THE I.N.A. IN IMPHAL CAMPAIGN

For the Indian National Army (I.N.A.) the importance of the Imphal Campaign (1944) lies in the fact that it was the only battle in which it (I.N.A.) participated with the purpose of achieving India's freedom. In the unfavourable war situation for the Axis in 1945, I.N.A.'s military activities in Burma during that year aimed mainly at keeping up its (I.N.A.'s) prestige. Those military activities will not be discussed in this chapter because their objective was something else than the liberation of India. This chapter would discuss the development of the plan of the Imphal Campaign, and narrate the preparations of the I.N.A. to participate in the campaign which made it necessary for the Indian leader to find out a basis of co-operation between the Japanese Army and the I.N.A. and develop a plan of administration of the liberated territories. An assessment of the I.N.A.'s role in the Imphal Campaign will also be made in this chapter.

1. Japanese plan for the Imphal Campaign

The documents of the Indian army show that from 1942 there were continuous preparations by the Indian Army Command for the recovery of Burma. (1) In the last part of 1942 and the early

(1) Field Marshal Wavell (the C-in-C of the Indian army) in his telegram to the British Prime Minister on 14 June 1942 said: "We can now begin definitely to plan recapture of Burma,

(Contd. on next page)
part of 1943 the Allies had carried out two limited campaigns 
towards Akyab and northern Burma respectively. (2) With the 
formation of the South East Asia Command in 1943, grand schemes 
were worked out for the recovery of entire Burma (3) and it was 
decided to recover Arakan, and Myitkyina, and make an advance 
to the Chindwin during 1944. (4)

The Allied efforts had serious reactions in the mind of 
the Japanese Burma Area Army (B.A.A.) Headquarters. The fear of 
an Allied counter-attack and the danger in a failure to hold on

which has been in my mind since it became obvious that I was 
likely to lose it." In October 1942, Wavell had agreed with the 
plan prepared by Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek for the recapture 
of Burma through land and sea operations. From Wavell to Chur-
chill, 14 June 1942. See the Secret Report from Field Marshal 
Wavell to the Secretary of State for War, Second Despatch from 
the India Command covering the period from March to December 1942 
(Delhi, 1943) Appendix E, 16. Combined Inter-Service Historical 
Section, India and Pakistan, file no. 601/7401/H, Ministry of 
Defence, Government of India. Hereinafter this report will be 
referred to as the Second Despatch from the India Command.

(2) For details of the Arakan Campaign and North Burma 
Campaign see Major-General S. Wood Burn Kirby, Captain C.T. Addis, 
Colonel J.F. Meiklejohn, Brigadier M.R. Roberts, Colonel G.T. 
Wards, Air Vice Marshal N.L. Descoy, The War against Japan; 
India's Most Dangerous Hour, Sir James Butler, ed., History of 
II, 253-63, 303-29. An account of the campaign in North Burma 
in 1942, popularly known as the first Chindit Campaign, is also 
given by Bernard Ferguson, Beyond the Chindwin (London, 1945). 
The author took part in the campaign.

(3) For the detailed discussion on the schemes see Vice- 
Admiral The Earl Mountbatten of Burma, Report to the Combined 
Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia 
1943-1945 (London, 1951) 27. Hereinafter referred to as the 
S.E.A.C. Report.

(4) Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, Defeat into Victory 
to Burma, a region which was considered as most important for the
defense of the whole of the Japanese Co-Prosperity Sphere, were
at the upper most of the Japanese mind throughout the period from
1942 to 1945. (5) This was the fear which drove the Japanese
army in Burma in 1944 to decide a plan of offensive campaign to
safeguard the western fringe of the Co-Prosperity Sphere. (6)
The consideration of Burma's security was evident from the
documents of the Japanese army. The order issued by the Japanese
Imperial General Headquarters on 7 January 1944 instructing the
commander of the Japanese Southern Army to carry out the campaign
towards India read: "In order to strengthen the defense of Burma,
the G.O.C., Southern Army, is to attack the enemy when conditions
become favourable and occupy and consolidate the Imphal area and
the strategically important regions in N.E. India." (7) Another
Japanese document, which originated in the Southern Army, shows

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(5) The Japanese efforts in 1942 to strengthen the defense of
the Co-Prosperity Sphere, and more particularly that of Burma,
had been discussed in chapter two. As late as January 1945, when
the war was going very badly for Japan, the I.O.H.O. emphasised
the necessity to hold on to Southern Burma at any cost for defend-
ing the Co-Prosperity Sphere. See the Army Directive No. 1226:
Orders concerning changes in Southern Army's outlook, I.O.H.O.,
27 January 1945, The Combined Inter-Service Historical Section,
India and Pakistan, file no. 601/7775/4, Translation of the

(6) It has been mentioned in chapter three of this study
that towards the end of 1942 the Japanese army in Burma had
planned a similar campaign to ensure Burma's security. But that
plan could not be carried out. From

(7) Army Instruction No. 1773/Cen. Sugiyama, to G.O.C.
Southern Command, Count Terauchi, Translation of the Japanese
Documents, n. 5, Emphasis original.
that the purpose of the campaign, as viewed by the Southern Army Headquarters, was to take Imphal and Kohima and thus secure a geographical advantage to defend Burma with minimum forces. "Our aim," wrote the Commander of the Southern Army, "was to drive off the enemy forces to the west of Imphal and, by commanding the mountain areas, to economise our forces and accomplish our original aim of defending Burma." (8)

Political objective of the Imphal Campaign

The plan of the Imphal Campaign, in the initial stage of its development, was a purely military one. But the plan had developed during the period, July 1943 to January 1944, - when the Indian freedom movement in East Asia was gaining increased momentum. Since Bose took over the leadership of the movement in July 1943, the movement was reinvigorated. The propaganda


That the Imphal Campaign (1944) aimed to achieve Burma's security, and nothing more was clear to the British Army authorities. The campaign had been described as "an offensive operation realizing that British offensive was a certainty...real object was to strengthen the defence of Burma." Headquarters Twelfth Army, ed., The Japanese Account of their Operations in Burma December 1943 - August 1945, Part I (Rangoon, 1945) 5, Combined Inter-Service Historical Section, India and Pakistan, Registered File No. 601/6255/H, Ministry of Defence, Government of India. Hereinafter referred to as The Japanese Operations in Burma.
carried out by the Provisional Government on nationalist lines had stressed the political implication of any military campaign directed towards India. The Japanese plan gave the I.N.A. an opportunity to enter India. Bose had persuaded the Japanese army authorities to permit one I.N.A. regiment to take part in the Imphal Campaign. (9) Consequently, the importance of the political factor was not neglected by the Japanese army authorities when the plan of the Imphal Campaign reached the final stage. The B.A.A. Headquarters, which were in charge of the campaign, attached importance to this political factor.

About the B.A.A.'s emphasis on the importance of the political factor in the campaign a reliable source wrote:

...once this Imphal offensive was planned, new political meanings came to be added to its purely military character,...the Provisional Government asked the Japanese Government...not to miss this golden opportunity and carried out a vociferous propaganda regarding the political implications of this offensive. Its result was that the military and government leaders were placed in a situation whereby they could not think of this offensive eliminating the political aspect. (10)

The B.A.A. Headquarters' estimate of the objectives of the Imphal Campaign was: "To upset the British base around Imphal in order

(9) See chapter five.

