



Cruise of the Lanikai, by R-Adm Kemp Tolley
USN (Ret), © 1973 United States Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland, Naval Institute Press, 1973.

pp. 23-4

On 6 January 1941, with no personal advance warning, Richardson was informed he was to be relieved of command. “You hurt the President’s feelings,” Stark told him.

Four days before that, Ambassador to Japan Joseph C Grew entered in his diary a sentence Richardson’s successor, Admiral Husband Kimmel, might have read with more profit, had not acting Director of Naval Intelligence, Captain Jules James, made such a casual evaluation of it. “There is a lot of talk about town,” wrote Grew, “to the effect that the Japanese, in case of a break with the United States, are planning to go all out in a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Of course I informed our government.” By probably something more than coincidence, Admiral Yamamoto, top Japanese sea commander, wrote on 1 February 1941 to the chief of staff of the 11th Air Fleet, requesting his opinion on just such an attack. Yamamoto had discussed the subject with his own chief of staff the preceding year.

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On 22 March 1941 Captain Alan G Kirk already was Director of the ONI.

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It looks like Capt Jules James took over as acting Director of the ONI on January 24 from R-Adm Walter Anderson. So, there might have been a mistake above, on p. 23-4. Capt. Kirk takes over soon after from James and Tolley says that Kirk had been Naval Attaché in London for two years before becoming Director of the ONI, which at 90% makes him **Lt Cmdr John N Opie III’s boss** at the moment of Taranto.

Kirk took the ONI assignment at the request of Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, who had heard him speak at a symposium and concluded Kirk knew more about the European war situation than any naval officer suitable for director.

Lieutenant Commander Alvin Kramer, crack ONI translator and evaluator, who had spent three years in Japan studying the language and people, felt the bomb plot message to be sufficiently important to merit a special “flag” pinned to it. Captain Kirk was equally impressed, but with his specific duties for evaluation and dissemination usurped by Stark’s oral directive, he pressed Turner, who had assumed these responsibilities, to relay the message to Kimmel. Turner refused.

Within that week, matters came to a showdown, irreverently and clandestinely called “the *Oktobr Revolution*,” and euphemistically described as, “Trouble on the Second Deck,” by A. A. Hoehling. (4)

(4) Kirk was selected for rear admiral six weeks later. He commanded the US naval task force at the Normandy invasion, retired a four star admiral, then served as ambassador to Belgium, Luxemburg, the USSR, and Nationalist China.

[...] The chief of the ONI’s Intelligence Branch, Captain HD Bode, who had joined Kirk in pressing Turner to transmit the message, was relieved of his duties the same day, the ninth, and was detached for sea duty on the sixteenth, after a mere nine months in the assignment.*

* By an ironic coincidence, Bode commanded the cruiser *Chicago* at the 8 August 1942 Battle of Savo Island. *Chicago* survived, but one Australian and three American heavy cruisers, under the operational command of Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, were sunk with the loss of 1,023 lives and negligible damage to the Japanese. It was the greatest sea disaster in American history.

Turner survived physically and professionally to become a four star admiral commanding the Pacific Fleet Amphibious Force, highly regarded by many. Bode, “the melancholy Dane” as he was sometimes called, probably brooding over the American disgrace, committed suicide the following spring.

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Learning that Gen. Gerow, chief of Army War Plans, and Marshall had refused to send a translation of the bomb plot message to MacArthur and Short, and that Turner and Stark had done the same for Admirals Hart and Kimmel, Col. Sadtler took a calculated risk trying to send the news anyhow through some interpretation

loophole in the standing orders but in the end gets blocked by Adm. Noyes.

On 6 December, Navy Secretary Knox inquired at the daily top level meeting: "Gentlemen, are they going to hit us?" Turner's reply was, "No, Mr. Secretary. They are going to hit the British. They are not ready for us yet."

Source: *National Review*, 13 December 1966, p. 1261; Vice Admiral Frank E. Beatty, who was present at the meeting as Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox's aide.

