

# The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor

by John T. Flynn  
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***A NOTE FROM THE WEBMASTER:*** *We set Justin Raimondo to writing a short preface to this 1945 essay by John T. Flynn – after all, Justin devoted a whole chapter to Flynn in his 1993 book, [Reclaiming the American Right](#) – but he got carried away and handed in over 1200 words. So if you want to find out more about Flynn, his contribution to Pearl Harbor revisionism, and the significance of Flynn's work in relation to later revelations, [check out his column, here](#).*

**O**n Wednesday, August 29, 1945, President Truman gave out the reports of the Army and Navy Boards directed by Congress to investigate the responsibility for the great disaster of December 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor. These Boards had filed their reports nine months ago. Under the pretext that issuance of them would disclose important military secrets President Roosevelt suppressed them. But President Truman has not by any means given out the whole story. Portions of it are still suppressed. He says they will never be given out. And that is the simple truth. They will never be given out by this government until Congress compels the government to release all the information which it is hiding from the people and which it hopes to hide from history.

The [Roberts Report](#) – which was also doctored before being released – blamed [Admiral \[Husband\] Kimmel](#) and [General \[Walter\] Short](#) for the defeat. Now the two Army and Navy reports expand the guilt to cover General Marshall, Admiral Stark and former Secretary of State Hull. Marshall and Stark were the Army and Navy chiefs in December, 1941. All the top commanders have now been blamed, plus various lesser commanders. But the greatest commander of all is left out – the *Commander-in-Chief*. In the 150,000 words of these findings and comments the name of Franklin D. Roosevelt stands out in almost monumental conspicuousness by its absence. The Army and Navy chiefs, the former Secretary of State and Congress have been blamed and the President of the United States has added to the culprits the 130,000,000 people of the United States. The only person not blamed is Franklin D.

Roosevelt, who was running the whole show. However, in spite of all the suppressions, the story of Pearl Harbor is known. And here I propose to tell it. Put in plain terms the tragedy of Pearl Harbor was the dark fruit of three incredible blunders. First in importance was the manner in which the crisis was managed. The second blunder was the bottling of the fleet in Pearl Harbor. The third was the stripping of the defenses of Pearl Harbor. It was Roosevelt who personally managed the whole crisis. It was Roosevelt who bottled the fleet in Pearl Harbor. It was Roosevelt who stripped the base of its defenses. First then, let us look at the crisis as it developed in Washington. Let us see it now in the light of the facts which this government has hidden and which I will now reveal publicly for the first time.

We shall have to look at two battlefields. One was the Pacific, where Kimmel and Short brooded week after week over their deplorable condition, begging for more weapons, fighting against the inroads made on what they had and living almost completely in the dark as to what was happening in that vast, mysterious Pacific world in which they found themselves. We shall look upon that battlefield later.

## **THE JAPANESE MILITARISTS DECIDE ON WAR WITH THE UNITED STATES**

### **Roosevelt Maneuvers for a Crisis**

There was another battlefield. It was mostly in the private apartment of Secretary of State Hull to which the Japanese Ambassador Nomura paid many calls between April and December of 1941. Japan's ruthless policy of conquest had brought her into deep water. The United States, Britain and the Dutch East Indies had cut off all trade with her. Without the iron, oil, cotton, rubber and other critical materials from these sources she could not continue the war in China. The situation became desperate. One party – the militarists – was for seizing the Dutch East Indies which would solve the supply problem.

But that would mean war with England and – almost certainly – with the United States. The Counselor of the American Embassy in Tokyo had so informed the Japanese Foreign Office. Nevertheless the extremists were for the desperate try. "The other party – the moderates, led by the Japanese Premier Konoye – was for making the best terms possible with the United States and getting out of the China affair as best they could. Admiral Nomura was sent to the United States as

Ambassador to see what could be done. From April to the end he sat with Cordell Hull, a few times with the President. They argued endlessly. Then on November 16 he was joined by Ambassador Kurusu to assist in the delicate crisis.

There is no space here to follow these conferences. If you will read the official reports of them you will see that as the situation in Japan became more and more desperate, the existing government was willing to make more and more concessions. But the War Party became more and more pressing at home for war. It was a race between the Moderates to get an agreement in Washington and the War-Agitators to produce a crisis in Japan. You will see also that President Roosevelt was not going to make any agreement that the Japanese could accept. The talks got nowhere.

Then on October 14 the Moderates lost in Japan. The Warmongers won. The Konoye ministry fell and General Tojo became premier. The President knew that would happen and he knew there could be only one result – a Japanese attack on the Dutch Indies. But there was also the possibility – even probability – that Japan would attempt to deal with England first – would try to reduce Singapore and perhaps attack us in the Philippines. He knew, as he steadfastly refused to hasten the negotiations, that he was producing a situation that could end only with an attack by Japan. Why did he want Japan to attack?

