Chapter 2

“He’s (not) coming south”
The invasion that wasn’t

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第2章
「奴は南に攻めてくる(?)」
侵略の脅威と史実

ピーター・スタンリー
"He’s (not) coming south"

The invasion that wasn’t

Australians had feared the prospect of invasion since the earliest years of white settlement. In 1942 those long-standing apprehensions looked set to become a reality. It’s common for Australians to assume that the invasion threat was real. To test the prevailing perception I circulated a questionnaire to about fifty people from several community groups. They included members of a local historical society, a University of the Third Age group and a conference of history teachers.

About two thirds agreed that Japan had planned to invade Australia in 1942. Around three quarters tended to agree that the Kokoda campaign had saved Australia from invasion and that the Brisbane Line strategy actually entailed abandoning northern Australia to the Japanese. Just about everyone – 95 per cent – agreed that John Curtin was a great wartime leader.

So the popular perception is that Japan planned to invade Australia, and would have if they’d won the battle for Papua. And that the man responsible for preventing this was John Curtin. This paper takes issue with that perception. I’m arguing that there was, in fact, no invasion plan, that the Curtin government exaggerated the threat, and that the enduring consequence of its deception was to skew our understanding of the reality of the invasion crisis of 1942.

The popular perception was founded in the long-held views of Australia’s strategic planners. The Australian Chiefs of Staff had regarded the prospect of the loss of the “Malay barrier” as the first stage in the Japanese plan for a major attack on Australia. With the actual fall of Malaya and Singapore and the breach of the “Malay barrier”, that prediction appeared to be coming true.

And, indeed, the Japanese had been interested in Australia. Since the sixteenth century Japanese merchants and writers had been intrigued by the “South Seas” or nan’yo. Business interests developed early in the twentieth century and a rich scholarly literature grew reflecting Japanese interests in the South Seas, including Australia. However, there was no Japanese plan before 1942 to advance beyond the perimeter to be won in the

白人による植民の最初の頃から、オーストラリア人は侵略されることを恐れていた。1942年ご、ついに長年の危惧が実現となりそうとし、それ以後もそのような認識が根強くあるのである。侵略の危機は実際にあったのだ。と考えるオーストラリア人は多い。このように一般的認識を確かめるために、私は各種コミュニティ・グループに属する50人ほどのアンケートをとった。対象になったのは、地元の歴史同好会の会員や、第3世代大学（高齢者を対象とした学習講座）の受講者や、歴史教師大会の出席者などである。

回答者のうち、約3分の2が、日本は1942年にオーストラリア侵略を計画していたと答えた。また回答者の4分の3が、コオダ作戦がオーストラリアを侵略から守ったと考え、ブリスベン・ライン作戦は、実際には北部オーストラリアを日本に放棄することを意味していたと考えていた。そして、ほとんどの全員、つまり回答者の95％がジョン・カーティス（オーストラリア首相、1941～45年）は優れた戦争指導者だったとの意見に賛成した。

以上のことから言えるのは、日本はオーストラリア侵略を計画していたということ、もし東部ニューギニア戦でオーストラリアが攻めていなければ、それが現実になっていたであろうということ、そして、「オーストラリアを救った」責任者であったジョン・カーティスは、優れた戦争指導者であったということである。これらの見方を、ここで考えてみたい。私の主張したいことは、侵略計画は実際には存在しなかった。カーティス政権はこの脅威を誇張した。そして、その後も存在しているこの幻想は、1942年の侵略危機に関しての歴史的実態の理解をゆがめているという点である。

以上述べたような一般的認識は、オーストラリアの戦略計画担当者たちが長い間持っていた見解に基づいている。オーストラリア軍参謀長は、いわゆる「マレー半島防壁」を失うことは、「日本のオーストラリア攻撃大作戦の第1段階である」と考えていた。実際にマレー半島とはシンガポールが結節し、「マレー防壁」が崩され、この予想が現実のものとなったと考えられた。