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One of the first PA-K2 messages to go out from Kita/Yoshikawa subsequently raised a storm in the JCC investigation. It covered a set of signals developed by an Axis spy, Otto Kuhn, shipped out from Germany after an unfortunate contretemps over his daughter Ruth, who had become Goebbels' mistress at sixteen. By use of bonfires, or lights in certain houses, or pennants on small boats, or fake want ads via a Honolulu radio station, an offshore submarine or radio-equipped fishing sampan could relay to Nagumo's Attack Force the number of battleships and carriers present. Ominously, the signaling schedule ended as of 6 December.

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18 November Maxwell D Hamilton, chief of State Department's Far Eastern Division, and known to some as "Slapsy Maxie," came up with the novel idea of giving Japan the funds to buy all or part of New Guinea, in exchange for Japanese merchant or warships.

Source: *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1941*, Department of State, Vol. IV, pp. 613-14.

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26 November An intercept from Hanoi to Tokyo, dated the twenty-fifth, ominously warned that, "No doubt the Cabinet will make a decision between peace and war within the next day."

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United States: *higashi no kaze, ame* – east wind, rain
 USSR: *kita no kaze, kumori* – north wind, cloudy
 U.K., N.E.I.: *nishi no kaze, hare* – west wind, clear

This clearly indicated options. Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, Navy War Plans director, who had usurped ONI's prerogatives in making intelligence estimates, thought it until almost the very last the wind would be northerly.*

*In 1936, commanding the cruiser *Astoria*, Turner had taken the ashes of Japanese ambassador Saito from Annapolis to Tokyo. There the grateful Japanese tendered him

their thanks, high honors and a litter of Japanese poodles. The whole thing had inspired Turner to look into matters Japanese more fully, so that by 1941, he considered himself an authority on the country and its intentions.

It should be remembered that it was in October that the magnificent Soviet spy Richard Sorge had been arrested in Tokyo just after advising the Fourth Bureau at Moscow that the Japanese would move southward, thus affording Stalin his God-given chance of moving masses of his cold weather Siberian troops to the west to save Moscow. There is no record of Stalin's having passed this word to the Americans.

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As for the Americans, their diplomatic codes were known to be so wholly insecure that until State had been furnished machine ciphers, FDR used Navy crypto systems to communicate with his London, Moscow, and Paris ambassadors.*

* By August 1941, the Germans had broken several top US State Department codes. In the same month the Italians clandestinely got a copy of the Black Code, a relatively new US military attaché system that allowed the Axis to read the American messages from Moscow, and even more vitally, the very long dispatches of our military attaché in Egypt. (This must be Col. Bonner Fellers) These described in detail the logistics and planned operations of British forces in North Africa which in effect provided Desert Fox Erwin Rommel a seat at the British High command conference table.

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3 December Both Lieutenant Commander Arthur McCollum, head of ONI's Far Eastern Branch, and Commander Lawrence Safford, cryptographic and code security chief, could see from the intercepts that war was so imminent that Admiral Kimmel *must* be given a definite warning.

McCollum had worked up what later was proved to be a highly accurate, two-and-a-half-page, single-spaced memorandum covering the entire Japanese situation over the preceding two months. On 1 December, he recited it before Admiral Stark and most of his assembled principal staff officers. McCollum then boiled his estimate down to a dispatch summary and was directed by his boss, Admiral Wilkinson, to take it to Admiral Turner for his coordination and release. The latter, in McCollum's words, "so amended the dispatch as to make it worthless," saying that if he still wanted to send it, that was the way it would go. At the same time, he showed McCollum the 27 November war warning that

Kimmel's defenders later felt so inadequate and misleading. It was the first McCollum knew of its existence. McCollum took his emasculated message back to Wilkinson and there is no record of its ever having gone out.

Failing here, McCollum got Wilkinson to release a more innocuous message which might still turn the trick:

TO: CINCAF, CINCPAC, COMMANDANT 14TH AND 16TH NAVAL DISTRICTS.

031850 [1:30 P.M., 3 DECEMBER WASHINGTON TIME]
HIGHLY RELIABLE INFORMATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED THAT

CATEGORIC AND URGENT INSTRUCTIONS WERE SENT YESTERDAY TO JAPANESE DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS AT HONGKONG

X SINGAPORE X BATAVIA X MANILA X WASHINGTON AND LONDON TO DESTROY MOST OF THEIR CODES AND CIPHERS AT

ONCE AND TO BURN ALL OTHER IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIAL AND SECRET DOCUMENTS.