(10) Government of Japan, Subhas Chandra Bose And Japan (Tokyo, 1956) 198. The book is in Japanese. The writer has used an unpublished English translation of the book. The writer was told by Gen. S. Kawabe in October 1953 at Tokyo that the book was prepared by him (Kawabe) from the available Japanese official records. Kawabe, whose rank was that of a Lt. Gen. in 1944, was the commander of the Japanese Burma Area Army. Hereinafter the book will be referred to as Subhas Chandra Bose And Japan.
to suppress the British counter-offensive. To strengthen the
defence of Burma and to exercise political influence over
India." (11)

The document mentioning the objective does not clarify the
nature of "Political influence over India" contemplated by the
B.A.A. But a reliable Japanese source and an official record
of the Allies agree on the point that, had the B.A.A. succeeded
in occupying Imphal, the Provisional Government of Free India
would have been installed there. (12) This would have offered
the Provisional Government an opportunity to organize the Indians
for an anti-British revolt, which was considered essential for
achieving I.N.A.'s objective. The political objective of the
Imphal Campaign was brought out well by the New York Times on
24 March 1944. It wrote:

...it is...clear that Japanese offensive operations
along the central Burma front, while serious, could
scarcely be called a "major offensive" if by that
term is meant a large-scale attempt at the conquest
of India. The time for such an enemy move is long
past.... The enemy appears to have two objectives
in the operations in and around the Indian state of
Manipur. One is plainly political. Premier Gen.
Hideki Tojo of Japan declared...that 'Indian National
Army', commanded by the traitor and puppet - Subhas
Chandra Bose - had commenced its march to its native
land accompanied by Japanese troops.... One of the
Japanese objectives in the current Manipur operations
is to implement a very small part of Premier Tojo's
plan. If the Japanese can take and hold a part of
Indian territory, particularly a state capital, like
Imphal, they could set-up their puppet Indian Govern-
ment there and propagandise even more than they are
now doing, the Indian nationalists...."

(12) S.E.A.C. Report, n. 3, 39; Saburo Hayashi and Alvin
D. Cox, Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War (Quantico,
1959) 93.
2. I.N.A.'s Campaign for India's Freedom

Preparations for the campaign

On 7 January (1944) Bose transferred the essential departments of the Provisional Government to Rangoon. (13) His arrival at Rangoon coincided with the approval of the plan of the Imphal Campaign by the I.G.H.Q. Bose had three main tasks before his army could go into action. An administrative arrangement would have to be made; the internal conditions of India should be properly assessed and an agreement with the Japanese had to be reached as regards the basis of co-operation between the two armies.

The Administrative Weakness

The No. 1 Regiment of I.N.A. moved into Burma from North Malaya in early January 1944 (14) and the Headquarters of the I.N.A. Supreme Command was set up in Rangoon on the 25th of the same month. (15) Efforts were made immediately to remove the army's difficulties which were mainly administrative. In spite of the setting up of a Special Board of Supplies (16) to procure

(13) Syyorn Shimbun, Singapore, 10 January 1944, 1.


army requirements and availability of funds some basic difficulties could not be removed. The deficiencies in arms, communications and heavy armaments remained. There could not be any adequate supply of medicine, boots and winter clothing for the troops. No independent wireless communication between the battle fronts and I.N.A. Headquarters could be developed. (17) One of the acute difficulties felt was created by inadequate transport resources. (18) This ruled out all possibilities of the I.N.A. troops having independent supply. All these difficulties had compelled the I.N.A. Headquarters to depend on the Japanese Army on the important matters of transport, arms and ammunitions, supply and communication.

Renewed Propaganda Campaign

In Bose's plan, the creation of revolutionary conditions in India was a pre-condition of the success for I.N.A. When he made his Headquarters in Burma, Bose reiterated it. (19) In transferring


(18) In September 1943, only one company of trucks was at the disposal of the whole I.N.A. Supreme Command, I.N.A. to Headquarters No. 1 Div., I.N.A., 8 September 1943, Exhibit UU of the first I.N.A. court martial, Motiram, ed., Two Historic Trials in Red Fort (Delhi, 1946) 324.

(19) In a radio broadcast to India on 8 January 1944 Bose said: "All preconditions and prerequisites of our final victory have been obtained. The only thing remaining for our ultimate success is that the action within the country must synchronise with the action from without." Indian Independence League Headquarters, Young India (Singapore) 46 (13 January 1944) 9.
the Advance Headquarters of the Provisional Government to Burma, one of the reasons had been to maximise in India the political repercussion of the establishment of the Provisional Government. (20) When the Provisional Government moved to Burma effective radio propaganda was carried out to produce desired effect in India. (21)

The Japanese controlled press echoed the point: "...the masses within India,...it is confidently expected, will synchronize their revolt against British misrule with the march of the Indian National Army into India." Svorn Shimbun, 10 January 1944, 1.

(20) Such consideration is evident from the radio broadcast by Rash Behari Bose, the Supreme Advisor to the Provisional Government. He said: "...from Burma, India is not only within hail ing distance but Burma also shares the common frontier with Bengal - the heart of India. Therefore, the shifting of the Headquarters of the Provisional Government to Burma may be likened to the dagger pointed at the throat of the British in India." Rash Behari Bose's broadcast to the Indian people. Young India, 46 (16 January 1946) 10-1. On 23 January Young India noted: "With the presence of Netaji Bose and the Indian National Army right at the Indian border has increased the intensity of the nationalist revolution." Young India, 47 (23 January 1944) 2.

(21) The Japanese rated highly the importance of the anti-British propaganda for India by Bose and, with their good offices, an arrangement was made with Free Burmese Government for independent broadcast by the Provisional Government over the Rangoon Radio. With this, a vigorous propaganda campaign was started by the members of the I.W.A. and women's corps. The propaganda campaign called the Indian civilians to hamper British war efforts by planned sabotage and the Indian armed forces to cut off their loyalty to the British. See the Radio Broadcast by Lieut.-Col. Loganathan, Young India, 44 (2 January 1944) 4-5; Broadcast by a member of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, Young India, 45 (9 January 1943) 11-2; Radio Broadcasts by Lieut.-Col. Aziz Ahmed and Baljit Kaur, Young India, 46 (16 June 1944) 12-4; Radio Broadcasts by Major Bishen Singh and a member of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, Young India, 47 (23 January 1944) 8-11. Discussing the probable result of this propaganda campaign, New York Times observed that "it might have a serious influence on the situation in India." New York Times, 16 April 1944, 23.
Basis of Co-operation

Finding out the general basis of co-operation between the I.N.A. and the Japanese Army was an important task. There were the problems over the exchange of military courtesy between the I.N.A. and the Japanese officers, (22) over the right asserted by the Japanese to command I.N.A. Intelligence and propaganda units directly (23) and over the alleged right of the Japanese army to apply the Japanese military laws over the I.N.A. (24) The problems were easy to solve when, on 7 January 1944, Lieut.-Gen. Kawabe agreed that I.N.A. was to enjoy equality of status with the Japanese Army. (25) It was agreed between him and Bose

(22) The problem arose as the Japanese troops looked down upon the I.N.A. men and officers as the former P.O.W.s and abstained from showing the I.N.A. officers usual military courtesy. This led to instances of bloodshed between the Japanese and Indian ranks. Subhas Chandra Bose and Japan, n. 10, 176; Indian Independence Movement and I.N.A., n. 58.

(23) The Japanese Army had attached to it small groups of Indians for propaganda and collecting intelligence before Bose took over the leadership of the I.N.A. Since then and particularly after Bose transferred the I.N.A. Supreme Headquarters to Burma, he had asserted all such units form a part of I.N.A. and if the Japanese Army needed the help of Indians, they would have to requisition their services through the I.N.A. Headquarters. The Japanese at first reacted unfavourably to this. Indian Independence Movement and I.N.A. in East Asia, n. 15, Chatterji, n. 16, 162-3.