By skillful maneuvers and impossible promises he had brought the country far toward war. From benevolent neutrality, selling to the Allies for cash, he had moved to "Aid-short-of-war"; then to the "Aid-at-the-risk-of-war" frame of mind. By October the once "Aid-short-of-war" group was publishing full-page ads demanding an immediate declaration of war. Senator [Claude] Pepper, a White House spokesman, said the President had drawn a line and that when Japan moved over it he would start shooting. The President was ready for the final act – the act of open war. Two influences restrained him. His generals and admirals told him we were not ready. Most important was the promise he had made to the American people – solemnly given and repeated – not to send their sons into foreign war unless attacked. He did not mind violating that pledge. He merely feared the political effect of the violation. [\[Joseph Alsop\]](#) and [\[Robert\] Kintner](#), White House columnist pets, had written a short time before that "He (Roosevelt) does not feel he can openly violate them (his pledges). But he can get around them the smart way." They explained this meant getting the Germans to shoot first. Then he could shoot back. But it was

now clear to him that the Germans, were not going to shoot first. Now, however, the Japanese were about to do so. If they could be provoked to attack, his problem would, be solved. He would then be in the war safely – not only against Japan but 'all the way,' as he triumphantly announced in his speech to Congress after the attack.

In Japan the war makers were in a desperate hurry. In the United States, Roosevelt, for some reason, became impatient of delay. So much so that he actually considered sometime before November 14 an invasion of China which would have put us at war with Japan. He proposed it to the Army and Navy staffs. They dissuaded him because we were not ready. So he waited a little longer – babying the Japanese along, but making it plain that they would get no agreement, save by abject surrender, terms he knew no Japanese government would dare accept. He did not have long to wait. By November 14 the sands were running fast, as [U.S. ambassador to Japan Joseph C.] Grew had warned. Something had happened which put the play irrevocably in Roosevelt's hands. This is the event or series of events which have remained locked up in the keeping of the very inner Circle of the White House. When you read of these you will know why the White House has concealed the truth from the world.

## **THE BREAKING OF THE JAPANESE CODE SEALS THEIR DOOM**

### **A Gift from the Gods**

The hour of Fate had arrived in Tokyo. But the bedeviled ministers seemed terrified at the appalling folly they were being driven to commit by the violent opinion-makers of Japan. The Japanese High Command began to move their war machine into position. Their plans were made. They had to have the great Dutch islands. That meant they had to paralyze Britain. But that in turn meant they must, if possible, strike a crushing blow at the United States before she could throw her weight into the struggle. The blow was obvious. This country's naval strength – all the battleships which were the core of her Pacific sea power – were tied up at Pearl Harbor. Some madman had done that surely, they must have thought. But there were the great ships like ducks on a pond waiting for the hunter. Everything depended on the United States leaving the rich target there for the Japanese hunters. It was a giant gamble. But a safe one, as we will see, because in the White House sat a

President who was satisfied that he knew it all. He had a plan too. And he had made sure, as we shall see, that those battleships and their auxiliary ships would remain quite still and immobilized in the great shooting gallery. But while the Japanese prepared for this gamble, frightened at the peril of waking the still awkward and stupidly led giant America into action they sent the astute Kurusu to Washington to join Nomura in a last effort to get a settlement. Kurusu arrived in Washington on November 16. But by that time the die was cast.

A gift from the gods had been put into Roosevelt's hands. The British government had broken one Japanese code. It proceeded to hand over to the State Department the messages between Tokyo and various foreign representatives which it intercepted. Roosevelt now could know what the Japanese were saying among themselves. November 4, Roosevelt knew the Japanese government would yield no more as he had an intercepted dispatch from Tokyo saying: "International situation makes any further compromise in this matter impossible." On November 5 an intercepted Tokyo dispatch to Washington said: "Signing of any U.S.-Japanese agreement must be completed by November 25." And the Ambassadors were urged by the government to "save Japanese-U.S. relations from chaos." November 6 another intercepted dispatch notified Nomura that Kurusu was coming and that this was the "Last hope of the negotiations." Therefore on November 6, Roosevelt knew that the Japanese were playing their last card; that they would make no further concession and he knew also the very date they had set for action – November 25.

Kurusu seemed to realize quickly enough that he was bucking his head against a stone wall. Troubled by the onrushing deadline he must have appealed to Tokyo for more time. Nomura also appealed to the Japanese government. He said in an intercepted dispatch that he "doubted the wisdom of aggressive action." Then on November 22 came a dispatch intercepted by the British saying the deadline had been changed to November 29. But it added: "This time we mean business. Deadline absolutely cannot be changed. After that things will automatically begin to happen." What was going to happen? All this information was in the hands of Hull and Roosevelt. Nothing that could happen could surprise them – save undoubtedly the point of the first assault.

## **Roosevelt Turns the Screw**

After being dissuaded from the Chinese invasion project, and seeing the posture of affairs in Japan, the President decided to bring matters to a head. He did not know where the Japanese would launch their attack. It might be on Singapore or some Dutch or British island. In that case he had committed himself – though no one knew it – to join the British in the war on Japan. But that was not an ideal arrangement. His opponents could still insist the United States was not attacked. He was apprehensive about the political implications. He had just won a battle to junk the Neutrality Act. But it was a tremendous battle and he won by a very narrow majority. The enemies of a war declaration were powerful. What was needed was an outright attack on an American possession. Roosevelt decided, therefore, to issue an ultimatum to the Japanese of such a character that America could not possibly be excluded from the coming assault. He had been discussing it since mid-November.

