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REPORT OF ARMY PEARL HARBOR BOARD

[Note: This text was taken from a copy of the original report, not the copy in the PHA. When referring to the PHA copy the page numbers in brackets correspond to the page numbers in this version.]

Appointed by the Secretary of War, pursuant to the Provisions of Public Law 339, 78th Congress, approved 13 June 1944, to ascertain and report the facts relating to the attack made by Japanese armed forces upon the Territory of Hawaii on 7 December 1941, and make such recommendations as it may deem proper. Also, to consider the phrases which related to the Pearl Harbor disaster of the report of House Military Affairs Committee, as directed by the Acting Secretary of War, in his memorandum for the Judge Advocate General, 12 July 1944.

effect very soon."

General Marshall again wrote General Short on the 28th of October, and in it he clearly indicated to Short that he should change his alert plan (of which there was no proof that he ever did) and only use the Air Force for guard during the last stage when the Air Force as such had been destroyed and a hostile landing effected. General Marshall further indicated that no potential ground duty should be used as an excuse for not continuing the specific Air Force training, saying:

"I suggest that you prepare a separate phase of your alert plan based on the assumption that the Air Force has been destroyed and a hostile landing effected. This plan could provide for the use of the necessary Air Corps personnel for ground defense and afford a means of indoctrinating them in ground defense tactics. It should, however, for the present at least, be subordinated to their own specific training requirements.

"It would appear that the best policy would be to allow them to concentrate on technical Air Corps training until they have completed their expansion program and have their feet on the ground as far as their primary mission is concerned." (R. 30)

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Here, again, General Marshall cautioned Short to use his Air Force for its normal purposes and not upon antisabotage guard duty and emphasizes that the use of the Air Force must be free and unfettered.

On October 16 Short received the following Navy message:

"The following is a paraphrase of a dispatch from the C.N.O. which I have been directed to pass to you. Quote: 'Japanese Cabinet resignation creates a grave situation. If a new cabinet is formed it will probably be anti-American and extremely nationalistic. If the Konoye Cabinet remains it will operate under a new mandate which will not include reapproachment [sic] with the United States. Either way hostilities between Japan and Russia are strongly possible. Since Britain and the United States are held responsible by Japan for her present situation there is also a possibility that Japan may attack those two powers. In view of these possibilities you will take due precautions including such preparatory deployments as will not disclose strategic intention nor constitute provocative action against Japan'." (R. 279)

On October 18, 1941, a radiogram was sent by the War Department to the Commanding General, Hawaii Department, reading as follows:

"Following War Department estimate of Japanese situation for your information. Tension between the United States and Japan remain strained but no abrupt change in Japanese foreign policy appears imminent." (R. 4258)

This message was dated October 18, 1941, according to the Gerow statement, Exhibit 63, but in the copy of communications produced by General Marshall, the same message was dated October 20, 1941, as #266.

On October 28, General Marshall wrote General Short as to details of the training of the air corps personnel.

On November 24 the Chief of Naval Operations sent the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, a message that Short thinks he saw, reading as follows:

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"There are very doubtful chances of a favorable outcome of negotiations with Japan. This situation, coupled with statements of Nippon Government and movements of their naval and military force is, in our opinion, that a *surprise aggressive movement in any direction*, including an attack on the Philippines or Guam *is a possibility*. The Chief of Staff has seen this dispatch and concurs and requests action. ... inform senior Army officers in respective areas utmost secrecy is necessary in order not to complicate the already tense situation or precipitate Japanese action." (R. 4258)

On November 26, 1941, the following secret cablegram was sent to the Commanding General, Hawaiian Department:

"It is desired following instructions be given pilots of two B-24s on special photo mission. Photograph Jaluit Island in the Caroline Group while simultaneously making visual reconnaissance. Information is desired as to location and number of guns, aircraft, airfields, barracks, camps, and naval vessels including submarines XXX before they depart Honolulu insure that both B-24s are fully supplied with ammunition for guns." (R. 4259)

On November 27 the Chief of Naval Operations sent to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, a message which was delivered by the liaison officer, Lieutenant Burr, to G-3 of General Short, which reads as follows:

