HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD: THE DOWNFALL OF ADMIRAL KIMMEL

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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14. ABSTRACT

In the aftermath of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Admiral Husband Kimmel was relieved of command of the United States Pacific Fleet and forced into retirement. Eight official investigations were conducted to determine his accountability for the attack. These investigations produced mixed and often contradictory findings. Though he was never brought to court-martial, accusations of dereliction of duty damaged his reputation considerably. Ultimately, he was one of only two World War Two flag officers not to be retired at the highest rank held during the war; the other was Lieutenant General Walter Short, the Army?s Hawaiian commander at the time of the attack. In contrast, only nine hours after the Pearl Harbor attack, General Douglas MacArthur suffered a similar crushing surprise defeat in the Philippines despite his knowledge that the Japanese had initiated hostilities. Yet, he became a national war hero. The differing treatment accorded Admiral Kimmel compared to General MacArthur stands as a lesson on biased judgement. Today, military commanders in the Global War on Terrorism may find themselves in circumstances similar to either of these two commanders. Knowledge of their situations may help today?s commanders avoid similar pitfalls, or may prevent comparable unbalanced treatment.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD: THE DOWNFALL OF ADMIRAL KIMMEL, by LCDR Matthew R. Pettinger, USN, 74 pages.

In the aftermath of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Admiral Husband Kimmel was relieved of command of the United States Pacific Fleet and forced into retirement. Eight official investigations were conducted to determine his accountability for the attack. These investigations produced mixed and often contradictory findings. Though he was never brought to court-martial, accusations of dereliction of duty damaged his reputation considerably. Ultimately, he was one of only two World War Two flag officers not to be retired at the highest rank held during the war; the other was Lieutenant General Walter Short, the Army's Hawaiian commander at the time of the attack. In contrast, only nine hours after the Pearl Harbor attack, General Douglas MacArthur suffered a similar crushing surprise defeat in the Philippines despite his knowledge that the Japanese had initiated hostilities. Yet, he became a national war hero. The differing treatment accorded Admiral Kimmel compared to General MacArthur stands as a lesson on biased judgement. Today, military commanders in the Global War on Terrorism may find themselves in circumstances similar to either of these two commanders. Knowledge of their situations may help today's commanders avoid similar pitfalls, or may prevent comparable unbalanced treatment.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CINC	Commander-in-Chief
CINCAF	Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Asiatic Fleet
CINCPACFLT	Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet
CINCUSFLT	Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
CSA	Chief of Staff of the Army
FEAF	Far East Air Force
MAGIC	Code name for the code-breaking efforts against Japan
OP 20 G	Code breaking section, Office of Naval Intelligence
PATWING TWO	Patrol Wing Two
PBY	Patrol Bomber (Y is the manufacturer's code for Consolidated Aircraft Company)
PURPLE	Code name for decrypted Japanese diplomatic messages
USAFFE	United States Army Forces, Far East

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On 24 January 1941, nearly a full year before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox signed a letter to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson that was amazingly prophetic in its content. In it, Knox stated that:

> The security of the U.S. Pacific Fleet while in Pearl Harbor, and of the Pearl Harbor Naval Base itself, has been under renewed study by the Navy Department and forces afloat for the past several weeks. This reexamination has been, in part, prompted by the increased gravity of the situation with respect to Japan, and by reports from abroad of successful bombing and torpedo plane attacks on ships while in bases. If war eventuates with Japan, it is believed easily possible that hostilities would be initiated by a surprise attack upon the fleet or the Naval Base at Pearl Harbor.
>
> In my opinion, the inherent possibilities of a major disaster to the fleet or naval base warrant taking every step, as rapidly as can be done, that will increase the joint readiness of the Army and Navy to withstand a raid of the character mentioned above.[1]

If this perceptive view existed in the senior leadership of the navy prior to the Japanese attack, why were the defenders in Hawaii caught by surprise? Many of the investigations that were conducted after the assault indicated that the senior U.S. Navy officer present in Hawaii, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet and Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Fleet, and his army counterpart, Lieutenant General Walter C. Short, had failed to adequately prepare the military defenses of Hawaii. One highly critical report even suggested that the men were guilty of dereliction of duty. Though neither man was ever brought up on charges before a court-martial, both were quickly removed from their post and retired soon afterward.

However, examination of the investigation reports and statements made by many professional military men, both those connected to and those thoroughly separated from the events in Hawaii, counter many of the claims of the reports. Admiral Kimmel, until

his death, accepted his responsibility as the senior officer, but flatly rejected the implication that he had been negligent in his duty to protect the Pacific Fleet. He felt that he had been sacrificed unfairly after senior military and administration officials had poorly supported his efforts at preparing a defense against the Japanese.

Though the attack on Pearl Harbor stands as one of the most consequential points in United States history, less well known and studied are the other Japanese offensives that occurred in conjunction with the Pearl Harbor attack. Just as damaging to the American plans for the defense of the Pacific was the initial blows on, and subsequent invasion of the American forces in the Philippines, under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. As at Pearl Harbor, the American forces were caught unprepared for the Japanese assault, with crippling consequences. Yet, out of this, General MacArthur was never held to any investigation. On the contrary, he was lauded as a national hero. Was Admiral Kimmel held to a higher standard than was General MacArthur?

After the attack, there were a total of nine official investigations conducted to discover how this tragedy had happened. All of these official investigations were completed within five years; the last report, the Joint Congressional Committee Report, was issued in 1946. Unfortunately, all of these investigations were conducted at a time when the deep passion of public opinion, the struggle for political power, and even the personal opinions of the investigators, may have prevented a fully objective review. Now, sixty years after the attack on Pearl Harbor, we can look at the facts surrounding the event in a more objective light, less hampered by a need to find guilty parties, and more willing to admit our nation’s mistakes.