Then on November 26, Secretary Hull did issue an ultimatum to the Japanese. Now he denies it was an ultimatum. But he cannot escape this charge. Nor can the President escape the fact that when it was proposed, General [George C.] Marshall and [Admiral \[Harold R.\] Stark](#) said: "For God's sake, don't send it. We are not ready." Here is what happened. November 25, Knox, Stimson, Hull, Marshall and Stark met and went to the President's office. Hull showed a plan for a three-months' truce to be given the Japanese. Stimson said he thought it was so drastic the Japanese would reject it. But apparently the group approved it. Hull said he didn't know whether he would offer it "or kick the whole thing over." The next day Hull handed to the Japanese a very different plan – the ten-point plan. It demanded that the Japanese (1) get out of China, (2) get out of Indo-China and (3) repudiate their treaty with the Axis. The Japanese rightly took this as an ultimatum. And Hull too so regarded it then. On that day – November 26 – Stimson telephoned Hull. Stimson wrote in his diary: "He (Hull) told me he had broken the whole thing off. As he put it: 'I have washed my hands of it and it is in the hands of you and Knox, the Army and Navy.'" The next day he told the British Ambassador the same thing. General Marshall and Admiral Stark prepared a joint memorandum to the President urging him not to send an ultimatum because we were not prepared. An attempt is made to get rid of this fact by saying it did not reach the President until the 28th, after he had confirmed the ultimatum to the Japanese Ambassador. The Administration sponsors are asking you to believe that the President, who was supposed to know so much, didn't know this fact – that Marshall and Stark knew it

but had never told him before. Of course they had warned him when he talked about an invasion of China around November 14. They met with him constantly. The lack of readiness was widely known. Are we supposed to believe that the irreplaceable Commander-in-chief alone was ignorant of this fact? When Hull handed that ultimatum to the Japanese he and Roosevelt knew it was all over. They sat down then and waited for "things to happen."

### **The Fog at Pearl Harbor**

What of our two Commanders at Pearl Harbor, inadequately prepared, and in the dark? It is important to remember that Pearl Harbor was 3,500 miles from the points at which the Japanese were preparing their blow. The reconnaissance of the government on these preparations was not in the hands of Short or Kimmel. Other agencies were responsible for that. These agencies reported to Washington. Kimmel and Short had to depend on Washington entirely for their information about the international negotiations and the physical preparation of the Japanese for an attack.

They were not getting information. Here is an example. As far back as July 26, Kimmel wrote Stark asking to be informed of the plans of the government if the Japanese attack the Maritime Provinces and England declares war on her. July 31, Stark wrote another naval officer making an amazing confession. He – Chief of Naval Operations, charged with the plans for eventual war – wrote that he could not get an answer to Kimmel's question, that when he advances it to Roosevelt all he gets is a "smile or 'Betty, please don't ask me that.'" As late as October, Kimmel has not yet been able to get an answer to his question. There is no answer until November 14, when the fuse is already lighted. Then Admiral Stark wrote him saying: "Just what we will do in the Far East *remains to be seen.*" He was never informed what the U. S. would do in case of war between Japan and Britain in the Pacific. On November 25, after Stark knew an ultimatum would be sent, that the war was only a few days off, he notified Kimmel that the possibility Kimmel had been worrying about was now about to happen, that the Japanese were about to advance in Indochina, Thailand and the Burma Road most likely. But as to what we will do, he writes a sentence almost beyond belief, unparalleled in the annals of grand strategy: "*I will be damned if I know what the United States will do – anything or nothing.*"

The President knew without delay the Japanese reaction to his ultimatum. On November 28 a coded Japanese message intercepted by the British said that "negotiations are ruptured," that the United States proposals are humiliating but that Nomura and Kurusu are not to give the impression that negotiations are off. On November 30, an intercepted code message from Tokyo to the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin directs him to notify the German government that U.S.-Japanese relations are ruptured and that war may come quicker than anyone dreams with the Anglo-Saxon powers. And the following day a British intelligence report came that the Japanese carriers had left the home waters.

What were Kimmel and Short told about all this? Literally nothing. Marshall was not in Washington, he left on the 27th to watch army maneuvers in North Carolina. Stimson, acting as Chief of Staff, sent Short a brief message. He called it a war warning. He said negotiations with Japan had ended – thus adopting the interpretation of Hull's note as an ultimatum which would be rejected. But he did not say we had given Japan an ultimatum. He said an aggressive move was expected in a few days. He warned "the United States desires Japan to commit the first overt act." He said: "Prior to hostile 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 to alarm the civil population or disclose intent. Report measures taken." The whole message was cryptic and inadequate. But this was the fault of Stimson, not Marshall. Next day, Short, who was told to report what he was doing, sent a long message describing in detail the measures he had taken. The Army-Navy plan for defense of Hawaii called for three different types of action – called Alerts. Alert No. 1 was preparation against internal sabotage. Alert No. 2 was mobilization against external attack. Alert No. 3 was a signal for battle positions, when attack begins. Short put into effect Alert No. 1 – against sabotage and internal disorder. He had been warned several times about this. He had been warned that all Japanese movements indicated an attack thousands of miles from Pearl Harbor. During the next ten days, though he reported his course, he received no word from Washington ordering a different one.