(24) The implication of the application of the Japanese Military laws to the I.N.A. meant to give a blank cheque to the Japanese Military Police which had earned notoriety for their cruelty and high-handedness. While the other local armed forces in the Co-Prosperity Sphere were bound by the Japanese Military Law, the I.N.A., having its own Military Act, declined to submit to the Japanese Military laws. Khan, n. 17, 103; Subhas Chandra Bose and Japan, n. 10, 176. Extracts from the I.N.A. Military Act were submitted by the Prosecution in the first I.N.A. court martial, Exhibit KK, Motiram, ed., n. 18, 313.

that the courtesy between the Indian and Japanese officers would be exchanged on the basis of seniority; small units of the Bahadur group would be attached to the Japanese formations and they would be placed under the command of the senior Japanese officers; the authority of the Japanese military police over the Indian troops was restricted to the minimum; and the lower ranks of the Japanese Military Police would have no authority over the I.N.A. troops. (26)

The method of the deployment of I.N.A. troops was also decided. Apart from the small groups of I.N.A. troops which would be attached to Japanese formations under Japanese command for front-line propaganda and intelligence work, the main body of I.N.A. force in the Imphal Campaign, namely, the No. 1 Guerilla Regiment could not be split up into units less than a battalion and that would go in operation under the Indian officers. (27) It was also decided that on the fall of Manipur it would be defended by the Japanese Army and the I.N.A. But the administration of Manipur would be handed over to the Provisional Government. (28)

The role of the No. 1 Regiment. On the nature of the role that I.N.A. would play in the Imphal Campaign initially there was a divergence of opinion between Bose and Lieut.-Gen. Kawabe. Bose's favourite idea was to stand by the I.N.A. and command it

(26) Subhas Chandra Bose and Japan, n. 10, 176; Discussion with Gen. Kawabe at Tokyo in October 1963.
(27) Khan, n. 17, 198.
(28) Discussion with Kawabe at Tokyo in October 1963.
personally in a chosen front and lead the advance into India. (29). The Japanese, at the beginning, were not ready either to have him at the battle front, or to give an independent role to an untried I.N.A. Bose's insistence on an independent role for I.N.A. in his meeting with Lieut.-Gen. Kawabe in July 1943 had made the B.A.A. Headquarters think over it again as the plan of the campaign was gradually developing in the second half of that year. (30)

As a result of this rethinking in the B.A.A. Headquarters it was decided the first regiment of the I.N.A. would be given an independent sector to operate, as Bose had pressed for it. "The extreme left flank of the 15 Army...the area south of Haka Falam" would be entrusted to the first regiment of the I.N.A. "The main force of I.N.A. from this place (i.e. Haka-Falam area) was to move in support of the main forces of the 15 Army." (31) On 24 January 1944, the Chief of Staff of the B.A.A. presented the outline of the Japanese plan to Bose and explained the role assigned to the I.N.A. Regiment. The role of I.N.A. having been approved by Bose, the first regiment 3000 strong (32) was placed under the operational command of the B.A.A. (33)

(29) Subhas Chandra Bose And Japan, n. 10, 180.

(30) Ibid., 175.

(31) Ibid.


(33) Khan, n. 17, 111; The Japanese operations in Burma, n. 8, 5.
I.N.A.'s participation in the Arakan Campaign

The military operations conducted by the Japanese Burma Area Army directed towards India in 1944 consisted of two campaigns in two different sectors, namely, Arakan hills and Imphal. In the Arakan Campaign, the Arakan operation was to be carried out by the 55 Japanese Division with which was attached a unit of Bahadur Group, about 200 strong, under Major Misra. (34) Lieut.-Gen. Hanaya, the Japanese Commander in Arakan, reorganized his 55 Japanese Division and the elements of Bahadur group into three task forces namely, Tanabashi force, Koba force and Doi force, each named after its Commander. (35) In order to "cover the right and rear of the main force of the Division" a unit of the 55th Japanese Cavalry regiment together with No. 1 battalion of the 1 No. I.N.A. Regiment was to check the 81 West Africa Division which was advancing down the banks of the Kaladan River. (36)

On 15 January 1944, the Divisional orders were issued (37) and on 4 February the 55th Division struck. (38) On that day, Tanabashi and Koba Forces, evading all air reconnaissance of the

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(34) Khan, n. 17, 113.
(35) S.E.A.C. Report, n. 3, 40; Slim, n. 4, 237.
(36) Terauchi's Report, n. 2, no page no.
(37) IMIP.
(38) S.E.A.C. Report, n. 3, 40.
British, took Taung Bazar from the rear, swept round it and cut the Nyakypunk Pass, trapping the 7th Division on the eastern side of the Mayu range. The 7th British Indian Division was completely cut off from the 5th Division and the line of communication of the whole 15 Corps was disconnected. (39) The element of surprise which characterized this operation was partially due to the success of "the reconnaissance and subversion of an Indian outpost position by Major L.S. Misra, the I.N.A. Commander in Arakan." (40)

The Commander of the No. 1 Regiment (I.N.A.) got his orders from Gen. Kawabe in Rangoon on 27 January. One battalion of the regiment would help the Japanese in checking the advance of the West African Division in Arakan and its two other battalions should be in charge of Hakka-Falam sector. (41) On 4 February the movement of the three battalions from Rangoon started.

By the beginning of March 1944 the 81 West African Division, advancing south down the Kaladan Valley, had captured Kyauktaw and Apawwa in quick succession. (42) By its swift advance the Division "was approaching a position from which it might menace

(39) Ibid., 40-1; Syoran Shim bun, 11 February 1944, 1.

(40) Toyo, n. 32, 104-5; Khan, n. 17, 113-4. The Tana-bashi column advanced so swiftly that on the morning of 5 February it attacked the Divisional Headquarters of the 7th Indian Army at Faung Chaung. The attack was so sudden that, it is said, it surprised the Divisional Commander Gen. Frank Messervy "in his pyjamas". Barker, n. 32, 65.

(41) Khan, n. 17, 111-2.

(42) S.E.A.C. Report, n. 3, 43.
the Japanese right rear" (i.e., the main Arakan operation of the Japanese on the Mayu Range) and constitute a "threat to the whole Japanese position in Arakan." (43) The No. 1 Battalion established its base at Kyauktaw in the middle of March (1944) and after some skirmishes had established itself at Temta, a place south of Kaladan. With the Japanese reinforcement forthcoming from Arakan, (44) the Battalion pushed northward by taking Kaladan, Paletwa, Dalete and eventually Mowdok, a place on the Indian side of the Indo-Burma border. (45) A part of the I.N.A. battalion continued to be at Mowdak up to September 1944.

**I.N.A.'s role in the Imphal Campaign**

The main Japanese operation, directed against Imphal and Kohima, was to start one month after the commencement of the Arakan campaign. (46) Three times larger than the Arakan operation, this main campaign was to be carried out by the three Japanese Divisions. Two I.N.A. battalions and two Bahadur units were to join the Japanese forces from the beginning of the campaign, two other regiments of the No. 1 I.N.A. Division reinforced them in April and May. According to the Japanese plan, the main force consisting of 33rd Japanese Division was to

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(43) Slim, n. 4, 241.
(44) Ibid.
(45) A detailed account of the Kaladan campaign is available in Khan, n. 17, 114-21.
strike first and advance from the line connection Kalemyo, Fort White and Yazagyo, cut the British 17th Division and advance up to Imphal. The 33rd Division was to start on 8 March 1944. (47) On 10 February 1944, Lieut.-Col. Shah Nawaz Khan, who was commanding the 2nd and the 3rd battalions (I.N.A.), received orders from Lt. Comd. Mudaguchi, the Japanese Commanding Officer of the Imphal Campaign. Shah Nawaz was to (a) prevent the Lushai Aijal Brigades of the British from advancing on Kalewa and thereby threatening the main supply lines of the Japanese forces (48) operating against Tiddim-Tamu and (b) to carry out offensive operations on the Haka Falam front in the direction of Lungleh with the main object of deceiving the British as regards the real point of attack." (49)

Shah Nawaz Khan established his regimental base at Nauchawng (Myittha Haka) on 24 February 1944, and took over the charge of defence of Falam on the next day and of Haka on the 3 April from the Japanese. (50) Shah Nawaz's men successfully patrolled areas around Falam and in March the third battalion was called upon from Kalewa to take part in action against Tidim, and in May a part of the 2nd battalion raided the British patrol-base at Klang Klang, about twenty miles west of Haka. (51)

By March 1944, the 2nd and the 3rd Guerrilla Regiments of

(47) Japanese operations in Burma, n. 8, 25.

