

Japan to France, 14-07-1941

Japan continued to press further demands on France related to access to facilities in Indochina (see ultimate Japan to France 19-06-1940, 31-08-1940 and 19-09-1940). On 14 July 1941, the Japanese government presented Marshall Petain in France with an ultimatum demanding the right of use of eight airports in the proximity of Saigon as well as access to the facilities of the port of Saigan and the Cam Ranh Bay. In addition, it requested French cooperation with the Japanese military in defending Indochina, including the support for Japanese forces; the freedom of movement for Japanese forces; and the reimbursement for the presence of these forces. At the same time, the Japanese government promised to continue acknowledging French sovereignty over French Indochina.¹ The deadline was 19 July. Failing a French response, Japan would invade French Indochina. This, the French government feared, would lead to the loss of French sovereignty over French Indochina. As neither British nor American support was forthcoming – apart from a message of US president Roosevelt expressing his hope that the French stall as long as possible – the Vichy government decided to comply. It signed an agreement with Japan on 29 July 1941.² French sovereignty over Indochina was again recognised in the agreement but at the same time Japan deployed 25,000 forces in Saigon and the Cam Rahn Bay.³

¹ Morley, *The Fateful Choice*, 236–37. Bussemaker, *Paradise in Peril*, 2001, 548.

² Morley, *The Fateful Choice*, 237–40.

³ *Ibid.*; Bussemaker, *Paradise in Peril*, 2001, 549.