Why the alert against sabotage, instead of against external air or submarine attack? The reader must have this very clearly in mind. Hawaii had 160,000 Japanese living there. It swarmed with Japanese spies. While the General Staff felt certain the attack would come at least 3,000 miles from Hawaii, they were



profoundly frightened lest an internal movement of suicidal Japanese patriots would destroy planes and essential installations, crippling the base. Protection against sabotage called for a very different arrangement than from external attack. Short, and all his officers, were certain that is what the High Command indicated and he felt they knew more of the whole Pacific situation than he did. Kimmel, too, was warned not to do anything that would excite the civil population. Whatever he did must be done secretly. Both were warned not even to let their own officers in on these facts save where essential. And they were told "hostilities would begin soon" – but against the Kra Peninsula, Guam, Singapore, Malay.

What was Kimmel doing? It is forgotten that Kimmel's fleet was not there to protect Pearl Harbor. The Harbor was there merely as a fuel and supply base for it. That fleet had a task assigned to it in case of war. The protection of the base would be the duty of the army and the base naval installations. We do not know what the task assigned to Kimmel was. But it is certain that had the Japanese overlooked Pearl Harbor and struck at the Philippines or Singapore alone, Kimmel and his fleet would have been off to sea instantly. Kimmel was preparing for the war task assigned to him, not merely for the protection of Pearl Harbor. We must also bear in mind that after November 27, General Short never received another message giving him any information about the international situation, That is difficult to believe, but it is true. And, we must ask, why was Short told to alert against sabotage while MacArthur in the Philippines was told to alert all out against instant attack?

Roosevelt, the Commander-in-chief, who was now assured of the attack which would bring him safely into the war, went off to Warm Springs to enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday.

### **The Night Before Pearl Harbor**

We now come to the night before Pearl Harbor in Washington. The President had returned from Warm Springs because of the crisis. The Japanese envoys had held during the week several meaningless sessions with the State Department. But the formal answer of the Japanese government to the ultimatum had not come. Yet Roosevelt knew what it would be. The stage is all set for the attack on British or, better still, British and American territory in the Pacific. The scenery is beautifully arranged.

The President is widely advertised as seeking peace. That night at nine o'clock he sends a dramatic message to Hirohito

appealing for peace. He knows this to be as futile as the breeze around the White House grounds. The Japanese navy is putting to sea; Japanese troops are pouring southward. The intercepted codes, of which the public knows nothing, have told the full story.

Luck now played again into Roosevelt's hands. Our Army Intelligence Service broke the Japanese code and learned what they were saying among themselves. On that fateful battle eve it got possession of a document of extraordinary importance. You will recall that the next day – Sunday – the Japanese asked for an appointment at 1 P.M. with Hull. They arrived a little late – when the bombs were falling on Hawaii – and presented a note breaking off relations with us. The incident has been presented to us in shockingly false colors. We were told how the President was in his study on Sunday for a day of rest, confident nothing would happen after his appeal the night before to Hirohito not to precipitate war. He was chatting with Harry Hopkins and fiddling with his stamp collection, while Mrs. Roosevelt entertained in another quarter one of her innumerable groups of uplifters. Then – all of a sudden – out of a clear sky, came news of the attack on Pearl Harbor. It's a good picture, but utterly fraudulent. That is not the way things happened. The preceding night – Saturday – the government had got hold of the text of that very document which the Japanese would present the next day. It went to Mr. Roosevelt at 10 P.M. Hull, Knox and Stimson had it. They knew now what was to happen. Hull telephoned Knox and Stimson to meet him next morning for a conference at 10.

Consider the situation that night. The President and his three aged and slow-moving cabinet members knew everything – all save the hour and point of attack. Far out in the Pacific the blow would fail. What, in the name of simple common sense, would men of ordinary intelligence do? They knew at that very moment the Japanese ships and planes and subs and troops, under cover of darkness, were moving to their appointed targets. They knew that out in that vast Pacific were two commanders, wretchedly equipped, depending solely on them for information. Would you not suppose the very first act would be to notify General Marshall and Admiral Stark and then, instantly, Admiral Kimmel and General Short? Would you not think that if Marshall and Stark were not in their offices, they were to be hunted through the town, roused from their slumbers to give them this tremendous news? No. The old gentlemen called a conference among themselves for the next day and went home for the slumbers so essential in their

advanced years. The President had the news at 10 P.M. He, too, did nothing. Worse than this, a naval aide was told not to give Admiral Stark his copy of the Japanese note until next morning. Why? I think Congress ought to ask for some explanation of this.

