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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JAPAN

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The world stood aghast when a detachment of the Japanese Navy slipped silently into Port Arthur and sank several Russian warships without giving a formal declaration of war. This occurred in 1904; yet the world seemed surprised when the suave little Japanese employed this pattern of trickery against the U.S.A. at Pearl Harbour in 1941. Hitler was impudent enough to publish his designs in "Mein Kampf," and the world was foolish enough not to believe him. For years the elder statesmen of Japan have given the world the clearest exposition of their policy, but few have paused to listen.

After their first triumphs, the Japanese divisions inundated the Asiatic mainland and the Netherland East Indies; the waters of abhorrent conquest rolled violently against the bulwarks of India, and (in the Pacific) the ramparts hastily thrown up by the Allies. In June last, the storm abated. Had the Japanese Command decided to consolidate their gains, or was the lull only preparatory to a further onslaught?

If the Imperial Diet had been convinced that enough territory had been obtained a new policy would certainly have been declared. In this case a close watch would have been maintained while Nippon greedily digested her victims.

Nippon's Intentions

A communique issued by General MacArthur in March this year throws some light on Japanese intentions. He said: "The Japanese are now taking up positions in readiness. . . ." Unfortunately he declines to comment further on this topic. About the same time U.S. spokesmen in Congress declared that their Allies had resolved to direct their strength against Germany until Hitler's power had been liquidated, and then to divert their attention to Japan. This policy involved holding the Japanese

meanwhile, and it certainly could not be accomplished by pursuing a static role. Fixed fortifications have often proved to be of greater service to the aggressor than to the defender.

Recollecting the lessons from recent events, the U.S. Command decided to wage a "fluid" defensive. Daily air reconnaissance was carried out over enemy territory, and whenever a menacing concentration was revealed, bombers were despatched to destroy it. Thus offensives were destroyed before they had time to develop.

Recently, a number of transports left Rabaul for Lae (New Guinea). They were successfully intercepted, and the convoy dispersed. A little later our intelligence revealed that the Japanese were concentrating a

considerable force at Kavieng in New Ireland. Promptly the R.A.A.F. dealt a surprise blow.

Allied Defensive Arc

No doubt feeling acutely Allied pressure in the south-western Pacific, the Japanese decided to convert We-wak into a potential supply base, and accordingly landing-strips and auxiliary air-fields were constructed in several localities, and an overland route pushed through to Lae, via Medang. This road was to enable supplies to be sent to the beleaguered troops in the south overland, if the Allied fighter command prevented provisions being carried direct.

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