Safford, with views and motivations identical with McCollum's induced Commander Joseph Redman, Assistant Director of Naval Communications, to release one to the same addressees as McCollum's, as a tipoff to Kimmel and Hart:

031855...TOKYO ONE DECEMBER ORDERED LONDON X HONGKONG X SINGAPORE AND MANILA TO DESTROY PURPLE MA-

CHINE XX BATAVIA MACHINE ALREADY SENT TO TOKYO XX DECEMBER SECOND WASHINGTON ALSO DIRECTED DESTROY

PURPLE X ALL BUT ONE COPY OF OTHER SYSTEMS X AND ALL SECRET DOCUMENTS XX BRITISH ADMIRALTY LONDON TODAY

REPORTS EMBASSY LONDON HAS COMPLIED

The two messages had one immediate result: a chewing out of Wilkinson and Redman by Turner and Noyes, respectively, for releasing them. The second, Safford's, caused Admiral Kimmel to inquire, "What is 'Purple'?"

atic Fleet “We intend to fight to destruction on the shore line! The inability of an enemy to launch his air attack on these islands is our greatest security. Even with the improvised forces I now have, because of the inability of the enemy to bring not only air but mechanized and motorized elements, leaves me with a sense of complete security!”*

* On December 8, 108 twin-engined bombers and 84 Zero fighters all but wiped out MacArthur’s air force on the ground. By 23 December, Japanese tanks and motorized artillery were rumbling down the paved road from Lingayen Gulf toward Manila.

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(At the sinking of HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse*) The traditional antitorpedo tactic of laying down a barrage of big gun splashes did no good. The aircraft were faster than anything the British had ever seen, and some of the torpedoes were dropped from a height unheard of in the West – up to four hundred feet. Without Japanese interference, 2,000 of the 2,800 aboard were picked up by the British and American destroyers. Next day a sentimental Japanese aviator dropped a wreath in the sea at the spot of the sinking. With these acts Japanese chivalry ceased. Thenceforth, they accepted no quarter and gave it only grudgingly and cruelly.

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Had he two fleets met in December 1941 before the American losses at Pearl, it is the opinion of both Admirals Nimitz and King that the result would have been an American disaster.

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MacArthur had told Hart on 22 September 1941 that the state of his air force was not good – that the ninety to one hundred Filipino pilots were superior to the average US pilots. Even more revealing, Hart discovered MacArthur was unfamiliar with the capabilities of radar.

An example of what Chennault considered the dinosaur mentality of his superiors was the reaction of General Charles Summerall, US Army Chief of Staff, when in 1928 he was asked to witness one of Chennault’s new ideas: mass parachute jumping by airborne troops. Before it was over Summerall disgustedly walked off, saying something to the effect, “What won’t that crackpot Chennault think up next?” Within a week, Soviet representatives had offered Chennault a long-term contract

with the rank of colonel, at \$ 1,000 a month, to train parachutists.

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The FRU "C" operators of the Asiatic's Fleet's "Purple" machine, a replica of those in Washington and London, held only the Asian keys. It could crack the Tokyo, Bangkok, Saigon, and Singapore Japanese diplomatic chat, but not the agonized conversational ping-pong between Tokyo and Japanese ambassadors Nomura and Kurusu in Washington.

Unlike the close restrictions on Hawaii's FRU "H," Cavite's FRU "C" had a free hand both to process and intercept Japanese traffic, aided in the latter by an Army C/I unit which had no facilities for decrypting. MacArthur shared the results, sometimes grumbling that they were holding out on him. Compared to this cozy set-up. Kimmel and Short in Hawaii were far out in the left field. (FRU stands euphemistically for "Fleet Radio Unit C", C/I stands for Communication Intelligence)

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Admiral Nimitz has written that our greatest stroke of good fortune was that the Japanese did not find the US Fleet at sea. The faster Japanese force, he said, with a carrier advantage of six to two, could have chosen battle on its own terms. In all probability, Admiral Nimitz continued, our ships would have been sunk in two thousand fathoms with a loss of all hands, instead of settling a mere forty feet to the soft mud bottom of Pearl Harbor, which saved thousands of trained men vital to the manning of our great wartime fleet yet to come.