(48) The main supply-lines of the Japanese were through Kalewa - Fort White and Kalewa-Tamu. Khan, n. 17, 121.

(49) Ibid.

(50) Ibid., 123, 129.

(51) Ibid., 127.
the I.N.A. reached Rangoon from Malaya. (52) It was not difficult for Bose to persuade Lieut. Gen. Kawabe to allow the two Regiments to join the 15 Army as the latter was operating against a superior force and the battleworthiness of the I.N.A. had been proved in the Arakan Campaign. (53) The regiments were ordered to reinforce the Yamamoto Detachment (a part of the 33 Division) ordered to take Tamu and the Palel airfield. (54) Col. M.Z. Kiani, Commander No. 1 I.N.A. Division, who was commanding these two regiments set up his Divisional Headquarters at Chamol on 17 April 1944. The Regimental Headquarters of the 2nd Regiment was established at Khanjol on the 28 April. Two days after the arrival of the 2nd Regiment at Khanjol, a task force of the regiment had mounted an attack on Palel from the South while the Yamamoto unit was to attack it from the West. (55) The 3rd Regiment, which reached the front in the end of May (1944), took a defensive position around Narum occupied the villages of Lamyang, Keiplam and Khoaset and was heavily engaged around the

(52) Indian Independence Movement and I.N.A. in East Asia, n. 15. Each of these two regiments was 2000 strong. Barker, n. 32, 94.

(53) Toye, n. 32, 224.

(54) It has mentioned in the preceding chapter that Col. Yamamoto was the chief of the Hikari Kikan from June 1943. With the establishment of the Provisional Government, Lieut.-Gen. Isoda became the chief of the Hikari Kikan and Col. Yamamoto continued as the Deputy Chief. At the end of 1943, the B.A.A. raised a guerrilla formation and put it under the Hikari Kikan. Yamamoto (Maj.-Gen. promoted) commanded the formation in 1944, Subhas Chandra Bose And Japan, n. 10, 180.

(55) Ibid., 226.
village of Bongli at the end of June and early July. (56)

In early June, the main force of the 2nd and 3rd battalion under Shah Nawaz was called up to Kohima to reinforce the Japanese garrisons in that area which were hard-pressed by the counter-attack of the British forces. (57)

The initial optimism and the administrative plan for the liberated territories

Between February and May 1944 the I.N.A. had crossed into Indian soil in the Arakan sector and Bishampur in the Imphal sector. The initial success in the Arakan sector caused much enthusiasm, and Bose, in a Special Order of the Day issued on 9 February 1944, referred to the "glorious and brilliant actions of the brave forces of the Azad Hind Fauj." (58) The reports of acute repercussion created among the Indian ranks of the British Army and in India as a result of the I.N.A.'s appearance in the battle (59) and the messages from Chopra's party in India, which

(56) Ibid., 229.

(57) Khan, n. 17, 135.


Bose congratulated the I.N.A. Commanding officer in Arakan and said "All officers and men of the Indian National Army and myself feel happy and proud over the achievement of our troops at the Arakan front under your command." Azad Hind (Singapore) 10 February 1944, 1.

(59) On 10 February 1944, Azad Hind (p.1) reported that "All over India, the news of the British setback on the Arakan

(Contd. on next page)
arrived about the same time, seemed to present very promising indications. (60) On 21 March (1944) Bose issued a proclamation urging the Indian people to co-operate with the I.N.A. and its allied forces, (61) about a week later made citations and gave awards to thirteen members of the I.N.A. who had fought in the Arakan and held, from 6 to 13 April, a National Liberation Week. (62)

The prospect of success made it necessary to prepare for taking over the civil administration of the liberated areas. Lieut. Gen. Mutaguchi had urged on 1 March (1944) that the preparations for taking over the civilian administration of the liberated areas should proceed and on 22 March (1944), three days after the Indo-Japanese forces crossed into Indian territory, Prime Minister Gen. Tojo declared in the Japanese Diet: "the land of India, towards which the Azad Hind Fauj is marching, will be placed completely under the administration of the Free India Provisional Government." (63) A party of civilian administrators,

front has inspired fresh vigour in the anti-British revolution. Syonen Shimbun reported on 19 February 1944 (p.1) that the British Army High Command had removed Indian soldiers in the front line for fear of contact with the I.N.A. troops. It also reported that "since the beginning of the drive Indian soldiers have been surrendering in groups of 50 and 100 almost regularly."

(60) Toye, n. 32, 105. A party had been sent to India in December 1943 to send reports back on wireless. It has been referred to in the preceding chapter.

(61) For the text of the proclamation see Syonen Shimbun, 22 March 1944, 1.

(62) Syonen Shimbun, 29 March 1944, 2; 1 April 1944, 2.

(63) New York Times, 23 March 1944, 4; Syonen Shimbun, 23 March 1944, 1.
trained in military discipline in a unit called the Azad Hind Dal, was organized and a Chief Administrator of the Liberated Territories was appointed to make preparations for setting up civilian administration. (64) An Indo-Japanese War Co-operation Council was proposed. (65) Bose, who was contemplating an advance into Bengal on the fall of Imphal, chalked out a two-phased programme of reconstruction works in the liberated territory. (66) The immediate tasks would be to restore the utility services and, as soon as the war would be over, the work of reconstruction would start "to create a new political, economic and social order by which a better life for the Indians may be secured," (67)

The opening of the campaign made it necessary to gear up the drive for new recruits and funds. The reports of initial success created a better response in the Indian community. (68)

(64) Chatterji, n. 16, 161. The author, A.C. Chatterji, was appointed the Chief Administrator of the Liberated Territories.

(65) Although there was agreement between Bose and the Japanese on the necessity for the Council, there could not be any agreement on the point who should be the chairman of the Council, Indian or Japanese? Subhas Chandra Bose And Japan, n. 10, 132; S.A. Ayer, Unto Him a Witness (Bombay, 1961) 195.


(67) Ibid., 156-7. This carefully worded announcement, avoiding any clear-cut pronouncement on the ideological principle, makes it clear that Bose kept the door open for future adjustment with other leaders in India when the occasion would come.

(68) Syonan Shim bun, 9 February 1944, 2; 21 February 1944, 2.
Organizational changes were made in the Provisional Government to step up total mobilization. The 'Netaji Fund Committee' which was set up in January (1944) was brought under the newly created Revenue Ministry and the latter succeeded in mobilizing Indian resources in Burma. (69) Mr. N. Raghavan, the leader of the Indian community in Malaya, was persuaded to become the Finance Minister. (70) This yielded better results in mobilizing the wealth of the Indian merchant class in Malaya, which was shy from the beginning of the movement. (71) A new Ministry of Man Power was created to co-ordinate recruitment and training. (72)

Although these expansions in the Provisional Government strengthened the administrative position of the movement, Bose had little knowledge or control over the utter break down of the administration under which the I.N.A. was working on the front. He was almost cut off from the front since May and it was only

(69) A.C. Chatterji, who was in charge of the fund collection, gives an elaborate account of the campaign for collecting fund in Burma in his book, Chatterji, n. 16, 160-1.