Looking at the entire story of Admiral Kimmel's role in the Pearl Harbor catastrophe, it is hard not to come to the conclusion that he was a commander who was placed in a nearly impossible situation. Though charged with the safety and protection of the Pacific Fleet, he was not given the resources necessary for that task. Numerous mistakes were made in the protection of the fleet. Most were at a level above Admiral Kimmel's, in the offices of the Navy Department. The failure of the Navy Department to provide critical information and defensive resources to the Pacific Fleet commander, as well as the mixed message about Japanese intentions and the nature of the threat, all played a large part in the success of the attack. For this, the senior navy leadership was just as guilty, if not more so, than was Admiral Kimmel. Yet, Admiral Kimmel was the one who would pay the price.

In the months after Secretary Knox wrote his foreboding letter, numerous coded messages sent through Japanese diplomatic and military channels would be received and broken in Washington DC. These decoded messages, under the code names of "MAGIC" and "PURPLE," were highly indicative of Japan's plans of nationalistic expansion, to be initiated by a decisive strike at American military power in the Pacific. Ultimately, this superb code breaking technology was never provided to Admiral Kimmel.[2] This lack of information served as just one more turn in the noose that was tightening around Pearl Harbor.

Until the Pearl Harbor investigations tarnished his reputation, Admiral Kimmel had a served a distinguished career in the United States Navy. The son of an army major, he had graduated from the United States Naval Academy in the class of 1904. He had risen to command several ships and staffs. In early 1941, he was selected for the post of

Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet and Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Fleet. His selection came after President Franklin Roosevelt lost confidence in the residing commander, Admiral James Richardson. Admiral Richardson had been quite vocal about his objections to a decision by President Roosevelt to move the Pacific Fleet from Long Beach, California, to Pearl Harbor. The move, intended by the President to send a message to Japan about America's intentions of maintaining access to sea lanes in the Pacific Ocean, placed the mighty Pacific Fleet far from the defenses of the North American continent. Admiral Richardson felt that the defense infrastructure in Hawaii was not adequate to protect the fleet. Moreover, with the emphasis on aiding Europe against Nazi Germany, Hawaii's defenses could never be made sufficient as long as defense material was being diverted to the Atlantic Fleet. His objections finally led President Roosevelt to believe that Richardson had lost confidence in the civilian leadership. With that knowledge, Admiral Kimmel relieved Admiral Richardson, determined to support the President to the best of his abilities.[3]

However, Admiral Kimmel, like his predecessor, did not receive the support necessary to protect Pearl Harbor. Most significant of these were the intelligence information and estimates concerning Japan's actions. With the best intelligence resources, Washington was far better suited to determine the Japanese intentions than was any commander in Hawaii. Admiral Kimmel, therefore, relied upon Washington to provide him with the best intelligence in time to guard against any planned Japanese assault. In fact, Admiral Harold Stark, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), had guaranteed Admiral Kimmel that Hawaii would be kept advised of any intelligence that would relate to the Pacific Fleet. During the summer months of 1941, this appeared to be

the case, as some intelligence flowed to Hawaii. However, this information well began to dry up as time wore on. Unfortunately, Admiral Kimmel was not in a position to realize that critical intelligence was not being forwarded to him. He had to trust that his superiors were keeping him informed.[4]

Unlike Admiral Kimmel, General Douglas MacArthur, Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE), and Admiral Thomas C. Hart, Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet, were both privileged to have access to the PURPLE messages concerning expected Japanese moves. General MacArthur had only recently assumed his position, having returned to active duty. General MacArthur had reached the highest post in the army in 1930 when he was appointed Chief of Staff of the Army. In 1935, he was sent to the Philippines to act as a special defense advisor.[5] He had served four previous tours of duty in the Philippines during his career in the United States Army.[6] This knowledge of the Philippine culture, combined with his military expertise, was just what the Philippine government needed to establish an army capable of standing up to Japanese expansion. With independence from the United States scheduled for 4 July 1946, the Filipinos had to be capable of independently defending their islands.

However, General MacArthur's grandiose Philippine Army existed mostly on paper, and his ambitious plans for the defense of the archipelago were unrealistic. By 1937, the Army Chief of Staff decided to reassign MacArthur. General MacArthur felt insulted, and chose instead to retire from the Army. He had no desire to return to America, and instead convinced the Philippine government to retain him as a military advisor.[7] But on 26 July 1941 he was recalled to active duty in the United States Army to command USAFFE.[8] His primary duty was to defend United States interests in the Asian

Theater, and more specifically, the Philippine Islands. General MacArthur realized that war with Japan was approaching, and was probably inevitable. However, he seemed not to realize how close war was. In fact, in late November 1941, he confidently remarked to Admiral Hart that he felt that any Japanese aggression would not come until the following spring.[9]

The predominate view in Washington during the summer and fall of 1941 was that if the Japanese were going to attack American interests, then the Philippines were the most likely target. The Philippines were strategically located close to the sea lanes that Japan relied upon for the flow of natural resources, including precious oil, from the Dutch East Indies. A series of five joint Navy and Army war plans for the United States had been prepared, each centered on differing political and military situations in the world. These plans were called the Rainbow plans. Rainbow 5 was the war plan that called for a holding action in the Pacific Theater, while a decisive war was fought in Europe. Rainbow 5 did not call for any large-scale reinforcement of the Philippines, to the dismay of General MacArthur. However, by early August 1941, the Army had shifted policy, determined now to defend the Philippines, and promised General MacArthur substantial reinforcements. This policy shift helped to reinforce the mindset that the United States no longer considered Pearl Harbor the front line of any defense; the Philippine Islands were now the defensive line. The Army was so certain that these islands were key that they stationed 35 new B-17 bombers at Clark Field on Luzon. On 3 November 1941, Major General Lewis H. Brereton was placed in charge and directed to form an air striking force that would be able to control the Japanese sea lanes.[10]

