; Tojo speech on military activities in India; Imperial Conference Decision, Apr. 4, 1942 in Boeicho Senshishitsu.

Two years later, when Japan mounted a military offensive into the borders of India, it was with the limited objective of "securing strategic areas near Imphal and in Northeast India for the defense of Burma."<sup>13</sup> An auxiliary objective was to disrupt the air routes between Chungking and India. This was clearly not envisioned as a full-scale invasion of India. India remained a peripheral interest for Japan in terms of 1) the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and 2) the major theaters of the war. Nevertheless, the attention of Tokyo had been drawn to India at the close of 1941, even before the outbreak of war. One of the reasons Tojo took notice was the policy recommendations of the young Major Fujiwara, who had been sent to Bangkok on an intelligence mission late in 1941.

Another major tenet of Japanese policy, this toward the INA, was that Japan would use and support the INA chiefly for propaganda purposes, particularly to foster anti-British sentiment. All major Japanese policy decisions regarding the INA point toward this goal. Beginning with the Fujiwara mission in 1941 (and a brief assignment for Fujiwara in late 1940), and continuing with the expanded propaganda functions of the Kikan under Col. Iwakuro, the major Japanese thrust was to encourage the proliferation of Indian intelligence activities throughout Southeast Asia. Under both Fujiwara, and still more under Iwakuro, training centers and liaison facilities were developed to expand propaganda and sabotage missions behind enemy lines.

Yet another Japanese objective was a corollary to the above, namely: even during the Imphal campaign and the actions in Burma, the Japanese Army was reluctant to see the INA evolve into a large fighting force, partly because of the problems of equipping such an army, partly out of questions about possible actions of such an army once the Indian border was crossed, and partly because of doubts about whether an Indian army would constitute a military asset to Japan. During the Imphal campaign Japan conceived of the INA as a series of guerrilla fighting units and special forces which would perform intelligence functions. Shah Nawaz Khan alleges that General Terauchi, commander of the Southern Army, told Bose unequivocally that Japan did not want large formations of the INA at the front. Shah Nawaz was particularly skeptical of Japanese motives, and charged further not only Japanese inability to supply arms and provisions during military campaigns, but also reluctance.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Instructions from Imperial Army Headquarters, Tokyo to General Kawabe in Burma, Jan. 7, 1944 in Historical Section, Defense Ministry, Government of India, New Delhi. Also quoted in Barker, A. J., *The March on Delhi*, London, 1963, p. 246.

<sup>14</sup> Durlab Singh ed., quotes from Shah Nawaz Khan's diary in *Formation and Growth of the Indian National Army, Lahore*, 1946, p. 46. Shah Nawaz, *My Memories of I.N.A. and its Netaji*, Delhi, 1946, p. 125.

Several steps taken by Japan, recounted below, also support the hypothesis that Japan was primarily interested in using the INA for propaganda purposes. These include the Japanese recognition of the Free India Provisional Government, the transfer of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to FIPG, and the sending of a diplomatic representative to the Free India Provisional Government. In all these instances Japan conceded the form but not the substance of Bose's demands. The concessions were designed to create the impression abroad, and with Bose, that Japan was dealing with a large, independent government and Army.

Another problem which beset Japan's India policy throughout the war was a time disjunction between three factors: 1) military intelligence in the field and its evaluation and response in Tokyo, 2) policy planning by IGHQ, and 3) tactical implementation of policy at the operational level. Part of this delay was attributable to normal processing of proposals and policies through a bureaucratic establishment, even during wartime. For example, the decision to invite Bose from Berlin to Tokyo to evaluate his utility from the standpoint of Japanese policy was reached on April 17, 1942, jointly by the War, Navy and Foreign Ministries.<sup>15</sup> Bose did not actually reach Tokyo until the end of May, 1943. Apart from normal bureaucratic delays, part of the time lag was created by the German Foreign Ministry's reluctance to release a potentially valuable bargaining instrument in dealing with the British. Part of the delay was also occasioned by the presence in Tokyo of another Indian revolutionary, Rash Behari Bose, who many felt was the logical leader to work through.

