

Building a Case for the Original “Alleged” Rumor

The Many Versions of the “Source” of Grew’s
Telegram # 125 of 27 January, 1941.

“MY PERUVIAN COLLEAGUE TOLD A MEMBER OF MY STAFF
that he had heard from many sources including a Japanese source that the Japanese military forces planned in the event of trouble with the United States, to attempt a surprise mass attack on Pearl Harbor using all their military facilities. Although the project seemed fantastic the fact that he had heard it from many sources prompted him to pass on the information.”

In various accounts in books. “a member of my staff” has been variously identified in many more documents and books than those listed below as:

1. Edward (Ned) S. Crocker: First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo 1939-1942. (Second Sec. 1935-1938)*

The First Secretary alleged that Peruvian minister Schreiber had told him about a fantastic rumor of a possible attack on Pearl Harbor. Crocker relayed this to ambassador Grew who sent telegram # 125 to the Secretary of State.

Gordon W. Prange, “At Dawn We Slept”, 1981, Chapter 4, p. 31 “No Credence to these Rumors”

On January 27, 1941, Dr. Ricardo Rivera Schreiber, the Peruvian envoy in Tokyo, told a friend, First Secretary Edward S. Crocker of the American embassy, of a rumor that the Japanese intended to make a “surprise mass attack on Pearl Harbor” with all their strength. Crocker passed it on to Ambassador Grew, who cabled Washington. The message was routed to Naval Intelligence, which reported that “based on known data regarding the present disposition and employment of Japanese and Army forces, no move against Pearl Harbor appears imminent or planned for the foreseeable future.” At that moment Yamamoto was already moving forward.

John Toland, "The Rising Sun", p. 151, Random House, New York 1970,

Something similar, adding: *That same night, Grew also entered this strange rumor in his personal diary.*

Then goes on stating (wrongly) that it was the ONI who inserted the "No credence" comment.

Ladislav Farago, "Burn After Reading", pp. 193-4, ©1961, Pinnacle Books, New York, 1972.

The U.S. Naval Institute is publicizing this, in certain aspects, very inaccurate book still in August 2005.

2. Capt. Henri Smith-Hutton, USN: U.S. Naval Attaché in Tokyo 1940-1941

Stated that Grew told him that: *"He, Grew, had heard a rumor... about a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. ...and further that Grew understood that one of the main sources of the rumor was Dr. Rivera Schreiber, the Peruvian Minister to Japan."*

Smith-Hutton, "Reminiscences", pp. 323-324, Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland, 15 July 1974. Also, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard.

3. Max Bishop: Third Secretary of the US Embassy in Tokyo from 1939 until mid-January 1941, under his original name **Max Waldo Schmidt****, which he changed in late 1941 or early 1942 in Bishop, his mother's name, apparently in order to not have a German-sounding name during a war against the Nazis.

Max W. Schmidt was transferred in Jan. 1941 to the Division of Far Eastern Affairs at the State Department in Washington D.C. [See Bishop interview by John Toland.]

On January 27, 1941, Dr. Ricardo Rivera Schreiber, the Peruvian envoy in Tokyo, chanced to meet Max Bishop third secretary of the American Embassy, in the lobby of a bank. Bishop was changing his money in preparation for returning to Washington. Schreiber

whispered that he had just learned from his intelligence sources that the Japanese had a war plan involving a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

Upon his return to the embassy, Bishop drafted a telegram warning the State Department of the attack, then presented it to Ambassador Grew, who was most impressed.

John Toland, "Infamy", 1982, p. 253

4. Max Bishop: (Formerly Max W. Schmidt) Foreign Service Officer, Retired

Eighteen years later Bishop repeats to Stinnett his role as the person to whom Schreiber had given the information.

Robert B. Stinnett, "Day of Deceit", 2000, pp. 30-32

In the 32 pages-long notes by Toland of an interview with Bishop, titled:

"Interview with Max Bishop, Thursday, February 22 at the Metropolitan Club in Washington" Went to Exeter

Appallingly, long after Joseph Grew's death, Bishop elaborately kept insisting he was the only direct recipient of Rivera Schreiber's warning message ("rumors"). Max Bishop owed his career entirely to Grew.

5. Joseph C. Grew: U.S. Ambassador to Japan 1932-1941 (Enemy diplomats exchanged with Japanese diplomats abroad in mid 1942)

In "My Ten Years in Japan", ostensibly a history of his service in that country, Grew writes under the heading:

"FIRST RUMOR OF A SURPRISE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR"

“There is a lot of talk around town to the effect that the Japanese, in case of a break with the United States, are planning to go all about in a surprise mass attack on Pearl Harbor. Of course I informed our government.”

(Grew, in his book, intended this as his warning of an attack on Pearl Harbor.)

Grew, “My Ten Years in Japan”, p. 368, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1944.

6. Joseph C. Grew:

Eight years later, in 1952, Grew wrote “TURBULENT ERA”, a two-volume set in which he repeats the first sentence above and replaces the end with

“...I rather guess that the boys in Hawaii are not precisely asleep.”

7. Joseph C. Grew:

In his obituary on page 2 of 5, Grew is credited with having warned of a surprise attack at Pearl Harbor. This was followed by:

“This warning apparently went unheeded.”

8. Eugene H. Dooman: First Secretary at the US Embassy in Tokyo 1941, Counselor at same, 1938-1940
Grew relied entirely on Dooman.

A few authors imprudently cited Dooman as the recipient of the “rumor.”

‘Gene’ Dooman, instead, on his way back by ship through Oahu (Hawaii) from leave in the US, was introducing Otto D. Tolischus to Admiral Kimmel at Waikiki Beach on 29 Jan. 1941. Tolischus (expelled by Hitler) had been the Berlin correspondent of the NY Times. “Tokyo Record”, by Otto D. Tolischus, p. 4, Reynal & Hitchcock, New York, 1943.

So much for shoddy research and damaging assertions.

* U.S. Embassy at Tokyo rosters are from “Ten Years in Japan”, pp. 539-548, by Joseph C. Grew.

** Only the name Max Waldo Schmidt appears on the Tokyo Embassy roster until 1941, as one of the Third secretaries.