



pp.141-2

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The *Automedon* affair subsequently influenced IJN strategy.⁴⁶⁵ *Automedon* was a British Blue Funnel cargo liner that was sunk by a German raider, *Atlantis*, in the Indian Ocean on November 11, 1940. *Automedon* possessed a secret copy of the British War Cabinet Minutes for August 1940, which was being sent to Singapore from Liverpool, and the document was captured by the Germans. It consisted of 87 paragraphs and showed a blueprint of the British Far Eastern strategy. This document indicated that Britain would not go to war against Japan, even if the Japanese Army invaded French IndoChina. In the document, British Chiefs of Staff regarded Thailand and Hong Kong as indefensible against Japanese attack.⁴⁶⁶

Bernhard Rogge, captain of the *Atlantis*, recognized the significance of the document and sent it to the German naval attaché in Tokyo, Rear Admiral Paul Wenneker. In Berlin, the Japanese naval attaché, Captain Tadao Yokoi, sent a summary of the document to the Navy Ministry in Tokyo. On December 12, 1940, Wenneker handed the document to Admiral Nobutake Kondo, the Vice Chief of Staff, and talked about Britain's overstretched empire. At that time, Hitler was urging Japan to attack Singapore to weaken the British Empire. Admiral Koshiro Oikawa referred to this information in December 1940 and he had a conviction that Britain would not wage a war against Japan over French Indo-China. As mentioned above, Admiral Yamamoto ordered his junior, Vice Admiral Onishi, to plan the Pearl Harbor operation in January 1941, just after the *Automedon* affair.

⁴⁶⁵ Also see, Chapman, op. cit.; James Rusbridger, op. cit.; Elphick, op. cit.

⁴⁶⁶ COS(40)592, Cab 66/10, PRO.