Another case in point was the planning of the offensive into Northeast India and its execution. In the fall of 1942, and even earlier, Tojo and IGHQ contemplated a military thrust into Northeast India, "Operation 21" as it was then called. But in 1942-53 there were too many obstacles to the idea—inadequate supply lines, British deterrent strength in the Akyab sector through early 1943, a shortage of trained Indian troops for a joint Campaign, not to mention events in the Pacific. Consequently, the plan for an Indian offensive was postponed to early 1944. In 1944, however, despite the rationale for the campaign, the above obstacles were even more acute and it was not possible for Japan to succeed.

Regarding this disjunction of time factors, it should be noted that Bose's role in the timing of most aspects of the Japan-INA cooperation was minimal. The timing of Subhas Chandra Bose's arrival in East Asia was not of his own choice. For over a year before he arrived in Asia he had been pressing Japanese Ambassador Oshima and Col. Yamamoto, military attaché in Berlin, to arrange his transportation to Asia. Bose

<sup>15</sup> Renraku Kaigi Kettei, Apr. 17, 1942 [Liaison Conference Decision] in Boeicho Senshishitsu.

was similarly unhappy about the timing of the Imphal campaign, but again his expressions of urgency carried little weight in Tokyo. Bose would have had Japan push across the border soon after his arrival in the summer of 1943. But because of the above reasons and because India remained for Japan a peripheral concern in the deployment of her resources for a total war, other considerations overrode the logic of not postponing the campaign. In other respects, however, Bose did make a difference in Tokyo, particularly with Tojo, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu, and Chief of Staff Sugiyama.

To summarize, then, Japan had several objectives in cooperating with the INA: to encourage anti-British sentiment in Southeast Asia, within the British-Indian Army and within India; to develop an intelligence network to implement this aim; to defend Burma and the western border of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, and to support and assist the FIPG and INA, within certain limitations, to achieve these aims. These were both political and military objectives. There was a distinction made between the political aims, which fell within the purview of the Second Bureau, Intelligence, and the military problems, which fell within the scope of the First Bureau, Operations, in IGHQ. The first Bureau was the more powerful of the two in any conflict.

### 3. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND TRANSPORTATION IN THE FIELD

The organization in Southeast Asia for implementing Japanese policy toward the Indian National Army was a liaison agency under the aegis of Southern Army Headquarters. Formed in October, 1941, it predated the formation of the first INA by two months.

On October 1, 1941, Major Fujiwara Iwaichi was sent from the 8th Section, Second Bureau, IGHQ on an intelligence mission to Bangkok, where he contacted the Japanese military attache. Fujiwara's instructions from Chief of Staff General Sugiyama directed him to maintain liaison with the Indian independence movement and with Malaysians and Chinese in Thailand and Malaya. Fujiwara was to encourage the cooperation and friendship of all these groups with the Japanese. It was a formidable task for a thirty-three year old major, a staff of five commissioned officers, and a Hindi-speaking interpreter. It called for considerable initiative, imagination and finesse. Fujiwara reported directly to the military attaché in Bangkok, ultimately to the 25th Army and the Southern Army.

Fujiwara began work with groups of Indians in Bangkok. There was already an Indian organization printing and distributing propaganda leaflets among Indian officers and men of the British Indian Army, before the Pacific war broke out. In Fujiwara's early contacts with these Indians, mostly Sikhs, he was impressed by their revolutionary fervor

for independence from British rule. If all Indians in Southeast Asia felt like the Sikhs in Bangkok, perhaps they could all be united in a single vast movement which could cooperate with the Japanese and at the same time for independence from the British.

