



*The Secret War Against Hitler*, by William Casey, © 1988 Sophia Casey, Regnery Gateway, Washington DC, 1988.

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The British had sent word that a Japanese fleet was steaming towards Hawaii.

Among those not reading the intercepts was Donovan, President Roosevelt's Coordinator of Information. The military had confined the priceless intercepts to a handful of people too busy to interpret them. Small wonder that Friedman cried out in despair on hearing of the attack on Pearl Harbor, "But they knew. They knew." The fact is that Friedman knew, but those with responsibility and power to act had received only an accumulation of raw intercepts. No one had put the pieces together for them and told them of their momentous implications. Great power that we had become, arsenal of democracy and beacon of freedom, we still lacked an organized intelligence service.

Distribution of intelligence intercepts was strictly limited to the President, the Secretaries of State, War, Navy, and a few ranking military officers. [...] The Army and the Navy kept one master copy, each. Also, each service had one, and only one, Far Eastern specialist who was allowed to see the Japanese intercepts [...]

General Marshall summed up the top-level mood when he told a Congressional inquiry on Pearl Harbor in 1946: "If I'm supposed to have the final responsibility of the reading of all Magic [the broken code] messages I would have ceased to be Chief of Staff in every other respect." [...]

Only static information like size and location of armies was sent out. Judgments and projections about enemy intentions were withheld from the front lines. The Navy was even more rigid. Intelligence was to present factual evidence and refrain from estimates or prediction – the jealously guarded prerogative of the Chief of War plans – and both rules were rigidly enforced. When the Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Committee (JANIC) first met in October 1941 the Army wanted it to collate, analyze, and interpret information, and make judgments of enemy capabilities and intentions. But the Navy insisted on holding JANIC to facts, not interpretation. The Navy won.

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Donovan and his staff at the Coordinator of Information's office were not receiving this vital flow. On November 1 and December 1, Japan made changes in naval call signs so unusual as to hint strongly at preparations for some offensive.. The changes were followed by the sudden "disappearance" of the Japanese aircraft carriers. US inability to locate the ships by intercepting radio calls indicated the carriers were near Japan and could communicate on wave lengths we were unable to detect. At the same time diplomatic reports from Tokyo pointed to approaching political deadlines, first on November 25 and then on November 29, on which something would happen. Coded messages from Japanese agents in major ports, which we intercepted and read, told us what information Tokyo's warlords wanted to have about US defenses. Their sudden stepped-up interest in Manila and Honolulu should have been hard to miss.

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Hoover had shown his total incompetence for sophisticated war-time intelligence activity early on. His handling of the "Popov Affair" might well have been a tip-off for his future legendary secretiveness and over-simplified way of thinking. Popov was a Yugoslav who had been recruited as an agent by the Germans, but who had decided to work for the British. He would prove one of the best and most effective double agents of the war. Six months before Pearl Harbor the Germans ordered Popov, operating out of England, to go to the US to set up a Nazi

spy network. The British promptly got in touch with Hoover, hoping the FBI would help Popov develop a fake network in the US that could feed misleading information back to Berlin, much as the British counterpart to the FBI, MI-5, had done with Popov in England.

Hoover viewed the whole affair with hostility and suspicion and held Popov off as long as he could. Even when the Yugoslav gave Hoover a list of questions the Germans had asked him to answer, the FBI director did not react, although one of the questions asked for detailed information about the installations and defenses at Pearl Harbor. Hoover failed to find this line of inquiry important enough to pass on to Army and Navy. For a while the British watched in disbelief as Hoover frittered away the opportunity for building a controlled network of disinformation. Then they began to pressure the FBI director. MI-5 had a stake in Popov it did not want to lose. Hoover, the British said, had to leak some information back to Berlin through Popov, at least to preserve his British credibility. Grudgingly, Hoover agreed, but without letting anyone know what he would tell Berlin in Popov's name. Popov returned to England without knowing what he had sent and had to bluff his mission to his German controllers.

*Noticeably, Casey does not mention the bogus torpedo nets.*