

3. Southwest Pacific

The forty-nine plane raid on Darwin on March 15 served to emphasize a recent shift in Japanese activity from the Solomons and Papua, off the northeast coast of Australia, to Netherlands New Guinea and the islands directly north of Australia. A correspondent of the Sydney Morning Herald has described this shift as an acknowledgement that the Japanese attempt to use the Solomon Islands to cut the Australian-American supply line has failed. Instead, he suggests, the Japanese are trying to establish an impregnable line of island defences to protect the oilfields of Borneo, Sarawak, Sumatra and Java and to make it impossible for decisive Allied blows to be struck at Japan from Australia. Without being obliged to overrun Australia, Japan hopes thus to control Allied movements from a distance and ultimately to render Australia ineffective.

UNITED NATIONS' PLANES STRIKE AT CONCENTRATIONS ABOVE AUSTRALIA



March 16, 1943

Recent communiqués indicate two main centers of Japanese strength in this region—at Rabaul (1) and around Amboina (4) and Dobo (3). In the last-named locality, indeed, today communiqué reports an Allied air attack on three troop transports, in which direct hits were made on two. Japanese bases that have received attention from General MacArthur's fliers are, in addition to those already mentioned, Babo (2), Saumlakki (5), Timor (6) and Sumbawa (7). Yesterday forty-nine enemy planes from one of these bases raided Darwin, on the north coast of Australia.