

Why Detailed Data on Mineral Resources of  
Asia are Essential

A. From Asiatic Viewpoint:

1. Japan as a modern industrial nation, the only one in Asia, consumes vast quantities of minerals. Iron ore, coal, copper, and fertilizer minerals are used in the manufacture of needles, hoes, locomotives, hydroelectric generators, farmers' fertilizers, and an endless list of necessary items. A constant supply of minerals is almost as essential as food to this industrial nation of 83 million people.
2. Contrary to popular belief, Japan is a well mineralized country and produces substantial amounts of copper, zinc, pyrite, manganese, and steam coal. However Japan's deposits can supply only about 20 percent of her iron ore requirements; there is very little good coking coal, and no aluminum, or phosphate fertilizer ores. In addition, tin, tungsten, manganese, lead and nickel must be imported. The economical source of most of these minerals is in Asiatic countries.
3. Japan alleviated her shortages and was self-sufficient in minerals during her conquest of Korea, China, Manchuria, and South Asia. Acquiring these mineral deposits was a big factor of the conquest. During this period, Japanese geologists and mining engineers made intensive studies of mineral deposits all the way from Mongolia to the South Pacific Islands. Japan had no efficient governmental organizations comparable to the U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines so the work was mostly done by various Japanese mining company men. These men have the best information on many of the vitally important mineral deposits of Manchuria, China, Korea, and other Asiatic countries. Much of this practical information lies in Japanese mining company files and has not been published.
4. If it survives, Japan's mineral industry must have an economical source of raw materials. Iron ore and coking coal from America to replace Hainan iron ore and Chinese coal can only be a temporary, expensive prop. Before discussing any questions such as the practicability of obtaining additional iron ore from Malaya, there should be available detailed information on proved ore reserves, probable ore, grade of the ore, size and shape of the deposits, mining methods, equipment, accessibility, and many other facts. In short, detailed information, preferably in one convenient report is necessary for any integrated picture of the mineral resources of Asia. Such facts must be available before any worthwhile planning is possible.

If these problems are not solved it is entirely possible that Japan would at some future date again go to war to obtain the minerals she needs. Other Asiatic countries no less need the products from Japan's mineral industries.

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B. From U.S. Considerations

1. Military intelligence should know all details of mineral resources that are in the hands of the enemy or that may at some future date fall. Metals are the sinews of war. Areas accessible today, may not be accessible later. It is not enough to know the mineral produced and a description of the plant. Reserves, mining methods, geology, and processing are all factors necessary to estimate mineral potential over a long period. The size of the plant and its capacity are not always indicative of the reserves of good ore left in the ground. Sometimes the mining geologist can make an intelligent guess as to the nature of a new mineral operation in enemy territory if he knows the general geology of the area.

Mineral deposits may be strategic objectives for fighting forces; radioactive minerals, tungsten, iron, manganese and copper deposits may be objectives to be held or gained from an enemy. The value of the objective can be determined if there are sufficient facts gathered from previous studies.

2. U.S. lacks certain critical and strategic minerals that occur in Asia. Tin, tungsten and antimony are abundant in China and Malaya. U.S. has no tin deposits, and very little antimony. Our tungsten deposits were almost exhausted by World War II. The same is true of manganese, but Russia and India have large reserves.

U.S. will depend more and more upon foreign sources and must build up stockpiles of strategic and critical minerals. A knowledge of all possible sources is essential.

During the period of Japan's rehabilitation many of her mineral deficiencies will have to be supplied from U.S. sources. At the present time U.S. can ill afford many minerals essential to Japan. An intensive study should be made to determine the possibility of substituting increased production from other Asiatic Sources. The answer can only be derived from a knowledge of the potential of these deposits.

3. Japan can and does manufacture many items for the United Nations armed forces, and will continue to do so as long as an adequate supply of minerals are available.

C. Suggested Action

1. All possible information on Asiatic mineral deposits should be gathered and prepared in report form.

NRS will probably complete reports on nearly all minerals mined in Japan. Work is now progressing on a study of the manganese deposits. When these are completed, all important facts necessary to estimate Japan's mineral resources and capacity will be known.

As far as possible, the vast reservoir of knowledge on Asiatic areas, outside Japan should be tapped and utilized. Research into Japanese literature is only part of the information available. Technical occupation personnel working with Japanese geologists and mining engineers to increase Japanese mineral production have built up a spirit of good-will and cooperation. Quite often mine and geological maps are voluntarily submitted. Much of this material, particularly on Manchuria and China is unobtainable elsewhere. The United Nations have notified NRS that all Chinese geologists, with the exception of three or four on Formosa, all defected to the Communists and their reports are unavailable.

To date NRS engineers and geologists have only gathered outside Asiatic information as incidental to their main duty of assisting Japanese technical men and reporting on Japanese deposits, however they feel that their contacts should be utilized in obtaining invaluable maps and reports that may not be available in a short time. Many mine and geological maps are not published and most mining companies given only minimum information to anybody but friends to whom they are indebted.