Like many commanders, Admiral Kimmel was certain that any attack by the Japanese would take place in the Far East. He felt that an attack by carrier-borne aircraft on Pearl Harbor was not likely due to the strength of American Naval assets in the waters around Hawaii.[11] Any attempt by Japan to send a naval force so far from home waters, deep into American controlled territory was considered suicidal. Washington's buildup of U.S. and national forces in the Philippines, especially the greatly increased amount of air power, only served to encourage his view.

Although critical intelligence built up in Washington throughout the fall of 1941, the military leadership failed to construct the pieces to determine where the Japanese would strike. When Washington did finally deduce the time and location of the attack, failure of the navy leadership to comprehend the significance would prevent the timely notification of Hawaii. At this point, nothing could prevent the attack on Oahu, but this would be Hawaii's last chance to take action to minimize damage and possibly inflict significant casualties to the attacking Japanese forces. Once again, Admiral Kimmel would not receive the support from Washington that he so desperately required.

On the morning of 7 December, only four hours before the attack, the CNO, Admiral Stark, was given a decoded Japanese diplomatic message by Commander Kramer, head of the OP 20 G (code breaking) section of Naval Intelligence. The decoded message instructed the Japanese Ambassador to deliver a fourteen-part message to the United States Secretary of State at exactly 1300 Washington time (0730 Hawaiian time). Commander Kramer realized that the specific time coincided with dawn in the Hawaiian Islands, and theorized that it might be a precursor to a dawn attack by the Japanese. However, Admiral Stark already believed that the Pacific Fleet was already on the

highest alert, and therefore initially chose not to pass this information to Pacific commands.[12] This was a huge blunder on the part of the CNO. As any commander knows, some of the most critical intelligence a commanding officer can have in a defensive situation is the exact time and place the enemy may be expected to attack. Regardless of the alert status of the fleet, Admiral Stark's decision not to give the utmost urgency to informing his commanders of the possibility of a Japanese attack is inexcusable.

However, an hour and a half later, the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), General George C. Marshall, was given the same intercept. He came to the same conclusion that impending action somewhere in the Pacific by the Japanese could be concurrent with the 1300 delivery of the diplomatic message. He decided to inform Army commands in Hawaii, the Philippines, Panama, and the United States West Coast. Regarding the Philippines as the most likely area for attack, he stated that priority should be given to sending the message to General MacArthur. The CSA also consulted with Secretary Knox, who then agreed that Navy commands should also be informed. Secretary Knox offered the use of Navy radio circuits to send the message, but General Marshall turned down this offer. What Marshall did not know was that the Army teletype circuits to Hawaii were inoperative, which meant that the message had to be relayed via Western Union, resulting in a fatal delay.[13] Before the message was ever received in Hawaii, Japanese planes had already devastated the Pacific Fleet. The only thing the stunned defenders could do was radio a desperate message to other forces: "Air raid Pearl Harbor, this is not a drill." By the time the final Japanese plane headed back out to sea, it left behind a devastated American military. Over 2,400 servicemen had been killed, with

another 2,000 wounded. Eighteen warships were sunk or damaged beyond repair, including eight battleships. One hundred and eighty eight aircraft had been destroyed on the ground, and another 159 were damaged. The entire American fighting force at Hawaii had been effectively put out of action.

Meanwhile, at approximately 0900 Hawaiian time, Admiral Hart and General Douglas MacArthur received Pearl Harbor's stunning message. Despite his firm belief that the Philippines were next to be attacked, General MacArthur believed that he could not strike the first blow, and had to wait until the Japanese took the initiative in the Philippines. Approximately ninety minutes later General MacArthur received orders to initiate the Rainbow 5 war plan, which specifically called for air strikes against the Japanese in Formosa. Yet, General MacArthur still seemed uncertain about his authority to conduct raids against the Japanese. Even with the knowledge that the Japanese had started their aggression, neither he nor Major General Brereton, Commander of the U.S. Far East Air Force, ordered that aircraft at Clark Field be dispersed to make them more difficult to attack.[14] Three times he denied Major General Brereton's request to bomb Japanese airfields on Formosa.[15]

Finally, General MacArthur agreed to a reconnaissance mission to Formosa, to be followed by a bombing mission. However, before the bomber crews were ready to conduct the mission, they were surprised by Japanese bombers, who caught the planes on the ground, wingtip to wingtip. In a repeat of the Pearl Harbor attack, the enemy bombers decimated the airfields, destroying over half of the B-17s and most of the fighter aircraft on the field. The offensive left Japan with air superiority, and without a doubt, hastened the fall of the Philippines. General MacArthur's inaction had cost him the bombers that

the United States had been depending on for the defense of the Philippines. Had MacArthur decided to strike Formosa immediately, his planes would have been in the air long before the enemy bombers arrived.[16]

In the aftermath of the opening attacks of World War Two, Admiral Kimmel was relieved as CINCPACFLT on 17 December 1941 and reverted to the rank of Rear Admiral. He subsequently applied for retirement, which became effective 28 February 1942. In 1945, a congressional inquiry into the cause of Pearl Harbor cited that he had been guilty of dereliction of duty in his role as CINCPACFLT and his efforts to protect Pearl Harbor. For the remainder of his life he fought to clear his name and be restored to the rank of Admiral (Retired). Despite 1942 legislation that allowed flag and general officers to retire at the highest rank held during service, Admiral Kimmel and his counterpart Lieutenant General Walter C. Short, Commanding General of the Army forces in Hawaii, were the only two officers who never reverted to their highest rank held.[17]