(70) Toya, n. 32, 111.

(71) Discussion with Mr. N. Raghavan at New Delhi in April 1944. Mr. A.C. Chatterji, the Provisional Government's first Finance Minister, was an ex-medical officer of the British Army. Although one of the sincere workers at Bose's disposal, Chatterji had no hold over the Indian community as some other local Indian leaders had. On some occasions, Chatterji did not hesitate to be firm to deal with lukewarm Indian merchants in Malaya, and Thailand. The writer had noticed in his discussions with some prominent Indian merchants in those countries that the latter were critical about Chatterji. It was, however, found to be an easier task for Mr. Raghavan on account of the prominent place he occupied in the Indian community in Malaya.

(72) Toya, n. 32, 115.
on 10 July (1944) that he was informed about the abandonment of the Imphal Campaign. (73) Why did the campaign fail?

3. The causes of the failure of the I.N.A. in the Imphal Campaign

The I.N.A. took part in the Imphal Campaign which was predominately a campaign of the Japanese army. The failure of the Japanese army in Imphal ruled out all possibilities of success for the I.N.A. The causes of the failure of the Japanese army in taking Imphal have been discussed elsewhere. (74) It may be, however, mentioned here that the Japanese plan of the Imphal Campaign was based on three fundamentally weak points, namely, inadequate administrative facilities, (75) and insufficient air infantry strength. (76) These weaknesses explain the failure of

(73) Ibid., 114.


(75) In fact the Southern Army had allotted only two thirds of the total administrative units requested by the B.A.A., and by no means all of those allotted had been actually provided. Kirby and others, n. 74, 80.

(76) The Commander of the Japanese Southern Army mentioned that the ratio of air power between the Allies and Japan was 10:1 in 1944 and 100:1 in 1945. The total number of the operational aircraft of the Japanese Air force in Burma was 201 in November 1943. The total strength of operational aircraft under

(Contd. on next page)
the Japanese army in taking Imphal. There were, however, a number of important reasons which made the role of the I.N.A. in the Imphal Campaign less spectacular.

Factors explaining I.N.A.'s unspectacular role in the Campaign

Unfavourable time-factor. The Imphal Campaign was ill-timed. The general war position by 1944 had turned against the Axis Powers. (77) More important, on the Indo-Burma frontier the military position had changed to the disadvantage of the Japanese Army. The thorough unpreparedness of the India Command

the South East Asia Integrated Air Command in December 1943 was 56 Squadrons (approximately 672 aircrafts). During the Imphal Campaign the maximum strength of transport aircraft made available to the British 14th Army was 232. Terauchi's Report, n. 8, no page no.; Kirby and others, n. 74, 463, 468-71, 514.

According to Barker, the numerical strength of the British Fighting Forces in Imphal and Kohima was 155000 (reduced in May to 115000). The total strength of the I.N.A. - Japanese forces, which appeared on the front at different times, was 95000 (63000=31, 35, 15 Japanese Divisions; 8000 I.N.A. and 4000 reinforcements) according to an American source, and 96000 (84000=31, 35, 15 Japanese Divisions; 4000 reinforcements and 8000 I.N.A.) according to a British source. The maximum strength of the Japanese 15 and 33 Divisions at Imphal including I.N.A. and reinforcements was about 61000 as against about 90000 (7000=17, 20, 23 British Divisions plus about 20000 of 5 Divisions). Barker, n. 32, 270; Charles F. Romanc and Riley Sunderland, United States Army in World War II: China-Burma-India Theatre: Still Well's Command Problems (Washington, 1956) 175; Kirby and others, n. 74, 372. I.N.A.'s strength in the Imphal Campaign has been mentioned elsewhere in this chapter.

(77) Germany was faced with a war position beyond her control; Italy had capitulated on 3 September 1943 and Japan was harried in the Pacific. Amar Lahiri, Said Subhas Bose (Calcutta, 1947) 23-7.
might have given the I.N.A. and the Japanese a chance for an easy walk-over to Imphal and Kohima in 1942. But in 1944 the military position changed. One of the reasons for which the Japanese eventually undertook the campaign, as it has been pointed out, was the threat from this unfavourable military situation on the Indo-Burma border.

The I.N.A. leader was aware of the change in the war position against the Axis Powers. It was clear to him that the superior productive capacity of the U.S.A. would gradually strengthen the Allies and might ultimately force a decision against the Axis. Aware of this adverse factor Bose made hurried preparations right from the beginning of his assuming the leadership of the movement in the mid-1943. He repeatedly urged finishing the preparatory works to precipitate the campaign before the prospect of success was completely removed. But the preparation could not be completed as early as Bose wished.

More important, no campaign directed towards India was feasible

(78) The military unpreparedness of India in 1942 has been discussed in chapter two.

(79) Bose said, "...As for the Americans, I do not under-rate their productive capacity. Only a fool will under-rate the strength of the enemy.... Speaking quite frankly and objectively, I concede to the enemy Powers superior wealth and superior productive capacity...." A statement issued by Bose to the Press on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Greater East Asia War, Young India, 41 (12 December 1943) 3.

(80) Bose's speech at Kuala Lumpur on 5 September 1943. Narayana Menon, ed., On To Delhi: Speeches and Writings of Subhas Chandra Bose (Bombay, 1948) 92-3. It was the first Indian edition of the book. The book was originally published in Malaya in 1944. Bose's speech at Singapore on 24 October 1943, Young India, 35 (31 October 1943) 7.
with the limited forces of the I.N.A. alone. Such a campaign was bound to be primarily a Japanese campaign and it was unlikely that Bose's warnings would hasten the Japanese time-table.

Inadequacies in the No. 1 I.N.A. Division. One of the important factors, which should be taken into consideration in reviewing I.N.A.'s performance in the battlefront, is its actual strength. The total strength of the I.N.A. which took part in the Arakan, Imphal and Kohima operations in 1944, was about eight thousand in comparison to about 87 thousand Japanese combatants and 155 thousand Allied troops. About one fourth of the biggest Japanese Division and about half of the smallest, I.N.A.'s role could hardly be decisive factor in a wide front where three Japanese Divisions proved inadequate. (81) The role of the No. 1 Division was bound to be limited.

The No. 1 Division (I.N.A.) lacked properly trained officers and inadequate arms and ammunitions. The battalion commanders and those above, mostly from the officers' ranks of the Indian Army, were able officers. But the platoon and Company Commanders, most of whom had been promoted from the ranks during 1942, had no adequate training. (82) The number of officers, who had undergone the short training course in the Officers Training School in Singapore, was not many. The arms and equipments of the Division were old, inadequate and unplaceable; ammunitions

(81) For the numerical strength of each of the Japanese Divisions at Imphal and Kohima see Romanus and Sunderland, n. 76, 175.

(82) Toye, n. 32, 120.
were insufficient.