確かに、日本はオーストラリアに興味を持っていた。16世紀以来、日本人の商人や作家たちは「南洋」に興味をそそられ、南洋貿易への関心は20世紀の初頭から高まり、そ
initial conquest. Australia barely rated a mention in the 1941 conferences which planned Japan’s strategy. In the euphoria of victory early in 1942 some visionary middle-ranking naval staff officers in Tokyo proposed that Japan should go further. In February and March they proposed that Australia should be invaded, in order to forestall it being used as a base for an Allied counter-offensive (of course it became). The plans got no further than some acrimonious discussions. The army dismissed the idea as “gibberish”, knowing that troops sent further south would weaken Japan in China and Manchuria against a Soviet threat. Not only did the Japanese army condemn the plan, but the Navy General Staff also dismissed it, unable to spare the million tons of shipping the invasion would have consumed. By mid-March the proposal lapsed. Instead, the Japanese adopted a plan to isolate Australia, impeding communication between Australia and the United States by the occupation of islands to Australia’s north-east (New Caledonia, Samoa and Fiji), though in the event these further operations were negated by the defeats of Coral Sea and Midway. This conclusion is supported by all the scholarship, notably the late and much missed Henry Frei, whose Japan’s southward advance and Australia (Melbourne, 1991) documents the debate and its conclusion from Japanese official and private sources.

The reaction of the Australian people to the crisis of early 1942 has been described as one of “panic”. Certainly official and other historians have heightened the drama of the months in which invasion was regarded as possible. The official historian Paul Hasluck had some sport with the reactions of the Government “up at Canberra, which appears to have been more badly scared than any other part of the continent”. He described how public service typists were put to copying important documents so, if Canberra were bombed or occupied, “the Government could survive the loss of paper”. Sarcasm comes easily in hindsight, but at the time the rhetoric and the actions of the Curtin government abetted and fuelled popular disquiet. Advertising and propaganda, not least through posters such as “He’s coming south” made the case graphically. (So damaging to morale did this appear that the Queensland government actually banned it.) Curtin’s own Committee on National Morale alerted him to the dangers of his alarmist policy and protested against the use of “fear posters”. This committee, chaired by the mysterious Alf Conlon and including a dozen of the nation’s leading intellectuals (including Charles Bean), warned of the consequences of the government harping on the prospect of attack. The committee warned that the perception of “danger… tended to thrust idealism into the background and replace it with a crude physical self-preservation”.

Propaganda “fear posters”, such as this one produced in 1942, were not welcomed by all, but fed long-standing racial stereotypes and fears of Japanese invasion. Propaganda “fear posters”, such as this one produced in 1942, were not welcomed by all, but fed long-standing racial stereotypes and fears of Japanese invasion.
Certainly the actions of the Curtin Cabinet display disquiet, if not panic. Even before the fall of Malaya, New Britain or Singapore, Curtin had appealed for help to Churchill and Roosevelt. He claimed “it is beyond our capacity to meet an attack of the weight the Japanese could launch” on Australia. On the eve of the fall of Singapore, Frank Forde, the Army Minister, urged Curtin to obtain a division from Canada and 50,000 US troops “in view of the likelihood of an attack upon Australia”. By early March Cabinet, on the advice of the Australian Chiefs of Staff, anticipated a landing around Darwin in early April and a landing on the east coast by May.

Curtin's anxiety must have grown when in October 1942 he read a Chiefs-of-Staff file entitled Japanese plan for invasion of Australia. The file does give a full outline, complete with a map annotated in Chinese, for a Japanese invasion of Australia via Western Australia with a diversionary attack around Darwin. The map was forwarded via the Australian legation in Chongking from Nationalist China's Director of Military Intelligence, Admiral H. C. Yang. But if John Curtin accepted it as genuine (as Paul Burns suggests in his book, The Brisbane Line controversy (Sydney, 1998)) none of Curtin's military advisers agreed. Even the Chinese did not consider it genuine. In any case, the invasion was supposed to have been launched in May 1942, but the map was

Though the authenticity of this map outlining a Japanese attack on Australia was not widely accepted, it was used by Curtin and others as evidence to support invasion theories.
discovered” only five months later. Curtin showed it to journalists in March 1943 to substantiate his contention that “Japanese strategy...is being implemented”. The map has since been used (notably in Michael Montgomery’s book, Who sunk the Sydney? (North Ryde, 1991)) as evidence of Japanese plans to invade.