"Consider this dispatch a war warning. The negotiations with Japan in an effort to stabilize conditions in the Pacific have ended. Japan is expected to make an aggressive move within the next few days. An amphibious expedition against either the Philippines, Thai, or Kra Peninsula or possibly Borneo is indicated by the number and equipment of Japanese troops and the organization of their naval task forces. You will execute a defensive deployment in preparation for carrying out the tasks assigned in WPL 46 only. Guam, Samoa and Continental Districts have been directed to take appropriate measures against sabotage. A similar warning is being sent by the War Department. Inform naval district and Army authorities. British to be informed by Spenavo." (R. 1775)

And on the same day the Chief of Staff sent the following radio to the Commanding General, Hawaiian Department:

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No. 472. "Negotiations with Japanese appear to be terminated to all practical purposes with only the barest possibilities that the Japanese Government might come back and offer to continue. Japanese future action unpredictable but hostile action possible at any moment. If hostilities cannot, repeat cannot, be avoided, the U.S. desires that Japan commit the first overt act. This policy should not, repeat not, be construed as restricting you to a course of action that might jeopardize your defense. Prior to hostile Japanese action, you are directed to undertake such reconnaissance and other measures as you deem necessary but these measures should be carried out so as not, repeat not, to alarm the civil population or disclose intent. Report measures taken. Should hostilities occur, you will carry out task assigned in Rainbow Five as far as they pertain to Japan. Limit dissemination of this highly secret information to minimum essential officers." (R. 280-281, 4259-4260) [1]

This completes the pattern of the communications and information that was in Short's possession when he made the fatal decision to elect the antisabotage Alert No. 1 and not select either Alert No. 2 or No. 3 which would have constituted the defense against the most serious attack that could be made upon him in view of the previous estimate of the situation and warnings he had received from all quarters of an air raid. [2]

On the same day, November 27, 1941, but *after his decision to select

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5. No reaction from the War Department to Short as to whether his report of November 27th as to "measures taken", i.e., a sabotage alert and liaison with the Navy, were satisfactory or inadequate in view of the information possessed by the War Department.

6. The following information not furnished also existed in the War Department:

Information from informers, agents and other sources as the activities of our potential enemy and its intentions in the negotiations between the United States and Japan was in possession of the State, War and Navy Departments in November and December of 1941. Such agencies had a reasonably complete knowledge of the Japanese plans and intentions, and were in a position to know their potential moves against the United States. Therefore, Washington was in possession of essential facts as to the enemy's intentions and proposals.

This information showed clearly that war was inevitable and late in November absolutely imminent. It clearly demonstrated the necessity for resorting to every trading act possible to defer the ultimate day of breach of relations to give the Army and Navy time to prepare for the eventualities of war.

The messages actually sent to Hawaii by the Army and Navy gave only a small fraction of this information. It would have been possible to have sent safely, information ample for the purpose of orienting the commanders in Hawaii, or positive directives for an all-out alert.

Under the circumstances, where information has a vital

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entire matter was left for further consideration.

On the following day, November 26, 1941, the Stimson diary continues:

"Hull told me over the telephone this morning that *he* had about made up *his* mind not to make the proposition that Knox and I passed on the other day (the 25th) to the Japanese, but to kick the whole thing over and tell them that he had no other proposal at all."

Apparently on the 26th in the morning, Mr. Hull had made up his mind not to go through with the proposals shown the day before to the Secretary of War containing the plan for the "Three Months' Truce".

Evidently the action "to kick the whole thing over" as accomplished by presenting to the Japanese the counter proposal of the "Ten Points" which they took as an ultimatum.

It was the document that touched the button that started the war, as Ambassador Grew so aptly expressed it.

Again Mr. Stimson's diary relates "The 26th was the day he (Hull) told me he was in doubt whether he would go on with it." (R. 4051-2-3)

Apparently the Secretary of War was not advised by the Secretary of State that he had handed this so-called ultimatum to the Japanese. The diary of the Secretary of War and his actions indicate that to be a fact.

Witness what it says as of the morning of the 27th of November 1941:

"The first thing in the morning, I called up Hull to find out what his final decision had been with the Japanese -- whether he had handed them the new proposal which we passed on two or three days ago or whether, as he suggested yesterday, he had broken the whole matter off. He told me now he had broken the whole matter off. As he put it, 'I have washed my hands of it, and it is now in the hands of you and Knox, the Army and Navy'."

