

# MEMORANDUM

March 10, 1986

From: Frank A. Schuler, Jr., former Foreign Service/Language Officer  
Department of State - 1930-1953

Re: Despatch Warning About Japan's Plan to Attack Pearl Harbor

1. On January 27, 1941, a telegram arrived in the Division of Far Eastern Affairs of the Department of State from Ambassador Joseph C. Grew in Tokyo, reporting that the Japanese were planning a surprise mass attack on Pearl Harbor.

See Ex. 1, TELEGRAM RECEIVED, dated January 27, 1941, and Ex. 2, paraphrase of the telegram.

Also, please note my initials, "FASj" in the upper right edge of the FE stamp.

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2. Several days later, as was customary, a despatch-arrived by diplomatic courier, supplementing in detail the information contained in the above telegram. In relating the facts, Mr. Grew stated that the Peruvian Minister to Japan, Ricardo Rivera Schreiber, had told him (or as Mr. Grew put it, a member of his staff) that the Japanese were planning "a surprise mass attack" on Pearl Harbor. The 2-3 page despatch went on to give Mr. Schreiber's source as his Japanese valet, a trusted employee of many years, who had a brother in Japanese Naval Intelligence at the time who had access to documents which revealed Admiral Yamamoto's plan to attack Pearl Harbor.
3. In the course of the hearings in search of the truth about events leading up to the attack, Mr. Grew consistently denied he knew Mr. Schreiber's source. One example appears in Mr. Grew's book, TURBULENT ERA, Footnote 19 on P. 1233, Ex. 3 attached.
4. One aspect of the despatch stands out vividly in my mind, as well as that of my wife, then Olive LaCroix, namely, the last paragraph consisting of one sentence.

"The Embassy places no credence in Minister Schreiber's report."

This fatal last sentence assured that the information would never get to the eyes and ears of the Secretary of State as well as the President.

\*/ This despatch is missing from the files.

Memorandum (cont'd.)

5. In the early seventies when I started to research Pearl Harbor and the role played by the Department of State's Division of Far Eastern Affairs, this last sentence gained great significance, especially as I read Mr. Grew's testimony when he appeared before several investigative bodies. Navy and Army intelligence officers who, up to the end of the thirties, depended almost wholly on State Department briefings for their political intelligence regarding Japan, had "eyes only" access to "top secret" and "classified" despatches. This meant they had to rely on their memories for reports to their superiors. See Ex. 4, Lt. Comdr. McCollum's report to his superiors. Note the significant words, places no credence.

"The Division of Naval Intelligence[s] places no credence in these rumors."

In the manner of the operation of bureaucracies, this particular intelligence report was passed up along the hierarchy to the Office of Naval Intelligence and subsequently to the Secretary of the Navy. See Note at bottom of page 3 here.

6. In the military all messages are called dispatches. In the Department of State, at least at that time, a telegram was clearly identified at the top of the page with the words in bold letters, TELEGRAM RECEIVED and/or TELEGRAM SENT. See Ex. 1. In State, also at the time, diplomatic despatches (always and strictly with an e) generally came by diplomatic courier by air, or by ship if it was not an urgent message. A despatch was always on legal size paper with its number and subject clearly stated at the top of the first page. It is obvious that the exhibit Mr. Grew allowed his interrogators to refer to as a dispatch was not that.
7. At no time, when Ambassador Grew appeared before any of the investigative bodies which called on him to testify, did he reveal that there actually had been two messages, namely, a telegram and subsequently, a despatch. The latter is customary and amplifies the information sent previously in telegram. Of course, the fact that Mr. Grew, in his despatch gave Mr. Schreiber's intelligence information a "no credence" evaluation was critical. It was to his advantage, therefore, not to clarify the fact that a difference between these two messages insofar as State Department practice was concerned. Luckily, having found a way out of what might have been incriminating, not only for himself but as well for his colleagues in the State Department who had unquestioningly carried out his policy, Mr. Grew continued the charade throughout his testimony.

Memorandum (cont'd)

8. In the course of the hearings and in his writings, Mr. Grew, in a most unusual fashion, gave a number of versions of his so-called despatch of January 27, 1941. See Ex. 6, P. 363, from his book, MY TEN YEARS IN JAPAN, and Ex. 7, P. 1283, from his book, TURBULENT ERA. Also Cf. Ex. 1.
9. It should be underlined here that after the attack, Mr. Grew and his colleagues in the Department of State had full charge of all the documents of the files of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs. The Foreign Relations series prepared for that period is replete with notations that the document is not available. See Ex. 8.
10. Late in the fall of 1982, my wife became acquainted with a person who expressed great interest in our search for the missing despatch. He made contact with the Peruvian Embassy here in Washington on my behalf. This led to my being put in contact with Minister Schreiber's widow who kindly sent her attorney to Washington to meet with me and my wife. After several months of correspondence with Mrs. Schreiber, she provided me with an affidavit, sworn to at the American Embassy in Lima. The affidavit was prepared from her husband's files which he had hoped to publish one day. Both Mrs. Schreiber and her husband felt that Minister Schreiber had played an important role in providing specific intelligence information to this country about Japanese intentions. Her affidavit, Ex. 9, is attached hereto.

*Hand-signed*

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Note -Page 307 from Report of Navy  
Court of Inquiry:

"Although the U.S. Ambassador to Japan reported, as of January, 1941, that there was a rumor to the effect that a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was planned, its authenticity was discounted in the Embassy for the reason that such an attack, if actually contemplated, would scarcely be likely to be a topic of conversation in Japan.

"The Navy Department informed the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, of this rumor and stated that the Navy Department "places no credence in these rumors. Furthermore, based on known data regarding the present disposition and employment of Japanese naval and army forces, no move against Pearl Harbor appears imminent or planned for in the foreseeable future."