### **December the Seventh, 1941**

The next morning – Sunday – Admiral Stark, because of the tense situation, went to his office. There he found the now completed copy of the Japanese note. "My God!" he cried, "This means war. I must get word to Kimmel at once." For some reason that word did not go out at all. Another Japanese code message arrived and was decoded. By 8:20 A.M. the text was in hand. It gave the hour at which the envoys were to present their note to Secretary Hull. The hour was 1 P.M. Washington time. Just as it was decoded another message was intercepted. It advised the twelve Japanese consuls in the United States that Japan was breaking with this country. All were hurried to Knox, Stimson and the President. They were in the hands of Hull's conference at 11 A.M. The bombs would not fall on Pearl Harbor for another two and three-quarters hours.

Lieut. Com. Kramer gave a memorandum to Secretary Knox of transcendent importance. The memorandum pointed out that 1 P.M. Washington time was sunrise over Honolulu and dark night at Manila. Sunrise would be the moment for air attack. As a surprise attack was indicated, the hour of presenting the dispatch indicated an air attack on Pearl Harbor. In other words, we feared an air attack on Pearl Harbor in a little over two hours.

Can we believe that, thus warned, the High Command in Washington, on the edge of such a precipice, would not with whatever speed science had yet devised get this tremendous news and its implication to the Commanders in Hawaii? Instead the three aging secretaries sat down to a conference. General Marshall did not get the news until 11:25 A.M. He then sent a warning message to General Short. There was yet an hour and three-quarters before the explosion. The most precious hour and three-quarters the War Department had ever lived through. Time to get many of the ships in motion. Time to get every available man mobilized. Time to get every available plane off the ground. General Marshall had a scrambler phone which would reach Short instantly. He had also the Navy's powerful shortwave transmitter. Instead of using these he sent the message to General Short by commercial radio at or near 12:18

P.M., Washington time. That would be 6:48 A.M. Honolulu time. It reached Honolulu at 7:33 A.M. The Japanese planes were at that moment winging to their kill. The message was sent through the streets as the bombs were falling. Thus delayed it reached Army Intelligence office at 11:45 A.M. to be decoded. It was delivered to General Short at 2:58 P.M., hours after the great base had been destroyed. Why did not General Marshall use the government's short-wave apparatus? Why did he not use his scrambler phone which would have put this information in the hands of General Short from two and a half to an hour and a half before the attack? His explanation to the Roberts Commission was that he was afraid it might be intercepted, What would have been the difference? If intercepted the Japanese would merely know what they knew already. But Short would have known it also.

## **THE PLOT TO RUIN THE COMMANDERS**

While the American public was still stunned by the news of the Pearl Harbor attack, three ideas were promptly fed to the people by the government. One was that the damage was slight. The second was that Kimmel and Short were responsible. The third was that the President was taken completely by surprise. Naval Secretary Knox, after a quick visit to Hawaii, returned and told us we had lost one battleship, the *Arizona*, three destroyers, a mine layer and an old target ship. Some others were damaged. But the balance of the fleet, he said, including battleships, carriers, heavy and light cruisers, destroyers and submarines were at sea seeking contact with the enemy, Newspapers praised his frankness and the President for making good on his promise of "full information." But this statement was a carefully phrased falsehood. The Secretary juggled with the word "lost." Few ships, indeed, were permanently lost beyond ultimate salvage. But they were lost utterly so far as having any striking power against the enemy was concerned.

The majestic Pacific Fleet had been put out of action as an effective sea weapon. We had eight battleships in Pearl Harbor. The *Arizona* was blown up. The *Nevada*, with a hole in her side, was settled in the mud. The *California* lay on her side. The *West Virginia*, torpedoed six times, rested on the bottom. The *Pennsylvania* and *Maryland* were badly bombed. The *Oklahoma* sank on her side in the shallow water. Three cruisers were badly bombed. Three destroyers were sunk. A large drydock was destroyed. The *Utah* and the *Ogalala* were

sunk. The Army and Navy had had nearly 5000 casualties. They lost 197 planes. In time nearly all of these vessels were reclaimed. A few were out in a month. But generally the damage had not been repaired until the Japanese had completed the conquest of the Philippines, Malay and Singapore and much of the rich Indies of the British and Dutch and stood at the gateway to Australia, Why had Knox lied? To deceive the Japanese? Hide from them the extent of our losses? The Japanese knew them only too well He lied to deceive the American people who had been led to believe the Japanese would be a pushover and who, had they known the full extent of the losses, would have been more clamorous for the heads of the guilty.

### **The Attack on Kimmel and Short**

Not only was it necessary to conceal the losses. It was necessary to find a scapegoat. Somebody had committed a blunder of historic dimensions. Was it the commanders? Or was it the High Command in Washington? Or was it an even more eminent personage? Of course there had to be an investigation. It was important, therefore, that the investigation be controlled. Congress was clamoring for a congressional inquiry. The Administration blocked that. The President and Knox, along with the Commanders were, pending inquiry, equally suspect. But the President named Knox to do the investigating. Meantime the mud began to fly at Kimmel and Short. Congressman Dingell, New Deal stalwart, let fly in the House. Knowing nothing of the facts he demanded that Kimmel and Short be court-martialed. New Deal newspapers took up the cry. Stories were told of how most of the sailors and marines were ashore after a Saturday night drunk, how all the officers even, were sleeping off the fatigue of late Saturday night parties, how Short and Kimmel themselves were at late parties and of how the two commanders, divided by professional jealousies, seldom spoke to each other and conferred but little about the defense of the island.