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

I. EXPLANATIONS

As prelude to the citation of conclusions the following is pertinent:

1. SCOPE: Attention is called to the fact that the record developed by the investigation of this Board contains a great amount of evidence, both oral and documentary, relating to incidents and issues about which no conclusions are drawn. Evidence was introduced on these so that anything which might have had a bearing on the Pearl Harbor disaster would be fully explored. The Board considered that its mission implied the revealing of all pertinent facts to the end that charges of concealment would be fully met. In formulating its conclusions the Board has selected for treatment only those things which it considers material for a clear understanding of the events which collectively caused the Pearl Harbor disaster. The full report of the Board discusses and analyses the testimony in its entirety and must be read for a clear understanding of the history of the Pearl Harbor attack.

2. ESTIMATES UPON WHICH ACTION WAS BASED: The responsible officers in the War Department and in the Hawaiian Department, without exception, so far as this Board has been able to determine, estimated by facts which then seemed to impel the conclusion that initially the impending was would be confined to the land and seas lying south of the Japanese homeland, as forces of the Japanese Army and Navy were concentrating and

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moving in that direction. British and Dutch forces were being organized and made ready to move in opposition. The Philippine Islands which were in this theater constituted a threat to the flank of the Japanese force if the United States should enter the war. Supplies and reinforcements were being rushed to the Philippines. There was complete ignorance of the existence of the task force which attacked Pearl Harbor. Intelligent officers in high places made the estimate and reached the conclusions in the light of these known facts. They followed a sane line of reasoning. These statements are in explanation, not justification.

The estimate was in error. The procedure in arriving at it was faulty, because it emphasized Japanese probabilities to the exclusion of their capabilities. Nevertheless, the thinking of these officers was colored and dominated by this estimate and their acts were similarly influenced.

3. RELATIONSHIP OF COMMANDERS IN HAWAII: The relations between General Short and Admiral Kimmel and Admiral Bloch, the commanders of the Army and Navy forces in Hawaii, were very cordial. They were making earnest and honest efforts to implement the plans which would result in the two services operating as a unit in an emergency. These highly desirable ends had not been accomplished at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack.

4. INTERCHANGE OF INFORMATION -- STATE AND WAR DEPARTMENT: The Board was impressed with the apparent complete interchange of information between the State Department and the War Department. As a result the War Department was kept in close touch with international developments and the State Department knew of the Army's progress and its preparations for war.

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II. GROUPING OF CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions group themselves logically in two divisions: the Pearl Harbor attack, and operations of the Engineers in Hawaii. We shall consider these in the order stated.

1. PEARL HARBOR ATTACK:

a. The attack on the Territory of Hawaii was a surprise to all concerned: the nation, the War Department, and the Hawaiian Department. It was daring, well-conceived and well-executed, and it caught the defending forces practically unprepared to meet it or to minimize its destructiveness.

b. The extent of the Pearl Harbor disaster was due primarily to two causes:

1. The failure of the Commanding General of the Hawaiian Department adequately to alert his command for war, and

2. The failure of the War Department, with knowledge of the type of alert taken by the Commanding General, Hawaiian Department, to direct him to take an adequate alert, and the failure to keep him adequately informed as the developments of the United States-Japanese negotiations, which in turn might have caused him to change from the inadequate alert to an adequate one.

c. We turn now to responsibilities:

1. The Secretary of State -- the Honorable Cordell Hull. The action of the Secretary of State in delivering the counter-proposals of November 26, 1941, was used by the Japanese as the signal to begin the war by the attack

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on Pearl Harbor. To the extent that it hastened such attack it was in conflict with the efforts of the War and Navy Department to gain time for preparations for war. However, war with Japan was inevitable and imminent because of irreconcilable disagreements between the Japanese Empire and the American Government.

2. The Chief of Staff of the Army. General George C. Marshall, failed in his relations with the Hawaiian Department in the following particulars:

(a) To keep the Commanding General of the Hawaiian Department fully advised of the growing tenseness of the Japanese situation which indicated an increasing necessity for better preparation for war, of which information he had an abundance and Short had little.

(b) To send additional instructions to the Commanding General of the Hawaiian Department on November 28, 1941, when evidently he failed to realize the import of General Short's reply of November 27th, which indicated clearly that General Short had misunderstood and misconstrued the message of November 27 (472) and had not adequately alerted his command for war.

(c) To get to General Short on the evening of December 6th and the early morning of December 7th, the critical information indicating an almost immediate break with Japan, though there was ample time to have accomplished this.