Inspiration for the organization of the INA grew out of talks between Fujiwara and two Sikhs: Pritam Singh, a priest and teacher in Bangkok who headed the Indian Independent League (later the IIL), and Mohan Singh, a Captain in the British Indian Army who was one of the first Indians to surrender to the Japanese. The three determined to contact all Indians in the British Indian Army—both POWs and those still in the Army—and persuade them to volunteer for the Indian National Army, which would fight for India's freedom. This was the bold design which Fujiwara and his staff in the F Kikan worked for in Malaya and Thailand. Other than this work, Fujiwara's operation also embraced a Sumatra project, a Malay Youth League project, and an overseas Chinese project, all designed to secure good will of local inhabitants toward the Japanese and to encourage independence from colonial rule. Fujiwara worked with energy, enthusiasm, sympathy, and despatch, making friends for Japan wherever he went.

Fujiwara's encounter in the jungles of Perak state, Malaya, with a trapped battalion of the British Indian Army enabled him to meet Captain Mohan Singh, the ranking Indian officer. Fujiwara and Mohan Singh took an immediate liking to each other. Fujiwara convinced Mohan Singh he would be treated as a friend, not as a prisoner. In conversations with Mohan Singh, Fujiwara pointed to several historic ties between Japan and India and suggested the Pacific War was a chance for Indians to rise and fight for Indian freedom with Japanese help. This was the genesis of the Indian National Army. Mohan Singh was further convinced of Japanese sincerity in conversations with General Yamashita of the 25th Army. Mohan Singh and Fujiwara talked for two days about the form cooperation would take. From Mohan Singh Fujiwara first heard the name of Subhas Chandra Bose, whom Mohan Singh asked the Japanese to bring to Asia from Berlin. By January 1, 1942, Japanese—INA cooperation was assured. Mohan Singh began training propaganda units to work beside those already operating under Pritam Singh's direction.

On January 8 Fujiwara was visited by Lt. Col. Ozeki from the 8th Section, IGHQ, Tokyo, who had come to discuss with Fujiwara the progress of his mission. To Ozeki Fujiwara made his first proposal regarding Japanese policy toward India and the Indian National Army. It was a bold, broadly conceived plan including the following points: 1) Japanese encouragement of the Indian independence movement to cut India adrift from England, 2) clarification of Japan's basic policy toward India and the Indian independence movement, 3) a unified policy in

Tokyo toward India, 4) expansion of the work of the Fujiwara Kikan to all areas of Asia, including a direct appeal to India, 5) world-wide scope to Japan's Indian policy, including inviting Bose to Asia, 6) Japanese assistance to both the civilian Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army of ex-POWs, 7) personal proof to Indians in occupied areas of the ideals of the New Order in East Asia, and 8) re-organization and expansion of the Fujiwara Kikan to accomplish these objectives.<sup>16</sup> Through Col. Ozeki Fujiwara's imaginative suggestions came to the attention of IGHQ, which two weeks later sent two generals from IGHQ to visit Fujiwara and inspect the progress of his work on the spot. Fujiwara was elated that his ideas were getting a hearing in Tokyo. In spite of this high level notice of Fujiwara, however, he felt there was always a gap between his views of the INA and the views of Tokyo, even within the 8th Section, his own unit. Nevertheless, Fujiwara explained to Generals Tanaka and Tominaga his plan for the formation of an Indian revolutionary army of one hundred thousand men. He mentioned too the Indian request to bring Subhas Chandra Bose to Asia to unite all Indians there. Clearly an organization of the size of the F Kikan could not implement all Fujiwara's ideas; his staff, now twelve men, was already terribly overworked. But Fujiwara succeeded in making Tokyo take note of India and the INA.

With Japanese success at Singapore on February 15, Fujiwara accepted the surrender of some 50,000 Indian troops. About half of this number was persuaded to volunteer for the INA when Fujiwara and Mohan Singh addressed the assemblage of POWs. Many would not volunteer; they were detained in separate camps, but many of them later joined the INA when Bose arrived in Singapore. Again Tokyo was forced to watch this burgeoning of the INA and Indian independence movement, and to give support. Invitations were sent from Tokyo to the IIL and INA to send representatives to a conference of Indians from Southeast Asia in Tokyo.