In five days Knox was back with the inevitable "report." Of course Knox pointed no accusing finger either at himself or the President. He said: "The United States services were not on alert against the surprise attack. The fact calls for a full investigation which will be initiated immediately by the president." An indignant outcry broke out against the smeared officers in Congress. Then came the "investigation." The President named a five-man commission. Four were officers who could be depended on not to blame the War and Naval

Secretaries or the President. But Justice Roberts was a Republican. This was a master stroke. What the public overlooked was that Roberts had been one of the most clamorous among those screaming for an open declaration of war. He had doffed his robes, taken to the platform in his frantic apprehensions and demanded that we immediately unite with Great Britain in a single nation. The Pearl Harbor incident had given him what he had been yelling for – America's entrance into the war. On the war issue he was one of the President's most impressive allies. Now he had his wish. He could be depended on not to cast any stain upon it in its infancy.

His commission went to Pearl Harbor and investigated. But it was specifically enjoined from investigating the other segments of the story in Washington. Certain essential documents were deliberately concealed from it. It came up with the expected indictment – putting the blame on Kimmel and Short and calling for their court-martial. That fixed the black spot on the Commanders. They were relieved of their posts. They were forbidden to make any statement or enter into any discussion of their innocence. And it was then announced there would be no court-martial. The black spot was fastened on the two helpless victims to stay. The White House took over the management of the whole affair. Army and Naval officials, when asked for statements, said: "The White House is doing the talking." And it did none. It wanted to forget the case. It said: "Let's get on with the war."

From time to time voices rose in Congress to ask some degree of justice for the accused men. Finally Congress, by resolution, ordered the Army and Navy to make formal inquiry of the indicted officers. Boards were named in each Service and the inquiries were made. The Boards reported to their Army and Navy Secretaries in November, 1944. The reports were suppressed by the President on the pretense that military safety required it. Now nine months later President Truman, without knowing enough of the whole intrigue, has given out the reports when it is realized that an angry Congress is about to demand them. The reports have been subjected to alterations and deletions. Kimmel and Short are again smeared and with them Hull, Marshall and Stark. The reports still withhold the gravest facts – those revealed here. And Kimmel and Short, thus dishonored, are still denied a court martial and even a chance to speak up in their defense.

## **The Surprise Attack**

The next bead in the bracelet of defense of the Administration has been that the Army and Navy and the President himself were taken completely by surprise. While they look upon this as a defense for themselves, they apparently do not think it a defense for Kimmel and Short. The theory, endlessly repeated by radio and press, is that we were at peace, that we were actually negotiating for a peaceful settlement and that the President was waiting in complete security for the Japanese answer to his last proposal for peace when, out of a clear sky, the bombs began to fall on Pearl Harbor.

Here is the government's whole case. Our government, while trying to induce Japan to enter upon a peaceful settlement, was taken by carefully studied surprise. But, notwithstanding the surprise, that Government had adequately warned Kimmel and Short of the attack which it did not expect; the Admiral and General did not put their commands on the alert required, and as a consequence the great naval base was exposed to the full fury of the Japanese treachery.

## **THE FICTION OF PEACE BEFORE PEARL HARBOR**

There is a story of profound importance yet to be told about the state of peace so far as America was concerned before Pearl Harbor. Certainly we had not declared war. But we had sent an army across the sea to Iceland to join the British army there; we had been sending arms, ammunition and destroyers and planes as a gift to Britain and France and China. We had been with our warships hunting down German submarines for British planes and even bombing them. On November 25, W. Averill Harriman, the President's agent in London, said: "The United States Navy is shooting the Germans – German submarines and aircraft at sea." And on September 20, 1941, a dispatch from Hyde Park reported that "More than half of the United States Navy is forced to remain in the Pacific at a time when the United States is operating against German and Italian submarines and air raiders in the Atlantic." In the Pacific we had cut off all shipments and trade of essential materials with Japan and frozen and seized here \$130,000,000 of her funds, which Walter Lippmann called "a declaration of economic warfare." We had sent an American military mission to China and an American economic adviser to Chiang Kai-shek. We had sent General Chennault with a large number of American army fliers to China to fight with Chiang's army. At the Atlantic Charter meeting, Churchill had urged Roosevelt to send an

ultimatum to Japan at once. He replied saying: "Let me baby her along for another three months."

Mr. Grew, our Ambassador to Tokyo, had advised Roosevelt in December, 1940, that the hope of peace had vanished in the East and that it was no longer a question of whether we would have war with Japan but *when*. The United States must decide whether it should be later or now. And he, Grew, was for *now*. To this, on January 21, 1941, Roosevelt replied that he completely agreed with Mr. Grew. And a few weeks later Admiral Stark notified Admiral Kimmel that "war with Japan is no longer a question of whether but of when."