**Nominal fighting role.** Some small units of the I.N.A. were attached to the Japanese Divisions in the Arakan and the Imphal Campaigns. Although one such unit had proved to be useful in the Arakan Campaign, considerable expectation was attached to the performance of the No. 1 Division of the I.N.A. which was given a "trial role" in the Imphal Campaign. To some extent, however, the performance of the No. 1 Division was bound to be circumscribed by the nature of the role assigned to it. Bose had emphasised on the vital role that I.N.A. would play in the Indian campaign. (83) But I.N.A.'s actual role in the battlefront presented a contrast. The No. 1 Regiment, high in morale as a 'picked' regiment and led by an able officer, was the only I.N.A. force which appeared on the front when the initiative of the battle was retained by the Japanese. But the role assigned to the regiment was negative in nature. A major part of the regiment had little to do with fighting; it was engaged in carrying rations and building roads. Whatever fighting role was given to the regiment was for guarding the Japanese supply route. This created considerable disappointment in the regiment. The Commanding Officer's report to Bose in April 1944 revealed this feeling. He wrote:

> When this Regiment (No. 1, Regiment) was raised I as well as every single soldier of this regiment were of the conviction that we shall form the spearhead of the

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advance into India, or we shall be among the very fast troops to enter into Indian territory. Consequently, as we reached the frontline the spirit of the soldier went higher and higher. When we actually arrived at the frontline, the type of duty what was given to us was: (a) road making or preparing, (b) repairing bridges, (c) extinguishing jungle fires, (d) driving bullock carts carrying rations for the Japanese troops. In other words duties of a labour battalion...I am very pained to report to your excellency that the very high spirit and enthusiasm of my soldiers is gradually changing into disappointment. (84)

In mid-May the units of this regiment were ordered to move to Ukhrul to take part in the Kohima offensive. By the time the units reached Ukhrul, the Japanese 31 Division was falling back from Kohima to reinforce the 15 Division to mount the last attack on Imphal. (85) On 4 June 1944, when the Regiment Commander reported to the Commander of the 31 Division, the former was instructed to fall back to Tamu and then to the eastern bank of the Chindwin. (86)

Miscalculation at Yamamoto's Headquarters. The Second Regiment had to suffer heavily for certain miscalculation at Maj.-Gen. Yamamoto's Headquarters. The Japanese and the I.N.A.

(84) From Shah Nawaz Khan to Bose, April 1944. The papers of the Defence Counsel of the first I.N.A. court martial, All-India I.N.A. Relief and Enquiry Committee, Delhi. Shah Nawaz Khan mentioned that of the 10 Companies of the 2nd and the 3rd Battalions led by him, 7 companies were engaged either in broadening roads or carrying rations. Hereinafter referred to as Khan's Report.

(85) Hayashi and Coxx, n. 12, 97.

units had been "lightly equipped suited for the speedy advance-
ment". (87) As the initial advance of the Japanese forces towards
Imphal was stopped "by the British on the outskirts of Imphal,
15 and 33 Divisions and Yamamoto unit (of which 2nd I.N.A. Regt.
was a part) had to abandon their light striking tactics and had
to adopt more steady means of attacking fortifications." (88)
The "immediate change of tactics against heavy fortifications was
quite impossible", noted a Japanese document. (89) The conse-
quences of this change proved most disastrous to the No. 2 Regi-
ment. Trained and equipped for guerrilla warfare, this regiment
had been given an impression by Yamamoto Headquarters, when it
arrived at Chamol, that "it was already too late to take part in
the attack on Imphal, as it had either already fallen or would
do so in a few hours. They were advised to leave all their heavy
baggage, including machine guns and hand grenades at Kalewa and
reach Imphal as soon as possible. All that they required,... was
a blanket, a rifle and 50 rounds of ammunition. The rest... would
be available in huge quantities in Imphal." (90) When the regi-
ment was ordered to attack the Palal airfield immediately on its
arrival at Khanjol it was only natural that the Regiment would
suffer irreparable losses as the British forces were ordered to

(88) Ibid.
(89) Ibid.
(90) Khan, n. 17, 148.
keep the airfield at any cost. (91)

Consequences of the administrative failure. The administrative weaknesses of the 15 Army plan affected the Japanese and the I.N.A. units alike. The inadequate transport facilities created two serious difficulties for the I.N.A. units. The troops had to carry their arms, ammunition and food to the front which in some cases became a load of Ib. 85-90. (92) This was bound to hamper their fighting efficiency. Moreover, the supply difficulties often compelled the I.N.A. Commander to deploy a smaller unit in the front even at the risk of being overwhelmed by the enemy forces. (93)

In April the Commander of the No. 1 Regiment had reported that due to complete breakdown of the transport system the reserved rations could not be supplied to the front-line units who were living on jungle flowers and grass. (94) By the month of May conditions deteriorated further. By that time the 15 Army had completely exhausted its provisions for the campaign. (95) With the approach of the monsoon, the situation was to deteriorate from bad to worse with no further chance to improve. The troops

(91) Slim, n. 4, 243.
(92) Khan, n. 17, 125.
(93) Ibid., 129.
(94) Khan's Report, n. 84.
(95) Toye, n. 32, 118.
of No. 1 Regiment at Kalewa were "suffering almost without exception from Malaria, and about 70% of them were in hospital." (96)

It was in these circumstances that No. 2 Regiment started its activities in the beginning of May. It had appeared on the front with ten days' rations. (97) On 15 May, the Divisional Commander Col. M.Z. Kiani reported to the I.N.A. Headquarters the serious administrative difficulties which the 2nd Regiment had been facing. (98) This was followed by an urgent telegram requesting lorries, horses and provisions. (99) It was not before 4 June, that Bose's Headquarters received the report and the telegram and on 16 June they attended to this. (100) A.C. Chatterji who toured the front, had heard about all these difficulties from the Divisional and the Regimental Commanders. (101) Chatterji, by a liberal use of the fund he had carried with him, tried to set things right at least partially. (102) His discussions with the Japanese officers had brought nothing but apologies for their failure to keep the I.N.A. supplied with rations. (103)

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(96) Khan, n. 17, 135.
(97) Chatterji, n. 16, 206.
(99) Ibid.
(100) Ibid.
(101) Chatterji, n. 16, 204.
(102) Toye, n. 32, 118.
(103) Chatterji, n. 16, 207.
Consequences of the delay in withdrawal. By May (1944) it had become clear to Lieut.-Gen. Kawabe from his tour of the front that the Imphal Campaign had failed. (104) An withdrawal, which might have saved the Japanese and the I.N.A. forces, was delayed, mainly because the campaign having been launched under the Southern Army Headquarters' order, could not be called off by the B.A.A. (105) It was not before 9 July that Lieut.-Gen. Kawabe ordered a general withdrawal with a prior authorization from Field-Marshal Terauchi. (106)

The delay in withdrawal further aggravated the plight of the I.N.A. and particularly the No. 1 Regiment. During June and July the Regiment was threatened with destruction due to lack of supplies. (107) The 31 Japanese Division, which had been reinforced by the No. 1 Regiment, was similarly hardpressed. Its commander, Lt. Gen. Sato, virtually mutinied. He refused to obey the orders of the Army Commander on grounds of the latter's failure to keep his forces supplied, ordered the Commander of the No. 1 Regiment to fall back to Tamu (108) and himself conducted a

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(104) Discussion with Gen. Kawabe at Tokyo in October 1963.
(105) Kirby and others, n. 74, 363.
(106) Ibid., 368-9.
(107) On 7 June 1944, the Regimental Commander wrote in his diary: "Men did not receive any rations. 4 Garhwalis had died of starvation. I and Ramsamp approached Hikari Kikan to do something about the rations. They seem NOT to take the least notice of it." Exhibit CCC, first I.N.A. court martial, Motiram, ed., n. 19, 331.
general retreat towards the Chindwin. (109) An entry dated
15 July in Shah Nawaz's diary records: "Due to starvation men
are dying like flies. Some committing suicide (sic)." (110)
On 18 July I.N.A. Divisional Commander ordered the withdrawal
of the 2nd and 3rd Regiments. (111) The retreat carried out by
the I.N.A. has been described as "one of the most difficult
retreats that any army in the world had had to face." (112)