In Tokyo in early March Fujiwara visited IGHQ but was dismayed to find that his proposal regarding policy toward India and the INA had been given a much more Machiavellian tinge than he intended. Fujiwara spent three days discussing with IGHQ staff officers the need for genuine sympathy and sincerity in dealing with the Indian independence movement. At the end of the discussions he felt he had made some headway in affecting the thinking in Tokyo, but there was a gap which remained between Fujiwara and IGHQ.

One result of Fujiwara's policy suggestions was that his own mission was ended; the F Kikan was greatly expanded and he himself was

<sup>16</sup> Fujiwara Iwaichi, *F Kikancho no Shuki*, Jieitai, Tokyo, 1959, pp. 134-135. Fujiwara Iwaichi, *F Kikan*, Tokyo, 1966, pp. 183-186.

transferred to another assignment. But for the duration of the war he kept close track of the INA he had helped create. Fujiwara had proven the wisdom of the Japanese Army policy of entrusting important missions requiring much individual initiative to officers of field grade rank. His mission had proven a success in several other ways. He had established the sincerity and credibility of Japanese aid to the Indian independence movement.

As a consequence of Fujiwara's mission several developments occurred in Tokyo as well: he had drawn the attention of Tokyo to India and the INA; the INA had been formed with Fujiwara as midwife; IGHQ decided to expand the Kikan to handle the many functions which Fujiwara had suggested; a Liaison Conference on April 17 decided to invite Subhas Chandra Bose to Asia from Berlin to evaluate his usefulness for Japanese purposes. This was an imposing record of achievement for Fujiwara's five-month mission in Southeast Asia.

With Fujiwara's successor, Col. Iwakuro and the Iwakuro Kikan, there were several changes in Japanese policy and its implementation. In late March when Iwakuro arrived in Southeast Asia the Kikan was reorganized with some two hundred and fifty members, a far cry from the handful of men with which Fujiwara began the operation six months earlier. Several of the staff were prominent politicians, including two Diet members. A few months later the number of members had risen to five hundred. The Kikan was organized into six departments, with the emphasis on intelligence and political activities. Headquarters was in Bangkok, and the Kikan had branches in Rangoon, Saigon, Singapore, Penang and Hongkong.

Col. Iwakuro was an officer whose principal experience had been in intelligence and special mission projects. He had founded the Army Intelligence School, the Rikugun Nakano Gakko. He had also played an active role in the Japanese-American peace negotiations in Washington during 1941. His political power and reputation in the Army were such that Tojo was anxious not to have Iwakuro remain in Tokyo; this was one of the reasons for Iwakuro's selection as Fujiwara's successor in Southeast Asia. And Iwakuro outranked Fujiwara. Clearly IGHQ had accepted at least some of Fujiwara's suggestions.

Iwakuro was immediately plagued by several problems. One of the most vexing, which Fujiwara had worried about but not able to resolve—was the split between Indian residents in Southeast Asia and the Indian leadership in Tokyo. The mutual suspicion and hostility grew until it caused a crisis in the leadership of the whole independence movement in Southeast Asia. The crisis, personified in a struggle between Rash Behari Bose from Tokyo and Mohan Singh, partly caused the dissolution of the first INA and incarceration of Mohan Singh. Fujiwara was no

more able to avert the crisis than Iwakuro. Iwakuro was working closely with Rash Behari Bose, but Mohan Singh was unwilling to compromise with the Japanese. Since Fujiwara's replacement by Iwakuro, Mohan Singh had become increasingly suspicious of Japanese motives and sincerity. In Mohan Singh's eyes Bose was nothing more than a Japanese puppet.

Under Iwakuro the training schools for intelligence activities expanded and turned out graduates, some of whom were sent into India by Iwakuro. Penang was a special center for training in propaganda and espionage. This stress on propaganda and espionage for Japanese objectives was not quite to Fujiwara's liking; Iwakuro, however, was an expert at it.