There is no room here to discuss these interesting features of what is now a section of history. I do not wish to enter into any consideration here of whether the warlike acts of the President listed above were wise or not. Certainly he was supported in them by large and important groups. I recall them now merely to supply certain features of the international scenery in which the events I am describing took place.

## **THE BATTLEFIELD AND WHAT AMERICA HAD ON IT**

### **The Actors in the Drama**

The Commander of all our military forces was General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff. The Commander of the Navy was Admiral Harold R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations. Both, of course, were subject to the President who had by now got into the habit of referring to himself as the Commander-in-chief. This was not a mere peccadillo. He was already performing directly that function, issuing orders to Stark which the Secretary of the Navy knew nothing of and issuing orders to Marshall without consulting the Secretary of War. His intrusions into operations of the Navy were more frequent because, while Roosevelt had, under the influence of flatterers who surrounded him, come to think of himself as a master of diplomacy, an expert in political economy, an adept in political manipulation, a wizard in public finance, a profound student of foreign affairs and a military strategist of large dimensions, he regarded himself as little less than a genius in naval organization and direction. This obsession led to the habit of secrecy to avoid the annoyance of hostile advice upon projects he wished to manage.



Thus in June, when he directed the transfer of naval vessels from the Pacific to the Atlantic, the Secretary of the Navy heard about it first from the Secretary of War. Later, when Hull was asked what had happened to the proposals submitted by the Japanese Premier directly to the President, he said: "I am wondering myself." We have seen that the Chief of Naval Operations could not find out what our plans for the Pacific war were and an American Admiral first learned of certain plans of our government in his theater from a British admiral. We have seen this headstrong man, surrounded by subservient and obsequious courtiers like Harry Hopkins, Henry Wallace, Sam Rosenman and others, playing secretly the devious game of diplomacy with the Japanese and running, often behind the backs of his admirals and generals, segments of a rapidly developing war in two vast oceans.

The point upon which all the forces we have been examining were converging was the small island of Oahu and, in particular, its great naval base near Honolulu – Pearl Harbor. It was supposed to be one of the strongest in the world. The commander of the military establishment in Hawaii was General Walter C. Short. The Pacific Fleet was based at Pearl Harbor and it was under the command of Admiral Husband E. Kimmel. Responsibility for the defense of the island was in the hands of General Short. Admiral Kimmel was expected to give whatever assistance was required from the Navy. But Admiral Kimmel's area of operations extended over the whole Pacific. Further to the West was the Asiatic Fleet based in the Philippines and under the command of Admiral Thomas C. Hart.

### **Why Was the Fleet in Pearl Harbor?**

Here we must note a fact of great importance. The Pacific Fleet had always been based on our West Coast. Pearl Harbor was a supply and repair base of operations in the mid-Pacific. It was Roosevelt who forced the change of bringing the Fleet into Pearl Harbor. In 1940, Admiral Richardson was made Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet. He was one of the Navy's foremost figures. Since his earliest days, after leaving Annapolis, he had made the study of Japanese warfare his life work. He was beyond question the Navy's outstanding authority upon Pacific naval warfare and Japanese strategy.

He was the logical man for the post. As the war clouds darkened over the Pacific he was in the spot for which his whole professional life had been a training. Richardson was ordered to

berth the Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor. This he refused to do – an act no one but a very distinguished officer could risk. He was ordered a second time and again refused. It was Richardson's belief – and indeed generally supported by the Navy – that the Fleet should never be berthed inside Pearl Harbor where it would be a mark for attack. This was particularly true in such troubled times when the airways of the East were hot with rumors of approaching conflict. What is more, Richardson held the belief that Pearl Harbor was the logical first point of attack for the Japanese High Command, wedded as it was to the theory of undeclared and surprise warfare.

But Richardson was overruled by Roosevelt, the amateur admiral. Whether Richardson was relieved of his command or resigned in protest I do not know. Certainly he departed from it. At this point, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel was placed in command. What his views were on the berthing of the Fleet in Pearl Harbor I do not know. But in time he came to look upon the Harbor as extremely vulnerable. He arrived at the conclusion that the Fleet should not be held in Pearl Harbor, that it was a mistake to keep it there for political rather than naval reasons and that the longer it was kept there for political reasons the more difficult it would be to withdraw it without creating further international political repercussions. His advice on this was disregarded, as was Richardson's. He soon learned that neither he nor the Navy Command was running the United States Navy. This was another terrible blunder responsible for the tragedy at Pearl Harbor.

In November, 1941, just before the battle, the United States had in its Navy 216 major surface combat ships. The Pacific had always been the home of the greater portion of these vessels. But as the menace grew in Asia where the President looked upon war as certain, he began transferring war vessels to the Atlantic.