So what did Admiral Kimmel fail to do that warranted his dismissal? Without a doubt, there are many things that he should have done or known to prevent the havoc at Pearl Harbor, had he been provided adequate support. He was the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet, and was ultimately responsible for the safety of those he commanded. Command responsibility is a basic rule of leadership in the officer corps of the United States military. However, many things that Admiral Kimmel could not control contributed to Japan's ability to strike a devastating surprise blow. So was he given a fair hearing during the congressional inquiry in 1945? Or was he, along with Lieutenant

General Short, merely a sacrificial lamb, given up to quell the public rage at the horrific losses received from the Japanese?

Looking back on history, no one would dispute that the relief of Admiral Kimmel and the installation of Admiral Nimitz as the new CINCPACFLT benefited the American effort to win the war. Admiral Nimitz was a superb strategist and became one of the most vaunted heroes of the Navy. However, was the basis for Admiral Kimmel's relief justified? The fleet under his command was caught by surprise and decimated. Nevertheless, much of that blame can be passed to the leadership in Washington, who did not provide the material or information necessary for a proper defense. Crucial resources requested by CINCPACFLT for the Hawaiian defense were never provided. Admiral Kimmel was not kept informed of many critical intelligence intercepts, which may have shed light on the Japanese intentions if Kimmel had access to them. Additionally, Admiral Kimmel was not the only leader to misjudge the direction the Japanese wind was blowing. The prevailing attitude, in Washington, Pearl Harbor, and the Philippines was that the Japanese would strike closer to their Asian homeland. Of the likely American interests in the Far East, the United States military bases in the Philippines appeared to be the most likely target to many military and civilian leaders.

In light of these mitigating circumstances, why was Kimmel so abruptly dismissed? Was he treated similarly when compared with commanders who have also lost their commands to surprise attacks? General MacArthur offers a stark example of the difference in treatment received by two different commanders, who both met significant loss on the same day. Unlike Admiral Kimmel, MacArthur had more material and intelligence support to prevent a surprise attack on his forces. General MacArthur

expected a Japanese attack in the Far East, and most probably against his forces in the Philippines. Additionally, he knew that morning that the Japanese had begun hostilities against the United States by their attack on Pearl Harbor and that a state of war existed between the two countries. Yet, due to several hours of inaction and indecision, his air force was still caught on the ground unprepared and decimated.

In addition to his losses that December day, General MacArthur's poor planning led to a much quicker defeat of American and Filipino troops throughout the Philippines. The Rainbow 5 war plans called for these forces to fall back to Bataan and fight a holding action against the Japanese. To do this would require that he stockpile supplies in Bataan. General MacArthur disregarded these plans, preferring to fight the invaders on the beaches, and never stockpiled the necessary supplies. When his forces were unable to stop the Japanese at the beachheads, they eventually fell back to Bataan anyway, where they quickly ran short of desperately needed food, ammunition, and medical supplies. This resulted in the eventual surrender of the American and Filipino forces on 9 April 1942. Though not quite as dramatic as the loss of ships and aircraft at Pearl Harbor, the significance of the loss of an American foothold in the Philippines was no less of a blow to the Americans. It would take nearly three years for America to again stage forward bases in these islands to threaten Japan's sea lines.[18] Why then was General MacArthur not also dismissed? His actions directly contributed to the fall of the Philippines, a strategically critical area. Yet, upon his evacuation from the Philippines as they fell to the Japanese, General MacArthur was treated as a hero, and later placed in command of all American troops in the southwest Pacific.

In the end, what does all this mean today? Have the downfall of Admiral Kimmel and the study of his actions changed how America holds her admirals and generals accountable? One can easily draw many similarities between the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and the surprise attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, most notably in failures in the intelligence community. Were those that were charged with the defense of New York and Washington, D.C., held to the same standard as Admiral Kimmel?

Additional lessons from Admiral Kimmel' situation can be applied to the use of American military forces in relation to the Global War on Terrorism. In attempting to build a viable defense for Pearl Harbor, Admiral Kimmel was hampered by a lack of assets. Much of the equipment which he required was being diverted to support the British defense against the Germans in Europe, and to prepare a defense for General MacArthur in the Philippines. These equipment shortfalls greatly influenced some of the controversial decisions Admiral Kimmel was required to make, which in turn led to vulnerabilities in the Hawaiian area. Today, as America stretches its military capabilities to fight the Global War on Terrorism in countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines, the availability of military assets required for protection of the American homeland will diminish. Military commanders tasked with the protection of bases, posts, and airfields may find that they do not have the men or material to form an adequate defense. In the aftermath of a future attack on our bases and posts, will we find ourselves criticizing and castigating a military commander who did not have all that he needed to adequately protect the units under his command?

Although Admiral Kimmel was never brought before a court-martial for his alleged failures, the content of many official investigative reports irrevocably tarnished

his name and reputation. Neither before nor since Admiral Kimmel has there been another example of an American commander being held so informally culpable in such a controversial situation. He stands out as a singular example of the ultimate responsibility of command. An examination of how he was dealt with in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor will provide insight and lessons on the standard to which America holds military commanders responsible.

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[1] Gordon W. Prange, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor*. (New York: Viking, 1981), 45.

[2] John Costello, *The Pacific War*. (Fairfield, Pennsylvania: Atlantic Communications, Inc., 1981) 85-87.