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CNO's 091812 of December 1941 was a long (335 word) secret priority composed during the forenoon of 9 December by Marshall, Stark, Turner, and Gerow, the latter the Army chief war planner. Quoted in part, it makes clear the state of confusion in which the US high command found itself two days after Pearl:

[...] BECAUSE OF THE GREAT SUCCESS OF THE JAPANESE RAID ON THE SEVENTH IT IS EXPECTED TO BE PROMPTLY FOLLOWED UP BY ADDITIONAL ATTACKS IN ORDER RENDER **HAWAII UNTENABLE AS NAVAL AND AIR BASE** IN WHICH EVENTUALITY IT IS BELIEVED JAPANESE HAVE FORCES SUITABLE FOR INITIAL OCCUPATION OF ISLANDS OTHER THAT OAHU INCLUDING MIDWAY MAUI AND HAWAII. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES IT SEEMS QUESTIONABLE THAT MIDWAY CAN BE RETAINED BUT IT IS HOPED THAT JOHNSON PALMYRA AND SAMOA MAY BE. IN EXPECTATION OF

FURTHER AIR RAIDS AND INADEQUACY OF DEFENSES
OAHU CNO CONSIDERS IT ESSENTIAL THAT WOUNDED
 VESSELS ABLE TO PROCEED UNDER OWN POWER
 SHOULD BE SENT TO WEST COAST AS SOON AS POSSI-
 BLE WITH DUE REGARD TO SAFETY FROM CURRENT
 RAIDING FORCES AND VERY GREAT IMPORTANCE OF
 EFFECTIVE COUNTER ATTACKS ON THESE RAIDERS BY
 YOU. **UNTIL DEFENSES ARE INCREASED IT IS DOUBT-
 FULL IF PEARL SHOULD BE USED AS A BASE** FOR ANY
 EXCEPT PATROL CRAFT NAVAL AIRCRAFT SUBMARINES
 OR FOR SHORT PERIODS WHEN IT IS REASONABLY CER-
 TAIN JAPANESE ATTACKS WILL NOT BE MADE... [high-
 lighting added]

This astounding message was addressed for action to the Commander in Chief, US Pacific Fleet, Admiral Kimmel, and for information to the three west coast naval commandants. The Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet was left in the dark as to this dire state of affairs, as was the Joint Congressional Committee three years later, where the message framers testified that the defenses of Hawaii *had* been adequate, thus adding a few more spikes to Admiral Kimmel's hide, already pretty securely nailed to the barn door. [...] The US Army aircraft on Oahu would have been no help; the fighters were limited to a range of fifteen miles from land, and it later was repeatedly demonstrated that the heavy horizontal bombers, the B-17s, were unable to hit moving targets. But the B-17 question was largely academic anyway; there were only six of them operational on 7 December.

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Roosevelt's festering wound had been imparted by Richardson at a White House lunch on 8 October 1940, where the other guests were presidential alter ego Harry Hopkins, an elder naval statesman Admiral Leahy, then governor of Puerto Rico. When the question of strengthening the Asiatic Fleet came up, the President asked Admiral Leahy his views. "Whatever we sent out would be lost in the event of war," Leahy said. He thought that if anything *were* added, it should be only the least valuable element, perhaps a light cruiser. With a sailor's bluntness, Admiral Richardson said that with such a prospect, he would send nothing at all.

The President then refuted Richardson's views on keeping the fleet in near mid-Pacific, in effect, saying: "Despite what you believe, I know that the presence of the fleet in the Hawaiian area has had, and is now having, a restraining influence on the actions of Japan."