### **Our Battle Strength in Pearl Harbor**

By June there were 114 major surface combat vessels in the Atlantic and only 102 in the Pacific. Moreover by this time the President had given away 50 destroyers to the British and these were desperately needed by Kimmel as the crisis neared. While some of our pulp-paper generals and statesmen were telling the people that Japan was a pushover, the United States, Britain and the Dutch combined had in the Pacific 152 major combat vessels against Japan's 180 – perhaps more. The advantage of surprise lay with her and the battlefield was thousands of miles

closer to her shores than to ours. I should add that nearly 40 of the vessels we had were laid up for repairs. Much of the trained personnel had been taken away for service in the Atlantic, leaving the Pacific Fleet manned heavily by raw recruits. These required constant training: Admiral Kimmel wrote to the Navy begging to be kept informed of the international situation so that he could know when to convert from training to service routines.

Despite all this, while the President was ordering Kimmel to "keep ships popping up here and there to worry the Japanese" and Stark was instructing him to make plans for bombing inflammable targets in Japan, the President in May transferred from the Pacific to the Atlantic three battleships, six cruisers, 18 destroyers, six transports with all the trained marines on the West Coast. The commanders in the Pacific protested without avail. Then in June the President ordered the transfer of three more battleships, four more cruisers, and two squadrons of destroyers to the Atlantic. The naval defenses of the Pacific were being stripped by the President. Stark protested in vain. Then Kimmel went directly to the President and succeeded in dissuading him from this last raid upon his Fleet.

By this time the President's chief adviser on such matters – where he wanted advice – was Harry Hopkins, whose carefully taken policy was always to please the President. On one occasion a distinguished admiral had to go to Mr. Hopkins' bedroom where Hopkins, reclining in his pajamas, gave him a curt "no" to his appeal not to take away any further vessels from his area. Next Admiral King demanded the transfer of more ships from the Pacific to his Atlantic command. Knox was agreeable. It was prevented by Stark's resistance.

The islands' inadequacy in planes was deplorable. The Navy was responsible for long-distance reconnaissance. This meant observations 800 miles all around from Oahu. To do this properly Kimmel would need not less than 180 patrol planes. Kimmel had only 80 or 90 long-distance patrol planes. He had a couple of squadrons of marine planes. He had two carriers – a third was up for repairs. The Army was much worse off. If the Navy were called away the Army would have to take over long-distance reconnaissance. It should have had 180 B-17s for long-distance patrol. It had six. It had had 12 but was forced to dismantle six to keep the other six supplied with parts for flying. It should have had at least 200 fighter planes. It had few old P-36's not suitable for combat, ten A-20's good for 600 miles

flight (300 miles out and back) and a bunch of old B-18's which could not be used against an enemy without inviting suicide.

Less than ten days before Pearl Harbor, the Army and Navy proposed to ship 50 planes from Hawaii to Wake and Midway and a similar movement of Marines and Army personnel. It would have depleted the Army's already pitiful fighter strength by 40 per cent. General Short continually begged for more planes, more men, more detection equipment. Instead of getting reinforcement in the imminent peril of war, the two men had to fight continually to hold what they had. Kimmel too had protested frequently. He advised against "backing into war. If we have decided on war it would be better to take direct defensive action."

The stripping of the naval and airplane and military defenses of Hawaii – particularly of the naval defenses – was another great cause of the disaster at Pearl Harbor. And this was done by the amateur Commander-in-chief over the advice and protests of his military and naval advisers and of Admiral Kimmel and General Short.

This pathetic tragedy of blunders may be summed up as follows:

1. By January 1, 1941, Roosevelt had decided to go to war with Japan.
2. But he had solemnly pledged the people he would not take their sons to foreign wars unless attacked. Hence he dared not attack and so decided to provoke the Japanese to do so.
3. He kept all this a secret from the Army and Navy.
4. He felt the moment to provoke the attack had come by November. He ended negotiations abruptly November 26 by handing the Japanese an ultimatum which he knew they dared not comply with.
5. Immediately he knew his ruse would succeed, that the Japanese looked upon relations as ended and were preparing for the assault. He knew this from the intercepted messages.
6. He was certain the attack would be against British territory, at Singapore perhaps, and perhaps on the Philippines or Guam. If on the Philippines or Guam he would have his desired attack. But if only British territory were attacked could he safely start shooting? He decided he could and committed himself to the British government. But he never revealed this to his naval chief.

7. He did not order Short to change his alert and he did not order Kimmel to take his fleet out of Pearl Harbor, out where it could defend itself, because he wanted to create the appearance of being completely at peace and surprised when the Japs started shooting. Hence he ordered Kimmel and Short not to do anything to cause alarm or suspicion. He was completely sure the Japanese would not strike at Pearl Harbor.
8. Thus he completely miscalculated. He disregarded the advice of men who always held that Pearl Harbor would be first attacked. He disregarded the warning implicit in the hour chosen for attack and called to Knox's attention. He disregarded the advice of his chiefs that we were unprepared.
9. When the attack came he was appalled and frightened. He dared not give the facts to the country. To save himself he maneuvered to lay the blame upon Kimmel and Short. To prevent them from proving their innocence he refused them a trial. When the case was investigated by two naval and army boards, he suppressed the reports. He threatened prosecution to any man who would tell the truth.

Now, if there is a shred of decency left in the American people they will demand that Congress open the whole ugly business to the light of day.