Both Fujiwara and Iwakuro had received only very general instructions from Tokyo. This gave them both much room to maneuver but also not as much support as they needed from Tokyo. The most serious problem Iwakuro faced, and one that underlay the others, was the ambiguity of his role and uncertainty in Tokyo itself about how far Japan should go in support of Indian independence. Fujiwara had urged full and sincere support of the movement, but IGHQ had many reservations, some of them based on practical problems of material support. For Iwakuro the limits of Tokyo's support of the INA-IIL were not clear. His instructions left him latitude for interpretation and exercise of his own political acumen. Iwakuro was working from an IGHQ attitude of grudging and limited support, but this still left the problem of determining the limits. In general Iwakuro read the mood in Tokyo well. The one point that was clear, about which Tokyo would not quibble, was that the India project was part of a secret war in which the weapons of intelligence and espionage played the key role. Political propaganda and secret diplomacy were an old story to Iwakuro. These were the areas where he had proven his versatile talents, which he made good use of in the Kikan. But the IIL, INA, and especially Mohan Singh continually plagued Iwakuro with specific requests, constantly pushing the limits of Japan's willingness or capacity to commit herself. This fundamental problem of defining Japan's policy limits persisted under Iwakuro and ultimately led to dissolution of the first INA. It was not until the arrival of Subhas Chandra Bose that Tokyo was forced to reevaluate and redefine the limits of its policy toward the Indian independence movement.

With the arrival in Asia of Subhas Chandra Bose in June 1943 Japanese policy toward the INA underwent reevaluation and change. In part the shifts reflected the changed military situation and the planning and execution of the Imphal campaign in particular, and in part the changes resulted from the personal impact of Bose on both Japanese

and Indian leadership. Tojofi who at first refused to meet Bose and was only persuaded to after two weeks by Shigemitsu, became sympathetic to both Bose and the independence movement as a result of the meeting. Bose's charismatic personality also had an impact on Sugiyama and Shigemitsu.

As a result of Bose's arrival in Asia the Kikan was reorganized, first briefly under Col. Yamamoto Bin who had known Bose in Berlin, then under Lt. Gen. Isoda Saburo. Bose's complaints about Yamamoto's lack of understanding were partly responsible for Yamamoto's replacement by Isoda. General Isoda was a higher-ranking officer than either Iwakuro or Yamamoto, reflecting the increased military emphasis put on the work of liaison in 1944. Isoda was also a benign, mild-mannered man, whose appointment was calculated to placate Bose's impatient demands for action in India. But Bose remained dissatisfied at having to deal with the Hikari Kikan, and he would have preferred to deal directly with the Japanese Army and Government.

Another result of Bose's arrival in Asia was to give added impetus to the forces pushing for the Imphal campaign. While there were several military factors behind the rationale of undertaking the Imphal campaign in 1944, the strategists also took into consideration the political factor of the Indian independence movement as well as the crisis in morale in Japan.

During the planning of the Imphal strategy and the waging of the campaign Japanese military objectives regarding the INA were consistent. Japanese commanders, including Terauchi of the Southern Army, Kawabe of the New Burma Area Army and Mutaguchi of the 15th Army all insisted that the INA be used primarily for guerrilla fighting and for special services, i.e., intelligence duty. Bose, on the other hand insisted that the INA be used as a single unit and that the INA unit spearhead the offensive into India. For Bose the first drop of blood shed on Indian soil had to be Indian. A compromise was reached, with the INA remaining ultimately under Japanese command throughout the offensive but fighting in Indian units directly under Indian officers. Throughout 1944 and 1945 Isoda accompanied Bose and assumed charge of liaison between him and the Japanese military command. It was a frustrating job, for Bose's demands were insatiable. For Bose there was the single goal of liberation of India throughout the combined action of the INA and Japanese forces while for Japan Imphal was a limited holding operation subordinate to the high-priority campaigns in the Pacific. Bose requested increasing support in military supplies, while Japanese capacity to support her campaigns steadily diminished. The two positions could never basically be reconciled, and the differences caused constant daily friction during this military phase of the coopera-

tion. Though some in IGHQ in Tokyo questioned the prospects of the Imphal campaign from the outset, for Bose there could be no hesitation; this was the springboard into India. Once the INA crossed the borders into India, Bose expected all India to rise in revolt against the British.

