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CAN IT BE DONE?

This poses the question: Scientifically can heavy bombing, pinpointed on known earthquake areas, bring about an underground condition within fault sections which would step up the expectancy and possibly bring about a calamitous earthquake in a selected area? The tactical purpose being to put out of production war industries in this area, or to neutralize a strong defense sector.

This question is partly answered by N. H. Heck, Assistant Director of the U.S. Coast Geodetic Survey, in his pamphlet "Japanese Earthquakes from the Military Viewpoint." He states in part: "Can an Earthquake be set off by an explosion?"

"This question has been asked several times, so it should receive a serious answer. All that could be applied is trigger force, and this can only advance and set the time for an earthquake which is about to occur. It is conceivable, however, that an explosion at exactly the right time and place might have the correct effect. It (the explosive) would have to be very large and it would be necessary to know where to place it, and the latter cannot be determined at all from outside Japan".....

When and where to drop this explosive message, (at the most timely hour) is the crux of the problem, he stresses.

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This problem, he adds, has been complicated by the loss of seismological listening stations at Manila, Shanghai, and Batavia. These stations, he points out, are needed to supply the data to forecast a possible "trigger stress." Some of the data needed would be geological changes within Japan itself and those covering concurrent minor earthquakes, which often anticipate a major earthquake. These statements, it is timely to report, were made before the recapture of Manila and the occupation by our forces of the Okinawa Islands, well within the zone of Japan proper.

It now appears as though they no longer hold valid, and that this job of collecting the needed data is now within the realm of possibility.

With the possibility of getting this data, now arises the question of where to place this large explosive charge. Professor P. Byerly of the Seismological Laboratory of the University of California, in an answer to this question, reduces the range of speculation as to time and location. In a letter to Dr. L.H. Adams of the Geophysical Laboratory, he states: "....."we would have to get (bomb) within less than 5 miles of that place on the fault which is destined to break within a year, no help being offered it...." and "...if we could get (bomb) within a mile of a point on a fault destined to break within 90 years we might set it off...".

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Here again, the determination of the vulnerable faults is dependent upon the more specific data to be obtained from seismic listening posts.

The statements of these men, prominent scientists in their field, testify to the plausibility of "triggering" a potential earthquake condition by intensified and accurate bombings. This plausibility is further substantiated by actual tests conducted at the Palmer Physical Laboratory. Here, high explosive charges were studied with a view to their effect on these earthquake conditions.

It was the results of this study that brought the possibility of triggering a potential earthquake condition from the realm of fantasy to that of scientific plausibility.

With the knowledge of the possible effects of explosives, and the seismological data to be obtained from listening posts there appears a good possibility that we may be able to create a Psychological Warfare panic campaign well within this realm of scientific plausibility.

And if it became known in Japan that we had placed scientists in strategic areas within the zone of Japan proper for working out a hypothetical plan to further harass Japan by creating earthquakes, another diabolical feature would be added to stir up the imagination and increase the panic hysteria of the Japanese people.

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Also, the knowledge of the presence of these scientists at Manila and Okinawa, slipped into Japan proper by our agents in China, would not only give credence to such a diabolical plan among the mass of Japan but would act as a challenge to Japan's scientists.

This diabolical plan would also add another dilemma for Japanese officials to meet. Such a plan, it becomes obvious, would neutralize the effectiveness of underground industries, put there to protect machinery and workers from ordinary surface bombings. It would not take much imagination on the part of the lowliest coolie to visualize himself trapped in the bowels of the earth and doomed to being buried alive, by such a man-made earthquake. Add to this localized hysteria the fears of the mass of workers in above-ground industries, workers in shipyards, the fear of the mass of the great hydro-electrical dams turning their floods loose on the countrysides, and the general tension of their homes tumbling about their heads at any hour, and you have a PW formula for panic hysteria that cannot be duplicated by any type of physical warfare.

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