Impact of Allied 'psychological warfare'. In analysing
the factors which explain the failure of the I.N.A. the role of
the "Psychological warfare" carried out by the S.E.A.C. cannot
be ignored. (113) In the first half of 1944 an intensive pro-
paganda campaign was carried out by the S.E.A.C. on the Indo-
Burma frontier with the help of five Indian Field Broadcasting
Units (I.F.B.U.), distribution of propaganda leaflets and weekly

(109) Hayashi, n. 12, 97; Kirby and others, n. 74, 362-3.
(110) Exhibit CCC, first I.N.A. court martial. Motiram,
ed., n. 18, 331.
(111) Toyte, n. 32, 125.
(112) Khan, n. 17, 137. Toyte quoted official figures of
the Indian Army G.H.Q. to say that 400 I.N.A. men were killed in
the Imphal Campaign and fifteen hundred died of disease and
starvation. Toyte, n. 32, 125.
(113) Since the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in 1942,
the Allied Agency in charge of psychological warfare in the Far
East, the Far East Bureau (F.E.B.), was functioning from New
Delhi under the guidance of the Political Warfare (Japan) Com-
mitee (P.W.(J) C.) in London. After the S.E.A.C. was formed a
new unit Political Warfare Division was created to carry on
propaganda against Japan. Psychological Warfare, Annexure 7,
The S.E.A.C. Report, n. 3, 254.
news sheets (in Japanese, Burmese and Indian languages) and broadcasts in all the languages of South East Asia carried out by the Far East Bureau from Delhi. (114) About the subject matter of this propaganda, an official source wrote:

The propaganda themes driven home to the Japanese were: the implication for Japan of Germany's impending defeat; shortage of food and equipment in the Japanese Army; and the incompetence of the Japanese High Command. In addition a prolonged attempt was made to break down Japanese refusal to surrender, and throughout the campaign 'surrender passes' guarantying fair treatment to those who were captured were distributed, mainly by mortar. (115)

Similar propaganda campaign was directed towards the I.N.A. 'Safe Conduct Passes' bearing the signature of Gen. Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army, were dropped among the I.N.A. soldiers from the air, which contained the commander's sympathy for the hardships that they were facing and his 'promise' for good treatment to those I.N.A. soldiers who would return to their old ranks. (116) Temptations for "excellent

(114) I.Md.

(115) I.Md.

(116) Leaflets in Romanised Urdu, Urdu and Gurmukhi used to be dropped among the I.N.A. troops urging them to surrender. One such leaflet in Romanised Urdu says, "...the Japanese tell you that if you return to your respective ranks you will be made the targets of the bullets. It is a lie. If you tell our military or non-military officers all that is true as you come to them, then you will be welcomed. Don't fear at all in coming to us.... All our sympathies are with you for whatever hardships you had to suffer under the Japanese. Whosoever among our soldiers may come across you, you may ask him to take you the nearest Headquarters. Please give your full story.... If you do so, you will be given a very good treatment indeed. THIS IS MY PROMISE." It bears the signature of Gen. Auchinleck. Safe Conduct Pass: To The Indian Soldiers! (unpublished translation) Papers of the Defence Counsel of the first I.N.A. court martial All-India I.N.A. Enquiry and Relief Committee, Delhi.
food, clothing and medical attention as well as substantial pay and reward" were held out. (117) Skillfully geared up at a time when the men of the three regiments of the No. 1 Division of the I.N.A. were facing severe hardships in the field, the propaganda was to have some success. The sense of futility which had overtaken the I.N.A. soldiers, partly due to the unwise handling of the 15th Army and partly to the realisation that the campaign had failed, explains the major part of the desertions that took place during the Imphal Campaign. (118)

India's failure to respond to I.N.A.'s call

One of the preconditions of the success of the I.N.A. was a favourable response from India. It was expected that a revolt would break out in India and the Indian troops would refuse to fight against the Indian National Army. (119) But all this never

(117) Khan, n. 17, 137.

Another leaflet in Romanised Urdu said that if the I.N.A. troops would surrender they would be sent on leave to meet their family. Men (Troops) of India (unpublished translation) Papers of the Defence Counsel of the first I.N.A. court martial, All-India I.N.A. Relief and Enquiry Committee, Delhi.

(118) Toye quotes the official figure of the British G.H.Q. to say that during the Imphal Campaign 715 men deserted. Shah Nawaz Khan mentions only one instance of desertion in the month of March (1944). Toye, n. 32, 126; Extracts from the diary of Capt. Shah Nawaz Khan, Exhibit, CCC, first I.N.A. court martial, Motiram, ed., n. 15, 330.

(119) That the Indian troops in the British Army would surrender in large numbers had been a favourite idea of the I.N.A. Headquarters. This is evident for as early as August 1943 the I.N.A. Headquarters had forwarded to the Hdq. Hikari Kikan a

(Contd. on next page)
happened in 1944. (120) What were the factors which explains this?

In order to create revolutionary repercussions in India a military victory of the Japanese and the I.N.A. forces at Imphal and Kohima was necessary. A success at Imphal would not only have given the secret I.N.A. agents in India a chance to carry out their activities more effectively, (121) but it would have offered Bose with an opportunity to open his much desired 'second front' in the independence movement in India. (122) Knowing well that the tide of the war had turned against the Axis in Europe and in the Pacific, Bose looked forward for a victory at Imphal to enable him to put his army into India. Setting up of the Provisional Government at Imphal, followed detailed scheme outlining the arrangements for "Reception", "Feeding" and "Mental training" of the Indian troops who would surrender during the battle. Scheme for the Reception and Management of the Indian soldiers in Burma, Exhibit TT, first I.N.A. court martial, Motiram, ed., n. 18, 322-4.

(120) Gen. Slim mentions the hostility of the Indian and Gurkha troops towards the I.N.A. and Toye mentions one incident when a Gurkha Company did not agree to desert the Indian army. Slim, n. 4, 327; Toye, n. 32, 226.

(121) Dr. Sisir K. Bose, a nephew of Bose and Secretary of the Netaji Research Bureau told the writer in June 1964 that during 1944 Subhas Chandra Bose's secret agents were in touch with him. In a brief message in Bengali sent by S.C. Bose in 1944 from the Indo-Burma border he instructed his friends and followers in India that all assistance should be made available to his messenger who was going to meet them. The original message is in Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta. The writer obtained a photostat copy of the message.

(122) See chapter five dealing with Bose's plans for achieving India's freedom.
succeed in putting his army within India, "whatever may be the outcome of the war, atleast the British could never re-establish themselves in India. He began to envisage, in fact, the sort of situation that developed in 1946 in Indonesia, where it proved impossible to oust a nationalist government set up with Japanese assistance before the Allies could occupy the country." (125)

The failure to take Imphal removed the possibility of establishing direct contact with the Indian people. The two other factors which might have been expected to create a revolutionary condition in India were the works of the secret agents sent to India and the wireless propaganda from East Asia. The work of the secret agents sent to India however, could at the most be limited and the strict counter-measures taken against them by the Headquarters of the Indian Army and the Home Department of the Government of India made them innocuous. (126)

Similarly, the Indian Government's policy of reticence

(125) Toye, n. 32, 117.

(126) In 1944, the Headquarters of the Indian Command maintained close contact with the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department of the Government of India, the S.E.A.C. and the subordinate formations of the Naval and Air Headquarters. A joint section under the Director, Military Intelligence, and the Director, Intelligence Bureau, was created "for the disposal of enemy agents and other suspects in the H.I.P. (Hitler Inspired Fifth Columnists) and J.1.F. (Japanese Indian Force) and collecting and disseminating intelligence concerning them...." Elucidation of H.I.P. and J.I.P. added.

