

**War Plan**  
**ORANGE**

**EDWARD S. MILLER**

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disappointing commercial yields. One admiral on the Manila station in later years who advocated withdrawal from the Philippines could not imagine the United States fighting for a "farfetched" possibility of lucrative trade when it could not even shelter its home market from cheap Oriental goods.<sup>29</sup> The Jones Act, passed by Congress in 1916, promised the islanders eventual independence. Nevertheless, ardent Filipinists, notably Generals Leonard Wood and Douglas MacArthur, argued over the years for permanent military support. Wood, as governor-general of the islands in the 1920s, viewed America's interests in terms of morality, prestige, and eventual profits. He persuaded the Harding administration to redirect Plan Orange to the prime objective of foiling a Japanese conquest (Chapter 11). By then the vitality of the armed forces had become so enmeshed in their potential Pacific war missions that they abhorred a voluntary exit from the Philippines.

Joint Board reviews of 1924, 1931, and 1934 complained it would be "unfair" to lay down the "White Nations' burden." Withdrawal from the Orient would forfeit American influence and trade. The Open Door would slam shut. The Filipinos would borrow from wolfish bankers, then default and cede territory. Radicals of other "lesser developed races" would be spurred to expel their European masters. Japan would inherit most of the region. Soon it would grasp for the Philippines. The board, presuming a semiprotectorate obligation as with Cuba, felt the United States would have to return to help its former ward, by combat if necessary. Philippine independence, it warned, would thus increase the probability of war with Japan.

Some naval leaders lobbied for a continued American presence, specifically a fortified base and perpetual rights to use eight harbors. A Joint Planning Committee urged partition of the archipelago with the United States to keep the Sulu Archipelago and western Mindanao (where lay the best sites for an advanced fleet base) while the army retained a few posts and trained native troops. In 1933 Congress approved an independence bill with retention of military stations, but the Philippine legislature refused it. The following year the Tydings-McDuffie Act promised independence in 1946 without sovereign reservations. The war planners railed again about lost markets and influence and Japanese voracity that would compel U.S. protection "if for no other than sentimental reasons."<sup>30</sup>

A military presence was maintained in the Philippines throughout the commonwealth years so Orange planners never had to amend the supposition of 1911 as to what might spark a war. It was possible that the United States might have fought solely to defend European colonies

(as some plans of 1939–40 suggested), but the strategists never doubted that Japan, in its compulsion to evict it from Asia, would attack the Philippines. When the commander in chief of the Asiatic Fleet suggested in 1940 that Japan might bypass the archipelago while seizing British and Dutch colonies to the south, he was informed that U.S. war planners deemed an attack on the Philippines, and thus war, inevitable if Japan moved south.<sup>31</sup>

If the causes of war appeared ambiguous at times, the probable situation at the outbreak seemed clear. Japan could mobilize swiftly and secretly. It would choose to attack at an advantageous moment when it considered the United States unready and the U.S. Navy relatively weak. Mahan predicted it would strike unscrupulously without bothering to declare war, as it had done to the Russians at Port Arthur.<sup>32</sup> The planners usually assumed that U.S. politicians would not permit warlike deployments during a period of strained relations, especially not a provocative fleet movement toward the Far East.<sup>33</sup> They sometimes supposed a warning period ranging from two to forty days,<sup>34</sup> but for the most part they expected a sudden thunderbolt as the opening blow.

The American strategists' war objective, simply stated, was to win. They rarely reflected on the chance of a U.S. defeat. Only one circumstance, they reasoned, could bring about that dreadful result: destruction of the battle line early in the war. The fleet's home ports were in the Atlantic, and it would be safe enough at the outbreak. But if it were "expended" soon in the western Pacific, "that would end the war," according to 1907 critics of the Orange Plan,<sup>35</sup> because Japan would achieve strategic supremacy by occupying Hawaii and threatening to seize parts of the West Coast, then "demand peace on her own terms."<sup>36</sup> By 1914 gloomy speculations of defeat disappeared, although the planners remained aware that a naval disaster might forfeit the decision. By 1941, however, when Japan had acquired the means of destroying at a blow the half of the Blue navy that was in the Pacific, U.S. air defenses and Japan's logistical inability to dominate the eastern Pacific had negated any chance of "peace on her own terms" if the United States chose to fight on. Japan's hope of winning lay in enlisting an ally: time.

As the underdog in martial capacity, Orange would fare best in a short war concluded before Blue's power could be fully mobilized, yet its leaders had to anticipate a long war of attrition. Japan's basic military objective, U.S. planners surmised, would be to control the western Pacific as long as possible<sup>37</sup> while maintaining its economy