[3] Edward L. Beach, Capt., USN (Ret.), *Scapegoats: A Defense of Kimmel and Short at Pearl Harbor*, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 60-63.

[4] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 11-12.

[5] Robert W. Love, Jr., ed., *Pearl Harbor Revisited*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 112-113.

[6] John Jacob Beck, *MacArthur and Wainwright: Sacrifice of the Philippines*. (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 2-3.

[7] Love, *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, 114.

[8] Beck, *MacArthur and Wainwright*, 3.

[9] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 2-9.

[10] Beck, *MacArthur and Wainwright*, 5-6.

[11] *Report by the Secretary of the Navy to the President* (Hereafter referred to as *Knox Report*) [database on-line] (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944, accessed 12 October 2002); available from http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/pha/knox/knox_sec.html; Internet, 1.

[12] Costello, *The Pacific War*, 130.

[13] Prange, *At Dawn We Slept*, 494.

[14] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 71-72.

[15] Costello, *The Pacific War*, 141-146.

[16] Beck, *MacArthur and Wainwright*, 13-15.

[17] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 183-184.

[18] Ibid., 70-71.

CHAPTER 2

PREPARATIONS AT PEARL HARBOR

Among the abundant factors that allowed the Japanese to decimate American forces on 7 December, one of the most significant was the positioning of the Pacific Fleet in Hawaii, 2,200 miles from the coast of the United States. Arguably, this may be considered the first in the long line of mistakes. Before 1940, Pearl Harbor served only as a forward staging base for the United States Pacific Fleet. Only one carrier task force was permanently stationed there. The bulk of the Pacific Fleet was based in San Pedro, California. Annually, in the spring, the fleet would sail out to Hawaii for exercises, using the Pearl Harbor base for rest and refit.[1]

With steadily growing tensions between Japan and the United States, the fleet again conducted these yearly exercises in April 1940. At the conclusion of the training, the fleet was held in Hawaii on orders from Navy Department.[2] Ultimately, however, this decision was coming from President Roosevelt. Concerned with the security of the possessions of the United States, along with those of Great Britain and the Netherlands, the President was using the forward presence of the fleet to send a message to the government of Japan. Loud and clear, he was announcing the intention of the United States to defend itself and its possessions from forward bases, far from the West Coast. Unfortunately, this move, intended to serve as a deterrent to Japanese aggression, also added to Japan's feeling of being cornered in the Pacific, and helped to push her government closer to war.

As days turned to weeks and weeks to months, it became clear that the move of the Pacific Fleet was intended to be permanent. Admiral Kimmel's predecessor, Admiral

James O. Richardson, hotly contested this move. As Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Fleet (CINCUS) and Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT), Admiral Richardson felt that forward basing the Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor would make it much more susceptible to a surprise attack. Pearl Harbor was not outfitted for defense nearly as well as the West Coast port of Long Beach. Additionally, the shore facilities had not yet been fully developed to support the fleet. In Admiral Richardson's view, a Pacific Fleet based in California could be protected and readied for war much more easily.

His feelings about this were so strong that in October 1940 he traveled to Washington to meet with the President and the Secretary of the Navy to discuss this move and proffer his deep concerns. Admiral Richardson presented vehement objections to the move, and attempted to persuade the President that returning the fleet to California was the best move. However, President Roosevelt felt he could not pull the fleet back, as this would be interpreted by Japan as backing down and signal weakness in the American diplomatic position. Frustrated at his lack of success with the President, Admiral Richardson blurted out his feelings: "Mr. President, I feel that I must tell you that the senior officers of the Navy do not have the trust and confidence in the civilian leadership of this country that is essential for the successful prosecution of a war in the Pacific."[3]

Rather than convincing the President to reconsider the positioning of the fleet, Admiral Richardson's outburst insulted the President. Whether he intended to or not, Admiral Richardson had personally attacked the President and his administration. Having lost confidence in one of his most important naval commanders, President Roosevelt chose to remove Admiral Richardson from his post. On 5 January 1941, Admiral Richardson received a telegram informing him of his dismissal, and naming Rear

Admiral Kimmel as his replacement.[4] In turning over duties as CINCUS and CINCPACFLT, Admiral Richardson briefed Rear Admiral Kimmel on the status of the fleet, and his concerns with its stationing.[5] Mindful that Admiral Richardson's overbearing objections had brought about his subsequent demise, Rear Admiral Kimmel knew that he would have to dramatically improve the fleet's readiness in Hawaii, while simultaneously avoiding any perceived criticism of administration decisions. The fleet was in Hawaii to stay; Admiral Kimmel's job was to tread lightly and make the best with what he had. It is ironic that this apprehension about expressing great concern over the protection of the Hawaiian Fleet ultimately may have brought about the end of Admiral Kimmel's career.

The repositioning of the fleet had actually placed it at a greater risk to Japanese attack. Hawaii's defenses were unable to adequately protect the fleet. Additionally, the move placed America's naval force much closer to Japan, making a surprise attack more feasible. Despite the grave strategic error of this positioning of the Pacific Fleet warships, President Roosevelt's error in judgement seems to have been forgotten by history. Admiral Kimmel, who had to command this delicate predicament, was not offered such courtesies in most of the investigations following the attack. The most damning of these investigations, and one of the earliest, was the Roberts Commission Report.

On 18 December 1942, President Roosevelt appointed a commission to investigate the circumstances surrounding the attack. This commission produced the first detailed investigation into the background of the disaster. Confronting widespread public outrage and heated congressional criticism over the Japanese victory, President Roosevelt chose Supreme Court Associate Justice Owen J. Roberts to head the commission.