Curtin’s apprehensions ought to have been greatly calmed by General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific Area. MacArthur briefed the Advisory War Council in March, five days after arriving in Melbourne. Its members may have been relieved to hear his opinion that “it is doubtful whether the Japanese would undertake an invasion of Australia...”, though they may have entertained misgivings over his reason “as the spoils here are not sufficient to warrant the risk”. MacArthur suggested that the Japanese might “try to overrun Australia in order to demonstrate their superiority over the white races”, but as a strategist he thought that an invasion would be “a blunder”. In September 1942, though, Curtin was still pressing for an Allied force of 25 divisions for Australia’s defence. Roosevelt, in a cabledram that month, reassured him that Americans “fully appreciate the anxiety which you must naturally feel” for Australia’s security. Nevertheless, he had to stress that the forces then in Australia, including two American divisions and a large air corps were “sufficient to defeat the present Japanese force in New Guinea and to provide for the security of Australia against an invasion”. The confidential “backroom briefing” Curtin gave journalists, documented by Fred Smith, give an indication of his concern as well as his ignorance. On 21 September 1942, after complaining of Churchill and Roosevelt’s obtuseness, Curtin told journalists that the Japanese could still “base on the Kimberleys and cross overland...diagonally across in this direction”. This contradicted both the advice of his service advisers and geographical common sense.

By contrast, Winston Churchill, who had faced a more immediate threat of invasion for a year in 1940–41, took a more phlegmatic view of the likelihood of the Japanese attack. He consistently downplayed the likelihood, telling the House of Commons in January 1942 that the Japanese were more likely to devote their attention to making the most of their conquests rather than “undertaking a serious mass invasion of Australia”. His Chiefs of Staff consistently expressed the view that “a genuine invasion of Australia does not form part of the Japanese plans”. The Curtin government, kept informed by both the Dominions Office and by its High Commissioner in London, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, was aware of this view throughout. The Australian Chiefs of Staff, asked to comment on this and other British statements, did not demur. Both Churchill and Roosevelt appear (ボールバーンズがThe Brisbane Line controversy（『ブリスベン線論争』）アレン・アンウィン社刊、1998年）の中で詰まっているが、彼の軍事顧問は誰もそれに同意しなかった。中国断てさえ、これを本物とは考えなかった。どちらにしても、侵略は1942年5月に実行されるはずであったが、その地域はその5か月後、発見されたのであった。カーティン首長は、「日本軍の戦略は実行されているのだが」という自分の主張を説明するために、1943年3月、報道関係者に、それを見た。この地域は、その後も日本軍の侵略計画の証拠として使われた。（特にイケア・モントゴメリー著Who sank the Sydney?（『誰が戦艦シドニーを沈めたのか』）カッセール・オーストラリア社刊、1981年）の中でもそう言及されている。この地域は戦争記念館内リサーチセンターに詳しい説明があり、表示されているが、見学者にはこの説明文を読んでもらいたい。）

カーティン首相の懸念は、南西太平洋地域最高司令官ダグラス・マッカーサー将軍によって和らげられたはずである。マッカーサーは1942年3月3日にニューポルンに到着し、その5日の後戦争審議会で告発をした。首相と大臣たちは、そこで彼の「日本軍のオーストラリア作戦の可能性は疑わしい」という意見を聞く、安心したのではないかだろうか。しかしながら、「そのような危険をおかすだけの見返りは、この国から獲得できないだろう」という彼の理由だけでは、納得できなかったかもしれない。マッカーサーは、日本軍が「白色人種に対する彼らの権威性を実証するために、オーストラリアを覆散そうとするかもしれないものの、戦略的に見れば直面することが、指摘は大丈夫に終えるであろうとの見解を委員会に示し、安心させた。にもかかわらず、1942年9月の時点でカーティンは、オーストラリア作戦のため、連合軍に2個師団分の援軍を送るようにと主張していた。ルーズベルトはその月の電報で、アメリカはオーストラリアの安全に関与している「当然の安全について十分理解できる」と再確認した。にもかかわらず、ルーズベルトは、その時オーストラリアに駐在していた2個師団と大規模な艦隊は、「ニュージーランドにいる現在の日本軍を負かすのに十分であり、オーストラリア作戦を阻止する防衛力としても十分である」と強調した。カーティンが報道関係者に告発した「機密報告書」をプレッド・スミスが記録しているが、それは、カーティンの懸念と同時に彼の無知を示唆している。1942年9月21日、チャールズとルーズベルトの顧問に文書を送った後、ジャーナリストたちに対してカーティンは、日本軍は今でもシナリオに基づき、地続きを新方向へ斜めに横切って進攻できると主張した。この発言は、彼の軍事顧問のアドバイスや、合理的な常識と矛盾するものである。

それとは対照的に、1940年から41年にかけて、侵略の可能性が深刻に面したウィンストン・チャーチルは、日本の攻撃に対してもっと冷静な見方をした。彼は何度も日本
to have understood that Australia was practically secure and that they had to deal with Curtin’s fretfulness rather than the strategic reality.