Bose did not finally turn his back on Japanese aid for the liberation of India until the Japanese surrender in 1945. He turned then toward Soviet Russia and a plan to liberate India from the north with Soviet aid. In pursuit of this goal Bose was flying to Manchuria when his plane crashed on August 18, 1945 in Taiwan, killing him.

The INA in the Imphal campaign had come a long way since the discussions between Fujiwara, Mohan Singh and Pritam Singh in the jungles of central Malaya in late 1941. And Japan had come to view the cooperation with the INA as of considerable political if not military significance. Bose's personal bargaining power with the Japanese was part of the difference. There was sensitivity in Tokyo to Indian opinion, which was regarded as unfavorable toward Japan. Bose's leadership was seen as an entering wedge with Indian opinion. But in general Tokyo's objectives toward India and the INA remained limited. Some form of limited political-military alliance in Southeast Asia was natural and logical, but for IGHQ there were always the requisites of a total war in which Japan's resources had proven insufficient.

It was in part the men in the Kikan, and particularly the ideals of Fujiwara, that determined not only the implementation but also the formulation of Japan's policy toward the INA.

#### 4. PUPPET OR REVOLUTIONARY ARMY?

Was the INA a puppet or a genuine revolutionary army? The question is at least partly subjective. Though the subordination of the INA to Japanese military command is unquestionable, the issue has several other dimensions. Was the INA an independent army in Japanese intent, in international law, and in INA aspiration? This poses some of the implications of the question.

First, the problem of Japanese intent is itself complex. There was no single Japanese view of either India or the INA. Policy was formulated and implemented at several different levels, and at each level it was colored and transformed by the biases, experiences, personalities and political predilections of the men in charge. Japanese policy did not develop as an ideal analytical model on the desk of a single staff officer in Tokyo. There were many agencies and men who, in implementing policy in turn created and transformed it. The Fujiwara Kikan was a case in point. Assigned originally on a small-scale intelligence mission to Bangkok, Fujiwara became the midwife of the INA. His

proposals regarding Japan's policy toward India and the INA got a hearing eventually by Tojo and Sugiyama. Fujiwara brought India and the INA to the attention of Tokyo, which had not previously looked much west of Burma on the map.

Japanese policy also evolved chronologically throughout the war through the pressure of factors external to the INA. Japanese attitudes were affected at any given moment by the course of the war and the dictates of military necessity. The Iwakuro Kikan differed in character from the Fujiwara Kikan and the Hikari Kikan in turn differed from the Iwakuro organization. It was not only the men on both sides who spelled the difference. Fujiwara in 1944 would have been forced to play his role somewhat differently from the way he played it in late 1941-early 1942, regardless of his idealism and genuine sympathy for Indian independence.

Second, were the FIPG and INA independent from the standpoint of international law? Here too the answer is mixed. This question was a focal point in the court martial of INA officers on charges of treason in Delhi at the end of the war. If the Free India Provisional Government and its army were not independent but subordinate to Japan and the Japanese Army, then the Indians who led and participated in the FIPG and INA were legally traitors to the British. If, on the other hand, the FIPG and INA were legally independent of the Japanese, then the officers could not be convicted as traitors, because they were leaders of an independent government in exile and revolutionary army. These were the arguments of the prosecution and defense.

Japanese intent as well as Indian aspirations are relevant here. Three separate Japanese actions toward the FIPG throw some light on Japan's wartime objectives regarding the independence of the FIPG. Two days after the announcement of the formation of the FIPG on October 21, 1943, the Japanese Government proclaimed its recognition of the nascent Indian government. But this was recognition of a provisional government, which in the opinion of several generals in IGHQ, did not constitute full recognition.<sup>17</sup>

A second action immediately followed the first. It was the announcement by Tojo on November 6, 1943, of the transfer of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the FIPG. The announcement was timed to coincide with the Greater East Asia Conference in Tokyo. The FIPG now had a recognized government and territory, at least formally. The Islands had great political and symbolic significance as former places of exile for Indian political prisoners of the British. What happened in fact? Though an Indian commissioner was sent to the Islands by the

<sup>17</sup> Gaimusho [Foreign Ministry], Ajiya Kyoku [Asia Office], *Subhas Chandra Bose to Nihon*, [Subhas Chandra Bose and Japan], Tokyo, 1956, p. 124.