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The word “Bataan” suggests to most Americans nothing but grim defeat and the subsequent horrors the Japanese inflicted on prisoners in the “Death March.” Actually, until US forces landed on Guadalcanal, in August of 1942, it was on Bataan and only on Bataan that Allied troops in the early phase of the Far East War fought the Japanese to a standstill. In Malaya, the British, although they outnumbered the Japanese three to two, were kept on a steady run rearward, leaving hot meals on the mess tables, drums of gasoline, undamaged bridges and airfields – “Churchill aerodromes,” the Japanese gratefully termed the latter. T the same time, the Japanese were taking over the Netherlands Indies against only token resistance ashore. Resulting from a combination of Filipino and American guts and good leadership, abetted by Japanese stupidity, it was on Bataan alone that these troops atoned for the debacle of Pearl Harbor.

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As for Roosevelt’s readiness to promote an incident to force the United States into a war its people and Congress did not want, incontrovertible proof has been revealed by the late December 1971 release of some 950 volumes of formerly top secret British government papers.

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Among them were minutes of a 19 August 1941 British cabinet meeting in which Prime Minister Winston Churchill reported on his conversations with Roosevelt earlier that month at the Argentina conference.

The minutes quoting Churchill indirectly said:

He [Roosevelt] obviously was determined that they should come in.

If he were to put the issue of peace and war to Congress, they would debate it for months.

The President had said he would wage war but not declare it and that he would become more provocative. If the Germans did not like it, they could attack American forces.

In connection with the President’s “shoot on sight” order of 8 October 1941, which *de facto* opened hostilities against the European Axis powers, the President’s thinking was revealed at Argentina, as recounted by Churchill at the same cabinet meeting:

The President’s orders to these [convoy] escorts were to attack any German U-boat which showed itself even if it were 200 to 300 miles away from the

convoy. Everything was to be done to force an incident.

p. 301-2

The Navy's last warning, Chief of Naval Operations message 272337 of 27 November 1941 [...]

There is some persistent rumor to the effect that commencing 4 December, all war warnings of any sort had to be cleared through Army Chief of Staff, General George Marshall. This is corroborated by Admiral Stark's actions on the morning of 7 December. Pressed by his advisors to warn Kimmel urgently as a result of the 14-part Japanese message just intercepted which clearly meant a break in relations, Stark deferred to Marshall's sending the only final warning. Delaying until almost noon, Marshall got it off by commercial telegraph, routine precedence, instead of instantly by Stark's direct scrambler telephone, or in 15 minutes by the Navy's high power radio. Marshall's warning arrived by bicycle messenger about eight hours after the Japanese planes. Inspired by these same Japanese intercepts, Secretary of the Navy Knox dispatched a warning message to Kimmel the evening of the sixth. It never arrived, its being misplaced not likely, and the authority to kill a cabinet officer's message not widely held.

Supporting the above is an interesting tale that if someday corroborated by release of British wartime documents might modestly alter the face of history.

Under the circumstances, one cannot name particulars. At any rate, let us say that during a postwar Caribbean cruise aboard a British-manned vessel, a young merchant officer was entertaining a distinguished American guest with a story of his father's long employment by the Chinese government in a top intelligence capacity. In early December 1941, Dad's agents in Japan had picked up the details of the Pearl Harbor attack plan. Postwar investigation has revealed that some 75 high level; Japanese were aware of it. As well demonstrated in the Sorge case, Japan's deepest secrets were not inviolate. The Pearl information was at once transmitted to London, thence to Roosevelt. The latter then is assumed to have taken Marshall into his exclusive confidence, as Roosevelt felt that Marshall was intensely loyal to him and that he dominated affable but weak Admiral Harold ("Betty") Stark. [...]

[...] Just a few days over twenty years after the event (Pearl Harbor), Admiral Ben Moreell wrote to historian Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes:

“I frequently made long airplane trips with Secretary Knox. After we got tired of working and reading we used to talk about many things. One day we were discussing FDR, and I remarked that I thought his most unusual characteristic was his complete confidence in himself, that I had never seen him indicate any doubt about the correctness of his position on any issue. I then asked Mr. Knox whether he had ever seen such doubts. He replied, ‘Yes, on the afternoon of Pearl Harbor. I went to the White House and he was in the Oval Office. When I went in he was seated at his desk and was as white as a sheet. He was visibly shaken. You know, I think he expected to get hit; but he did not expect to get hurt.’