Roosevelt believed that Associate Justice Roberts would pay close attention to the need to promote national unity as he conducted the investigation.[6] This seems to be exactly what Associate Justice Roberts did, which has been the basis for great controversy about the commission's report. The report was quick to judge Admiral Kimmel, and his Army counterpart in Hawaii, Lieutenant General Short. Operating under questionable procedures, the report officially blamed the two commanders for dereliction of duty.[7] However, despite its quest for "facts," the commission did not even address the question of the President's policy of stationing the fleet in a forward base.

President Roosevelt had specifically prevented the commission from investigating any responsibility by himself or his top officials by controlling the specifics of how the commission would operate. The commission was directed to investigate only those personnel who were at Pearl Harbor.[8] This provided a convenient position for Justice Roberts to bypass the scrutiny of basing the fleet in Pearl Harbor. Justice Roberts was certainly aware of the controversy surrounding this basing decision, and knew questions would arise when this was not addressed in the final report. In an effort to stem criticism, he wrote in the opening paragraphs of the report "We feel that the national policy in this matter is one that has been settled by those responsible for such decisions and that it is not within our province that of finding the facts respecting the attack of December 7, and the responsibility for the resulting damage to the United States to discuss any such topic."[9] On direct assignment from the President, it appears that Justice Roberts and his commission were unwilling to insinuate that any of the blame for the disaster fell on the President or his administration. This resulted in a politicized report that shifted blame to the Hawaiian commanders.

The Roberts Commission never addressed the intercepted Japanese messages that Washington held but Admiral Kimmel never received. Some may view this as evidence that the commission was ignoring evidence in order to impute Admiral Kimmel. However, the commission was never aware of the contents of these messages, code named MAGIC.[10] Certainly, with the ongoing war with Japan, the need to maintain secrecy of this crucial American capability was paramount, and Admiral Kimmel would have to face the commission without this knowledge. However, the Roberts Commission bias against Admiral Kimmel seems readily apparent in Justice Roberts' later remarks. Testifying at the Joint Congressional Hearings, Justice Roberts stated "The MAGIC was not shown to us. I would not have bothered to read it if it had been shown to us."[11] This single statement gives a glimpse into the mind of the man who headed the investigation. It is hard to believe that he did not hold some significant bias against the two Hawaiian commanders. Wholesale dismissal of possible critical evidence, even after the investigation is complete, is inexcusable behavior for any commission head that is tasked to determine the true facts. His impartiality can certainly be questioned.

From the beginning, it seems that the Roberts Commission was out to find fault with the Pearl Harbor commanders. The direction coming from President Roosevelt was that the investigation should determine whether the commanders were guilty of any dereliction of duty or errors of judgement.[12] The commission was direct and forceful, and often intimidating. Rather than using rules that would be found in any formal investigation as specified in Army or Navy regulations, the commission established their own rules.[13] One of the members of the commission, Admiral William Harrison Standley, had retired from naval service in 1937.[14] Having held the office of CNO during his

career, it is certain that Admiral Standley was familiar with normal investigation procedures.[15] Yet, he was appalled at the confrontational, almost hostile attitude displayed towards Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short by the chair and some members of the commission. Though he would eventually sign the report that crucified these commanders, he would later express regret about the commission and how it was conducted. After the war, he would write about the conduct of the Roberts Commission "I was shocked at the irregularity of the procedure of the Commission and at the reliance placed upon unsworn testimony."[16]

For Admiral Kimmel's part, he was unaware that he was even being investigated. Justice Roberts assured him that the commission was a "fact finding" mission, and neither he nor Lieutenant General Short was being accused of any wrongdoing.[17] He was not allowed to have a lawyer, nor was he allowed to witness the testimony of any other person called to testify.[18] Therefore, he was unaware of any testimony that was prejudicial to him or his actions. He was not even aware of the criticism and charges of dereliction of duty levied by the commission until after the report was submitted to the President and then released to the public. When he saw the transcript of his testimony, Admiral Kimmel noted numerous errors, which had resulted from the commission's decision to use a civilian stenographer. Unfamiliar with common military terminology and procedures, the civilian stenographer had made significant errors in the testimony.[19] Admiral Kimmel demanded to be allowed to correct the records using a military stenographer, but was denied. Determined that his correct testimony be included, he continued to press. Finally, the commission agreed to allow a corrected testimony to be attached as an addendum to the report.[20] In stark contrast to the treatment of the Hawaiian

commanders, the Army's Chief of Staff and the Navy's Chief of Naval Operations had been given the courtesy of reviewing and correcting transcripts before they were included in the official record.[21]

The Roberts Commission spent a great amount of time dissecting Navy and Army plans for the defense of Hawaii and the forces stationed there. During the summer of 1941, Admiral Kimmel and General Walter C. Short, Commanding General of the Hawaiian Department, developed a local joint defense plan, entitled "Joint Coastal Frontier Defense Plan, Hawaiian Coastal Frontier." This joint plan was to be activated in the event of war, or upon the concurrence of the commanders during an emergency.[22] This plan was in place on 7 December, but was never activated until after the Japanese attack. Based on the information provided to them at that time, the two commanders did not consider the international situation to warrant implementation of this plan.