FIPG, in reality civil and military control of the Islands remained under the Japanese Navy. The impatience of Bose and his commissioner had no effect on the reality of the situation.

A third action was the appointment of a Japanese diplomatic envoy to the FIPG. This was a step much sought by Bose in 1944. He was frustrated at having to deal with all military and political matters through liaison officers of the Hikari Kikan. He preferred to deal directly with the Japanese Government in political matters and with the Japanese Army in military problems. Accordingly, an experienced diplomat, Mr. Hachiya Teruo, was appointed minister to the FIPG in February, 1945. What was the case in actuality? Mr. Hachiya arrived in Rangoon and sought an audience with Bose. Foreign Minister Chatterji asked for Hachiya's credentials, but he had none. He was not a regularly accredited diplomatic envoy any more than the FIPG was a fully recognized government. Bose refused to see Hachiya until such time as he was able to present his credentials. This was the third time the Japanese Government attempted to satisfy the requests of the FIPG by tongue-in-cheek actions which partly in form but not in substance recognized the independent status of the FIPG.

At the INA trial in Delhi after the war several Japanese witnesses were called. Contrary to the above indications of Japanese intent, Japanese witnesses unanimously testified that the INA was an independent military arm of an independent government in exile. The Japanese stand in 1946, however, was a separate phenomenon from Japanese aims during the war. In 1946 Japanese witnesses had no desire to see leaders of the Indian independence movement convicted by British colonial power. Japanese sympathy was still with the INA in the choice between Indian independence fighters and the former common British enemy.

Was the INA then a genuine revolutionary army? This question hinges partly on the subjective emotions of the officers and men of the INA. No one can dispute the character of Bose as a revolutionary in every sense of the word. From early school days he harbored a hatred of British rule which became accentuated rather than softened during his years in British universities. His refusal to accept a post in the ICS which he won through examination was a significant step in the metamorphosis of Bose the revolutionary. For Bose there could be no cooperation with the imperialist power. His conviction that the only way to rid India of British rule was to expel it by force was the decisive step in the formulation of Bose's revolutionary faith. But Indian revolutionary strength had to be supplemented by foreign power, and Bose turned to Italy, Germany, Japan, and finally Soviet Russia in search of outside help. Even Gandhi and Nehru, who broke with Bose earlier over

the issue of the use of violence against the British, conceded during the INA trial that Bose was a true patriot.

Mohan Singh, co-founder with Fujiwara of the first INA in December, 1941, was a revolutionary of a different order. A younger man than Bose, Mohan Singh was a professional soldier in the British-Indian Army. Until his meeting with Fujiwara in the jungles of central Malaya, Mohan Singh had rarely had a political thought. Fujiwara was the catalyst—an effective one—through which Mohan Singh began to articulate his accumulated unconscious hostilities toward the British. Of course independence was preferable to British rule! And here was chance to fight for India rather than for British India! Mohan Singh became a revolutionary under Fujiwara's eyes, a revolutionary unwilling to compromise with the Japanese when other Indians advised caution and moderation. Not even Fujiwara could persuade Mohan Singh to cooperate, and in late December 1942, one year after the creation of the INA, Mohan Singh was jailed by the Japanese, and remained in detention for the remainder of the war.

Here, then, were two Indian revolutionaries of different molds but the same goal. What of the other officers of the INA? Most of them, including even Mohan Singh, felt a conflict of loyalty when first confronted with the prospect of fighting Britain for independence, in cooperation with the Japanese. They were all professional soldiers, many of them from families with traditions of long and loyal service to the British Indian Army. Training and experience could not be disavowed overnight.

