

Explain the Japanese strategy for holding their gains in the Pacific after the ba...

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## The Japanese Strategy in the Pacific after the Battle of Midway of

Introduction One of the main theatres of World War II was the war in the Pacific, which was mainly fought by Japan against the Allies. In this theatre, Japan actually succeeded in carrying out swift, successful invasions of all of the colonies of the Asia-Pacific Region, giving them strategic advantages in position, territory and resources (Murray and Millet 2000). Just as the Nazis swiftly conquered most of Europe from the years 1941 to 1942, so did the Japanese; by December 1945 the Japanese was able to conquer Hong Kong (a large slice of China has already been conquered by the Japanese since 1937 in the Sino-Japanese War), and by 1942 Japan was able to conquer Burma, the Dutch East Indies, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Philippines, Malaya, Saipan, and other islands in the Central Pacific (Gailey 1995). While the Japanese was able to conquer a large part of the Asia-Pacific Region, it came at a large cost, especially in terms of manpower and war materiel such as carriers, warships and planes, and this proved to cause difficulties for the Japanese to defend their large conquests (Gailey 1995). In this case, the offensive plan of the Japanese was to launch further attacks on the south and central Pacific, with the aim of destroying the rest of the remaining aircraft carriers of the United States (Murray and Millet 2000). In order to carry out this plan, the Japanese both made attacks on the Coral Sea (to capture Port Moresby and control the waters north of Australia), and on Midway Atoll (in order to destroy the remaining United States aircraft carriers in the Pacific) (Murray and Millet 2000). However, the Japanese were repulsed both in the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway, forcing them to rethink their strategy (Murray and Millet 2000). Body With the losses in Coral

Sea and the Battle of Midway, the Japanese were forced to rethink their strategy, especially in how to hold their gains in such a wide territory. The major consequences of their defeat in Midway included the following: loss of war materiel and men, and failure to establish a strategic airbase in the Central Pacific, and control the waters approaching their conquered territories (Gailey 1995). With this in hand, the Japanese instead decided to make a defensive war in the Pacific in order to exhaust the allies, and concentrated their forces in controlling the Southern Pacific theatre of the Pacific War (Gailey 1995). In this case, the Japanese concentrated their efforts in conquering and controlling New Guinea and the Solomon Islands (especially Guadalcanal) (Gailey 1995). The Japanese wanted to conquer New Guinea in order to control the waters north of Australia and have a strategic position in launching future offensives against that country (Gailey 1995). The elimination of Australia from the war would give Japan absolute control in the Southern Pacific region (Gailey 1995). Having lost the Battle of Coral Sea, the Japanese concentrated in an overland campaign to capture Port Moresby but ended in stalemate (Gailey 1995). In addition, the Japanese also aimed to control the Solomon Islands (especially Guadalcanal) in order to cut off supplies from the United States going to Australia; however, it also ended in stalemate (Gailey 1995), (Murray and Millet 2000). Conclusion With the Battle of Midway lost for the Japanese, they focused on consolidating their holdings on their territorial gains in the Pacific, and aimed to swiftly conquer the Midway Islands and New Guinea. However, earlier attempts at conquering these territories failed, making them lose a strategic foothold in the Pacific region. With this loss, the Japanese was forced to fight a defensive

war, but still lost attempts to fully control strategic territories in order to cut off supplies from the United States. In the end, they were not able to sustain their gains, and lost the war. Reference List Gailey, Harry. 1995. *The War in the Pacific: From Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay*. Novato, CA: Presidio Press.

Murray, Williamson and Allan Millett. 2000. *A War To Be Won: Fighting the Second World War*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: 2000