Admiral Kimmel, however, was no slouch of a leader. Appreciative of the impending threat posed by Japan, and of Hawaii's vulnerability to attack, he pressed for continual improvements to defenses. Even the Roberts Commission noted that "Plans and preparations against the contingency of war...were being ceaselessly carried out."[23] Yet, he was unable to complete all his desired preparations due to a lack of material. Many of his resources, including three modern battleships and an aircraft carrier, were diverted to the East Coast in support of a possible Atlantic war.[24] Requests for more support were turned down. Priority for armament had now shifted to the Philippines.[25] These defenses, which service chiefs had deemed essential for Hawaiian protection in early 1941, were now sent to General MacArthur. Fighters and antiaircraft guns which would have provided a more capable defense of Hawaii were never received. Important among the

equipment that Hawaii would not get were long range B-17 bombers which would have added to the patrol and defensive ability against the Japanese fleet.[26] The Army had promised 180 new B-17 bombers would be provided to the Hawaiian Department. By 6 December, only twelve were based in Hawaii, and maintenance problems had made six of these unavailable.[27]

Most significant in these requests was an appeal for 250 long-range PBY patrol planes from Rear Admiral Claud C. Bloch. As Commandant of the 14th Naval District, Rear Admiral Bloch was responsible for the naval base and its security, and for fleet support. Three times, on 30 December 1940, 7 May 1941, and 17 October 1941, Rear Admiral Bloch had written to the CNO about the severe shortage of patrol planes in Hawaii. Each of his appeals for more aircraft was strongly endorsed by CINCPACFLT, twice under Admiral Kimmel's tenure.[28]

The requested aircraft were to be based on Oahu to provide Admiral Bloch a surveillance capability to 700 miles from the Hawaiian Islands. After the third request, Admiral Stark promised Admiral Kimmel 100 of the 250 requested PBYs, explaining that the remainder was needed for the support for the United Kingdom. However, not even one of the promised 100 aircraft was ever was sent to the Pacific Fleet.[29]

Though aware of the shortage of aircraft, Admiral Kimmel had a real need for these assets. Rear Admiral Bloch had based his patrol plane requirements on the need to conduct daily patrols to the maximum range of the patrol aircraft. In order to search the entire 360-degree arc around Hawaii to a range of eight hundred miles (the maximum range of the aircraft), a fleet of eighty-four planes was necessary. Each aircraft would be in the air for sixteen hours. Therefore, in order to provide required maintenance during

protracted operations, allow a pool of planes in reserve for emergency searches, and provide air reconnaissance for ships leaving and entering harbor, approximately 250 planes were required.[30]

The Navy Department's failure to provide the promised PBY aircraft left Rear Admiral Bloch without a single aircraft under his direct command. In an effort to provide the 14th Naval District with some form of air reconnaissance, Admiral Kimmel placed Patrol Wing Two (PATWING TWO), consisting of sixty nine patrol aircraft, under Rear Admiral Bloch's control. Patrol Wing Two's Commanding Officer, Vice Admiral Patrick N. L. Bellinger, was directed by Rear Admiral Bloch to establish joint air defense plans in conjunction with the Army's Hawaiian Air Force. By the end of March 1941, these plans had been established.[31] The one flaw in this plan was that it left the reconnaissance responsibility to the few fleet planes in Pearl Harbor. Separate from planes assigned to naval bases or naval districts, fleet planes were allocated for the direct support of the fleet when it went to sea. When not in support of the fleet, the patrol wing required time for maintenance, training, and rest and relaxation for the crew, much as the ships of the fleet would return to port for the same. This time was necessary to keep the planes and their crews at the operational efficiency required to support the fleet. This meant that Rear Admiral Bloch could only use these planes for patrolling the Hawaiian area whenever they were not directly in use by the fleet for exercises or operations, or down for maintenance and training. If necessary, additional air resources could be called upon by reducing the maintenance and training time for short periods. In the early days of December 1941, there were only enough aircraft available in the Hawaiian area to cover slightly over one-fourth of the area from which an enemy could approach. More

significantly, that coverage could be maintained for only a few days at a time, at the expense of maintenance, training, and crew rest. Eventually an aggressive schedule would take its toll on the crews, the planes, and the extremely limited stocks of spare parts in Hawaii.[32]

With this in mind, Admiral Kimmel made the controversial decision not to conduct air patrols. Although in retrospect it played a large part in the ability of the Japanese to surprise the American forces, this was far from a dereliction of duty. Admiral Kimmel made a deliberate decision, with a calculated military risk. He needed PATWING TWO to concentrate on preparing for war, in conjunction with the fleet. If he were to divert the wing's efforts to patrolling the Hawaiian area, he would be reducing the effectiveness of preparing the fleet for what appeared to be an imminent war with Japan. Besides, in June 1941 he had been assured by Admiral Stark that he would be given all information concerning Japanese movements and aggression. If intelligence indicated there was reason for concern for the safety of Hawaii, he could suspend training and commence air patrols until the threat diminished. With little reason to believe that any substantial Japanese force could approach Hawaii without some indications, he chose to allocate his resources to the fleet.[33]

In this decision, Admiral Kimmel was attempting to balance the need for security with the requirement to train for war, both directives given to him by Admiral Stark. On 3 April 1941, CINCPACFLT received a message from the CNO instructing him to devote as much time as possible to training in preparation for a war against Japan. In the months to follow, Admiral Kimmel's headquarters would receive many indications and warnings that suggested forthcoming Japanese aggression in the Pacific. If Admiral Kimmel were

to devote fleet resources to a Hawaiian defensive posture each time indications were received, the operating forces would never be able to train as a fleet. This was not the desire of the CNO, who testified before the Naval Court of Inquiry that he did not intend for Admiral Kimmel to restrict training, even after he sent his "war warning" message on 24 November. Simplified, Admiral Kimmel believed that any initial Japanese aggression would come in the Western Pacific. He had little reason to believe Pearl Harbor was in serious danger, and he needed to determine how to allocate his resources. Should his limited forces train for almost certain war, or take up a defensive posture to protect against an unlikely threat? His choice, looking at the information available to him, was logical and proper, and confronted the greater threat.[34]