Report by Gen. Sir C.J.S. Auchinleck, C-in-C India, 1 June to 31 December 1944, 14, Combined Inter-Service Historical Section, India and Pakistan; Registered File No. 601/7555/H, Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
about both the I.N.A. and the Provisional Government succeeded in undoing the effect of the propaganda campaign from East Asia. (127) Information about the Indian Prisoners of War in East Asia was withdrawn on the ground of "public interest," even before the Imphal Campaign had started. (128) The possibilities of the Provisional Government's radio propaganda being supplemented by the nationalist press in India were removed by press censorship in India during 1944. (129) Apart from countering the anti-British propaganda from East Asia, the Allied Propaganda machineries had succeeded in creating the impression in India that "the Azad Hind Fauj was a puppet in the hands of the Japanese ruling rump and if it came out successful in its mission then a shadow of autonomy under Japanese militarism would be set up in India, which would be equally bad, if not worse than the British

(127) An Official Despatch of the India Command records: "Enemy propaganda and wireless broadcasting inciting Indians to revolt or commit sabotage were timed to coincide with the Japanese offensive." One of the reasons for which the enemy propaganda failed is noted to be "our counter-measures." Report by Gen. Sir Claude J.B. Auchinleck, C-in-C in India, 16 November 1943 - 31 May 1944, 26, Combined Inter-Service Historical Section, India and Pakistan, Registered File No. 601/7554/H, Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

(128) Member of the Defence Department, Government of India, Sir Phiroze Khan Noon's reply to Mr. Bhutto on 26 July 1943 at the Central Legislative Assembly New Delhi. Nripendra Nath Mitra, ed., The Indian Annual Register, II, 1943 (Calcutta) 82.

(129) It should be pointed out that the news of I.N.A.'s participation in the Imphal Campaign was kept a secret. For example, one of Indian Newspapers, Hindu (Madras), gave brief news about Japanese advance in Arakan (11 February 1944, p.4), "Increased activity in Palal Area" (4 May 1944, p.4) and "Enemy attacks in Palal and Bishenpur" (16 May 1944, p.4) but no reference was made to I.N.A.
imperialist rule." (130) Although small sections of the Indian people had come to know of the I.N.A., its image had been too distorted to create a favourable reaction. Bose's reaffirmation of his own bona fide in his broadcast appeal to Mahatma Gandhi on 6 July 1944 clearly shows he too was aware of it. (131)

The unfavourable reaction of the Indian soldiers too can be explained by the I.N.A.'s image presented to them. The powerful propaganda machinery of the India Command and the S.E.A.C. had repeated charges of Japanese brutality and aggression in East Asia and their superior-race-consciousness. Bose was publicised as a helpless puppet in Japanese hands and the I.N.A., as a 'collaborating' army, was condemned as the J.I.Fs.

(130) B.K. Sen Gupta, India's Man of Destiny (Calcutta, no date) 201. An influential American newspaper, New York Times, called the Provisional Government as "Japan's India Puppet" (25 October 1943, 5) a few days after it was set up, and described the I.N.A. as "a fiction of propaganda" of Japan and its Supreme Commander as a 'Quisling', who "after training in Nazi-Japanese Organization technique in Berlin and Tokyo, has gathered around him from Indians in Burma and Malaya, a nucleus of anti-British extremists who are ready to play the Japanese game, hoping that if the Japanese conquers India they will become - as they likely would - the leaders in an Indian State under Japanese protection." New York Times, 16 April 1944, 23.

(131) Government of India, Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose (Delhi, 1962) 217. Later on, in August 1944 Bose, in a speech said: "I have been keenly watching the methods employed by Allied propagandists,... During the last twelve months, Allied propagandists have adopted many methods to confuse the Indians and prejudice them against Japan and the Indian National Army. When the formation of the Indian National Army was first announced they were discreetly silent. When they realized that the news was known, they stated that it was a nominal army of war prisoners compelled by Japan to fight against their own people...." Free India Radio (Saigon) 15 August 1944, Arun, pseud., ed., n. 58, 173.
(Japanese Indian Force). (132) To the extent the publicity of the India Command succeeded in distorting the image of the I.N.A. among the Indian soldiers, the latter's reaction to the I.N.A. was bound to be unfavourable.

A revolution in India was a basic assumption in I.N.A.'s strategy for winning Indian freedom. The removal of the chances of such a revolution by Allied counter-propaganda cut at the basis of that strategy.

4. An Assessment of I.N.A.'s Role in the Imphal Campaign

In assessing the role of the I.N.A. in Imphal Campaign, it should be pointed out that its (I.N.A.'s) role was bound to be indecisive due to its inadequate strength and that its performance on the front must have proved less spectacular as it was a guerrilla force. (133) As a guerrilla force the role of the two among the three I.N.A. Regiments was defensive. The fact that about one twelfth of the Division deserted shows that mere patriotism was not enough to keep the Army on the front. There was certainly slackness in command among the company and

(132) Leaflet titled as "To the Indian Soldiers" distributed by the British Indian Army. Papers of the Defence Council of the first I.N.A. court martial, All-India I.N.A. Relief and Enquiry Committee, Delhi.

(133) The role of a guerrilla force is restricted in comparison to that of a regular army equipped with heavy arms for frontal attack. The idea of a mighty break-through appears incompatible with the role of guerrilla formations.
platoon commanders. But the effect of the failure of the administration was more important. That the failure of the administration may make it impossible even for a first-class army to stay on the field is evident from Lieut. Gen. Sato's withdrawal from the front.

Although the factors mentioned above were bound to make the I.N.A.'s role in the Imphal Campaign less spectacular, Japanese sources did not under-estimate the I.N.A. About the performance of the I.N.A. Division as a whole, Svomon Shim bun quoted a Japanese soldier saying that "the fighting power of the I.N.A. is not in any way inferior to that of the Nippon forces." (134) The high spirit of the Division shown in the Imphal Campaign had been acknowledged by Field Marshal Count Terauchi, the C-in-C of the Southern Army. "The Indian National Army showed strong interest in this operation..." he remarked in his official report. (135) As a separate formation the Second Regiment's activities and leadership drew praise from the B.A.A. Headquarters. (136) It has been admitted that in its

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(134) Svomon Shim bun, 6 June 1944, 1.

(135) Terauchi's Report, n. 8, no page no. About the 3rd I.N.A. Regiment Toye wrote: "...some who fought against it have said that in its few weeks at the front it showed more zeal and will to fight than either of the other two I.N.A. Regiments." Toye, n. 32, 229.

(136) The Military Secretary of the I.N.A. headquarters in Rangoon informed the Commander of the No. 1 Division who was commanding No. 2 Regiment that "Every one here has been most thrilled to read about the bold action of the Unit No. 24 from 24th April to 6 May 1944.... Staff officers of the Mori

(Contd. on next page)
defensive role the Division played a crucial role in the last part of the Campaign. (137) The Bahadur groups attached to each of the Japanese Division proved most useful for the Japanese. (138) About the group attached to the 31st Japanese Division one press report says: "The activities of the Azad Hind Fauj which entered Kohima with Nippon Forces had been remarkable throughout the present drive and particularly during the capture of Phakekedzumi, Jessami and a hill south of Topheme." (139)

Headquarters, from time to time, inform us of the very good work being done by the units under your command..." P.K. Sahgal to Col. M.Z. Kiani, 16 June 1942, Motiram, ed., n. 18, 337. The action of the Unit No. 24 refers to the attempt to take Palal airfield; The B.A.A. HQ, was referred to as the Mori Headquarters.

(137) Toye, n. 32, 126.

(138) Discussion with Gen. I. Fujiwara at Maibashi (Japan) in October 1943.

(139) Asinan Shinbun, 11 April 1944, 1.