There were other reasons the history of revolt within the British Army was brief and unsuccessful. Despite Army policies which discriminated against Indian officers and men, there were also measures regularly employed to discourage possible disaffection, for the loyalty of the Army was the ultimate sanction for British rule in India. Only after the loyalty of the Army and Navy came into serious question in 1946 did the British finally decide to withdraw from India.

In many cases it was several months before Indian officers were able to resolve their emotional conflicts and volunteer their services for the INA. Some felt this was the only way to protect Indian lives and property. Others were convinced by the arrival of Bose in Asia. Once converted, they fought valiantly for Indian independence, and many refused to retreat when ordered to do so during the Imphal campaign. Shah Nawaz Khan and P. K. Sahgal were officers of this caliber. Shah Nawaz was especially apprehensive that the Japanese might come to replace the British in India, and was continually on guard against this eventuality.

There was also some professionalism and even opportunism among some of the officers and men. As volunteers for the INA they received better treatment than as POWs of the Japanese. In Singapore conditions in the barracks and mess were better, and they were still able to fight as INA volunteers. Among these were men who deserted to the British when the odds turned against the INA. The material inducement were attractive, irresistible for many. "They never fought the British in India. Why consider them great patriots just because they joined the Japanese in Southeast Asia?" one Indian critic asks.<sup>18</sup>

Among the JCO's (Junior Commissioned Officers) the feeling was that they were better patriots than the senior officers. They were more sincere in the fight for Indian freedom than the senior officers, many of whom were closer to the British and had divided loyalties. No doubt junior officers and enlisted men have in every army felt themselves more sincere and hard-fighting than their superiors.

When they fought their way beyond Burma across the border to Imphal, almost to a man the INA was eager to push on homeward. Even in Burma the genuine hope for freedom within the INA ranks impressed some Japanese observers. "There was some professionalism, yes, but everyone in the INA was fighting for freedom for India," one Japanese correspondent in Burma observed.<sup>19</sup>

These were the motivations of the motley group that was the INA, partly civilian in background, partly military. At the borders of India they all wanted to see India free, but they varied in their willingness to fight and sacrifice for the goal. The answer to the original question is therefore mixed. For many staff officers in IGHQ, particularly in the Operations Bureau, and for some staff officers in the field, the INA was a puppet army to be used for propaganda functions according to Japanese requirements. For others, like Sugiyama and Arisue, the INA was a revolutionary army so far as the Indians were concerned, but it had to be subordinated to Japanese military and political objectives. For still others, mostly young men in the field who were idealists like Fujiwara, the INA was a genuine revolutionary army, which should receive real and sympathetic support from Japan in its fight for independence from British colonial oppression.

And from the Indian standpoint, we have the account of officers and men of the INA. Bose was a revolutionary who stands alone, with the possible exception of Mohan Singh. Many other officers were beset by severe conflicts of loyalty, though once their conflicts were resolved these men fought doggedly for Indian freedom. Most of the INA were men who agreed to volunteer when it was suggested by Fujiwara, partly

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Kusum Nair, Jan. 25, 1966, New Delhi.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Maruyama Shizuo, July 28, 1967, Tokyo.

because their friends were joining and it seemed the thing to do. And some of the men volunteered frankly for reasons of expediency.

The logic of geography in Southeast Asia and the common enemy, Britain, made some form of cooperation between Japan and the Indian independence movement natural. Although Japan's wartime policy toward India and the INA was a peripheral concern, it was one which drew her into ever-increasing involvement. As events of the war continually tested the limits of Japan's objectives, the objectives themselves were affected.

Japan's interest in the Indian independence movement began as a small-scale intelligence mission in Thailand and Malaya, developed into a complex propaganda and espionage network designed to foster anti-British sentiment, and finally burgeoned into limited support of and cooperation with a government in exile and revolutionary army. Despite the military defeat of Japan, and with it the INA, popular support for the INA finally precipitated British withdrawal from India.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> For a discussion on this point see Kalyan Kumar Ghosh, *History of the Indian National Army*. Ph.D. dissertation, Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi, 1966.