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950 Soldiers Drive
Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5021
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Japan

PLANNED INVASION OF JAPAN, 1945-1946

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

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Operation **DOWNFALL** = overall assault on Japanese home islands.

Operation **OLYMPIC** = first phase of **DOWNFALL**; invasion of Kyushu by US Sixth Army, scheduled for Nov 1945.

Operation **CORONET** = second phase of **DOWNFALL**; invasion of Honshu by US Eighth & Tenth Armies, plus II Amphibious Corps, scheduled for Mar 1946.

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NOTE: General Marshal & Tactical Atomic Bombing

Perusal of pertinent sources suggests that the **OLYMPIC** and **CORONET** planners at the War Dept OPD and GEN MacArthur's SWPA headquarters were not involved in planning for the use of atomic bombs. Not surprisingly, then, no reference to tactical use of such bombs appears in the cited literature, e.g.:

Brown, Anthony Cave, & MacDonald, Charles B., editors. The Secret History of the Atomic Bomb. NY: Dial, 1977. p. 529 ff. UL409.16.S4.

Groves, Leslie R. Now It Can Be Told. NY: Harper, 1962. Chaps 22-25. UL409.16.G7.

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However, the absence of atomic bombs in written plans does not mean that Marshall did not himself consider their tactical use or would not have been in a position to order OPD or SWPA to alter the plans to allow for such weapons. The Joint Chiefs of Staff directive for the operation was dated 25 May 1945 and approved by President Truman on 18 Jun, but the operation itself was not scheduled to commence until early Nov. It was understood that the May plan was tentative. Thus, after the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on 6 Aug, for a few-- very few--days Marshall may have questioned its war-ending "efficacy" and may have considered revising plans by employing atomic bombs in the Nov invasion. Marshall may have even planned to use A-bombs in the invasion before Hiroshima.

Enderlin and Mosley below cite Marshall oral interviews on his consideration to soften the Kyushu beachheads with atomic bombs: Enderlin cites a 1959 Marshall interview, while Mosley cites a Marshall tape but fails to give the date. Interestingly, none of the tapes listed in Mosley's bibliography is dated later than 1957. One can then wonder if Marshall discussed this matter on more than one taped occasion or if Enderlin and Mosley erred in their references to sources? See:

Bauer, K. Jack, & Coox, Alvin C. "Olympic vs. Ketsu-Go,," cited above. Per.

Enderlin, Lee. "Greatest of All Invasions," cited above. Per.

Mosley, Leonard. Marshall, Hero for Our Times. NY: Hearst, 1982. pp. 338-340. E745.M37.M67.

Marshall's oral recollections of his plan for the invasion, probably recorded more than ten years after the events, must be weighed against other sources, such as the testimony of GEN Groves of the Manhattan Project, who would have encountered difficulties in delivering nine more bombs to the Pacific by the end of Oct. It is interesting to compare Marshall's recollection, as recorded in Mosley, with Groves' account pp. 352-353. Immediately after Hiroshima, the Mosley-painted Marshall was planning to drop nine more bombs.

NOTE: Casualties

At a meeting with President Truman, 18 Jun 1945, the Joint Chiefs of Staff identified Nov 1st as the date for the invasion of Kyushu (Operation **OLYMPIC**). Invasion of Honshu would follow on 1 Mar 1946 (Operation **CORONET**). According to Gen Marshall at that meeting, the Kyushu assault would require 767,000 troops and the casualties would not exceed those suffered in Luzon -- 31,000. Adm William Leahy pointed out that 35% of the troops engaged in Okinawa became casualties, but Adm Ernest King supported Marshall's low estimate. Incidentally, no plans were found for the shipment of coffins. 36,000 fixed hospital beds were to be set up in the "objective areas," i.e., Kogoshima, Shibushi and Miyazake, and another 7,000 beds in the Philippines and other Pacific Ocean areas were to be ready for D-Day casualties, with 11,000 or so additional beds established by D+10. See:

Feis, Herbert. Japan Subdued. Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1961. p. 10. D75.39.F35.

Maslowski, Peter. "Truman, The Bomb, and the Numbers Game." MHQ 7 (Spring 1995): pp. 103-07. Per.

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