Not until early 1943 is there any indication that the Curtin cabinet accepted the Japanese threat had diminished. The official poster “Ringed with menace!”, dating from about mid-1943, demonstrates how ludicrous the contention had become. In reality, Australia was spotted with inconvenience rather than ringed with menace. But Curtin refused to publicly concede the declining likelihood of actual invasion until June 1943. Not until 27 September 1943 – after the capture of Lae and as Australian divisions advanced into the Markham Valley and onto the Huon Peninsula – do the Cabinet minutes at last record simply “the danger of invasion, he said, had passed”. But even as he confirmed in an off-the-record briefing in March 1944 that “there would now never be any danger to the eastern side of Australia”, he was still raising the possibility of Japanese attacks on Darwin and Western Australia, his home state.

What explains Curtin’s anxiety? Australian and Allied leaders in Australia knew of the Japanese decision not to invade within a month of the debates between staff officers in Tokyo in March 1942. In early April “Magic” intercepts reached Australia which confirmed that no invasion was contemplated. An actual danger of invasion had never existed and the likelihood diminished through 1942 as Allied victories eroded Japan’s offensive capability. Curtin was told as much by London and Washington, and MacArthur, Curtin’s principal strategic adviser, consistently advised that it was improbable. Why did General Douglas MacArthur (left), meeting with Prime Minister John Curtin (right) soon after his arrival in Australia, advised that he felt Japanese invasion of Australia was “doubtful”.

軍によるオーストラリア侵略の可能性を否定し、1942年1月に下院において、日本軍は「顧問的なオーストラリア侵略を計画するのではなく、占領地域の効率的管理に集中するであろう」と発言した。彼の参謀たちも、一貫して「真の意味でのオーストラリア侵略は日本軍の計画に入っていない」との意見を表明した。英国内閣は「領民地であった国々との外交調和を担当した」やロンドン駐在のスタンレー・マルボリン・プルース高等弁務官の報告によって、ケイトン政権は以上を非難していた。オーストラリア軍参謀長は、この点や英国内閣の認識に関しての意見を求められた際、それを否定はしなかった。チャールとルーズベルト両者はともに、オーストラリアは実際に安全であるとの理解をしており、参謀長たちは戦時的な現実よりも、カーティンの落ち着きのさに反対する必要があったのである。

1943年の初頭まで、カーティン内閣は日本軍による侵略の顧問が少なくなってきたことを認めなかった。「顧問に包囲されて！」と題された1943年中頃発表の公式ポスターは、この主張がいかにばかげたものであったかを示唆している。現実的には、オーストラリアは顧問に包囲されるというよりも、不便さを感じる程度であった。それにかわらずカーティンは、1943年6月まで、現実的な侵略の可能性を正式に認可しなかった。ラジオの放送で、オーストラリア軍司令官マーラー・オズバリーを通じてフォン半島に進攻した後、1943年9月27日付の閣議録で、ようやく「首相は侵略の危険性が去った」と記録されている。1944年3月のオフロー報告で「オーストラリア東部の危険性はなくなった」との見解を発表したのもかかわらず、彼はまだマッケーウィンや彼の出身州である西オーストラリアへの日本軍の攻撃の可能性について言及していた。

カーティンはなぜそれほど不安だったのだろうか。1942年3月の東京での参謀会議で下された日本の決定は、その1ヶ月後にはカーティンとマッケーウィンに知らされていた。「マジック」によると、4月上旬には侵略計画がないことをオーストラリアは知っていた。侵略の現実的な危険性は存在せず、その可能性も、1942年の連合軍の数々の勝利によって日本軍の攻撃能力が弱められたことで、少なくなっていた。カーティンは彼の第一軍の部下であるマッケーウィンからも、そのようなことは起こらないとも伝えていた。にもかかわらず、なぜカーティンは侵略の可能性を唱え続けたのであろうか。グリーン・ハーパーによれば、カーティンが侵略の顧問を主張し続けたのは、1943年にあった選挙で優位に立たせたかったからだという。他の人々は、危険性を大声で唱えることは、カーティンにとって一石二鳥の効果があったと述べる。まず第2に、省察は顧問への情熱が彼自身のものよりも重要視されていたオーストラリア国民を、戦時体制に動員させることができた。第32に、すでに枢鰐が誤った情報であると知っている内容をあえて主張すれば、連合軍の敵の信号をすぐに破ってしまったことを群衆効果を期待で
Curtin continue to bang the invasion drum? Glyn Harper has suggested that Curtin kept up the pretense of an invasion threat for electoral advantage in 1943. Other answers may be that, by so loudly proclaiming the danger, Curtin could kill two birds with one stone. First, he could mobilise the Australian people, whose commitment to the sacrifices necessary for victory was often less passionate than his own. Second, his advocacy of a possibility known by Axis to be false, supported the deception that the Allies had broken key enemy codes. Had Curtin admitted the impossibility of invasion sooner Axis powers may have suspected how he could have known.

This much is logical, and yet a deeper answer seems to lurk in Curtin’s psyche. Curtin felt the burden of responsibility of his office so gravely that it contributed to his death in 1945. His rejection of advice that invasion was not going to occur, his repeated appeals for reinforcements in secret communications, and his privately dwelling on the prospect suggest that he was unable to accept the reality. David Day, in his recent sympathetic biography of Curtin, argues that “much of the anxiety and bitterness” which stemmed from Curtin’s fruitless appeals for forces to Australia’s defence to Roosevelt and Churchill could have been avoided had they taken Curtin and MacArthur into their confidence. Certainly Churchill and Roosevelt’s desire to divert the 7th Division convoy to Burma soured relations, and not until May 1942 did they tell Curtin of their decision to “beat Hitler first”. But it would seem that Curtin’s refusal to accept the strategic evaluations of London and Washington that caused his unease.

In the event, Churchill and Roosevelt were right and Curtin was wrong. He has been represented as the “Saviour of Australia”, but, however much Australia’s contribution stemmed from his passionate commitment to victory, his organisational skills and his personal example as an inspiring leader, Curtin did not save Australia from any real threat. Instead, one of the lasting legacies of his whipping up of the fear of invasion fear has been a persistent heritage of bogus invasion stories.

**Epilogue**

This paper was presented at the Memorial’s Remembering 1942 conference on 31 May 2003. On 1 June the Daily Telegraph devoted five pages of its Inside Edition supplement to a feature variously headlined “Imagine the unthinkable”, “Rising Sun over Sydney” and “Was invasion closer than we feared?” These pages were based on painstaking research conducted by “history enthusiasts” Warren Brown and John Collins, based on their yet-to-be-published fictional history Strike south. Accompanied by Warren Brown’s impressions of Zeros over the harbour, bombs exploding beside the Town Hall and
Japanese soldiers boarding a Bondi tram, the feature presented a fictional speculation of a Japanese invasion. It posited an invasion around Darwin in early July and a Japanese force heading southwards toward central Australia. A further drawing showed Japanese soldiers plodding through the "dead heart" and the accompanying text described a "scorched earth" strategy defeating this advance towards Adelaide. Why Adelaide was not explained. The feature included a map of the landings around Botany Bay, Narrabeen and Pittwater captioned in minute type, "This graphic illustrates a fictional attack on Sydney".

This feature raises questions about what Australians know and believe about this aspect of their history and about a newspaper's responsibility to its readers. "Alternative" or "counterfactual" history is increasingly being used as an acceptable technique, one that can produce useful questions or insights. (I have used the method myself, most recently several weeks before, in a conference workshop debating its application to secondary history teaching.) At the same time, in the light of the misconceptions which most Australians evidently entertain over the likelihood of invasion in 1942, publishing such a feature so prominently (beginning with the newspaper's cover) and without any historical counterweight was surely reprehensible. One letter was later published in the Telegraph. On 4 June a Geoff Ruxton of Kogarah wrote to say that he was "simply appalled" at the feature, which was "an insult to anyone's intelligence". Perhaps because the feature confirmed prevailing preconceptions, no controversy ensued.

The Daily Telegraph had in fact asked the Memorial's historians (Dr Robert Nichols and me) for a thousand words of historical background on the submarine raid and the invasion threat. Between 30 May, when we were asked, and 1 June the Telegraph found itself short of space and the thousand words Robert and I had written were dropped. As a result, tens of thousands of readers were left with a vivid impression that invasion could have been feasible but without any historically-based interpretation putting a countervailing or contextual view.

Late in February 1942, in the aftermath of the fall of Singapore and what Curtin called "the battle for Australia" opened, the Daily Telegraph published the results of a survey of its readers' opinions. Fifty-four per cent believed that Australia would be invaded, a smaller proportion than those who appear to agree today. If my informal survey has any validity, it is any wonder that most Australians still believe, in the face of all the evidence, that the Japanese were indeed Coming South in 1942.