One of the most significant criticisms levied upon Admiral Kimmel by critics was that he did not coordinate the defense of the Hawaiian Islands with Lieutenant General Short. Less than two months after the attack, the Roberts Commission issued its report, lashing out at Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short for perceived inaction. In what would probably be the most damaging criticism in any of the post-attack investigations, the commission declared that "it was a dereliction of duty on the part of each of them not to consult and confer with the other respecting the meaning and intent of the warnings and the appropriate measures of defense required by the imminence of hostilities. The attitude of each, that he was not required to inform himself of, and his lack of interest in, the measures undertaken by the other . . . demonstrated on the part of each a lack of appreciation of the responsibilities vested in them."[35] In the quest to quell public outrage over the disastrous attack, the Roberts Commission seemed to be aiming for the two commanders in Hawaii. At this stage in the war, the United States struggle in

the Pacific was just beginning to stem the enemy's advances, and the outcome of the war was far from certain. In the interests of public morale and the war effort, it would be much better for the populace to believe that the disaster at Pear Harbor was the result of incompetence on the part of the commanders, rather than the remarkable Japanese ingenuity in planing and executing the attack. The Japanese were not more skillful; rather, their success was due to the inefficiencies of two derelict commanders. Presented to the public in this manner, the "problem" had been fixed by the removal of the two commanders, and the nation could now continue on to ultimate victory against this inferior enemy. That is what was implied by the Roberts Commission report.

One of the great faults of the Roberts Commission report is the idea that it seems to purport that Admiral Kimmel bore direct responsibility for the protection of Pearl Harbor. However, Admiral Kimmel's responsibility was to the Pacific Fleet. The Roberts Commission Report even contradicted its own subtle views by stating "It is the Army's function to insure the security of Pearl Harbor against attack, and the Navy's function to support the Army indirectly by operations at sea and directly by making available therefor such instrumentalities of the Navy as are on the vessels of the fleet when in harbor and are located or based on shore either temporarily or permanently."[36] In the report by the Navy Court of Inquiry, this same concept was also laid out in nearly the same wording. This is not to say that Admiral Kimmel was not responsible for the safety of the ships under his command. Nor did he wash his hands completely of the need for defense. On the contrary, Admiral Kimmel was acutely aware of his responsibilities, and tackled them in earnest.

Certainly, there can be no doubt that Admiral Kimmel was proactive in providing for defense of the fleet throughout his area of responsibility. On 16 October 1941, the CNO sent a message to the Commanders-in-Chief of the Atlantic, Asiatic, and Pacific Fleets. This message stated that with the formation of a new Japanese Cabinet, Japan might take a more threatening stance, and U.S. interests might be more at risk. The CNO directed the CINCs to take precautions in light of this information. In complying with this directive, Admiral Kimmel placed submarines on patrol around Wake and Midway islands, provided Midway with twelve patrol planes to conduct daily patrols, reinforced Johnston, Wake, and Palmyra Islands, and ordered new security measures in the fleet operating areas. These preparations were reported and approved by the CNO on 22 October. Especially concerned with Japanese submarines, on 28 November 1941, Admiral Kimmel issued instructions to the fleet to depth charge any unidentified submarine located in any fleet operating area. In actuality, this was a violation of earlier directives, which indicated that the United States government desired that Japan strike the first blow in a war. Admiral Kimmel's willing disregard of this directive in the interests of protection of his ships is an indication of the aggressiveness with which worked to defend his fleet. [37]

More examples of Admiral Kimmel's emphasis on protection are seen in some of his antiaircraft preparations. Admiral Kimmel and Rear Admiral Bloch were both very aware of the insufficiency of the air defenses in the Territory of Hawaii, especially around Pearl Harbor. Rear Admiral Bloch did not control a single antiaircraft gun on the shore around the naval base. Knowing that Lieutenant General Short required as much help as he could get in the defense of the base, ships were ordered to remain at readiness

condition three while in port. This readiness condition, ordered months before the attack, continuously maintained ammunition at each secondary and antiaircraft gun, and a portion of the gun crews ready in the case of a surprise attack. Notably, Fleet orders provided for the specific berthing of ships in order to evenly distribute the amount of antiaircraft fire from ships in harbor. This means that, on the morning of 7 December, a large number of ship's antiaircraft guns were augmenting the shore batteries. Between this augment of available firepower and the assistance from fleet aircraft, it is obvious that the Pacific Fleet, under orders from Admiral Kimmel, was doing its best to assist the Army in the defense of the islands.[38]

Despite the impression that Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short did not coordinate efforts, the reverse is true. The two men shared a friendly, cooperative relationship, both socially and officially, and would often consult with each other concerning Hawaii's defense. In 1944, contradicting the charges of dereliction of duty put forth in the Roberts Commission report, the Navy Court of Inquiry found that "Each was mindful of his own responsibility and of the responsibilities vested in the other. *Each was informed of measures being undertaken by the other in the defense of the Base to a degree sufficient for all useful purposes.*" (Emphasis added).[39] By this standard, it is apparent that Admiral Kimmel was fulfilling his duties, despite inferences by the Roberts Commission report to the contrary. Unfortunately, this implication of Admiral Kimmel by the Roberts Commission would tend to prejudice later investigations.

Despite the allegations levied at Admiral Kimmel by the Roberts Commission, Admiral Kimmel had worked hard to ensure the Pacific Fleet was at the highest state of readiness for war. The protection of Pearl Harbor, while one of his responsibilities, was

not his only focus. Impaired by limited resources, he was forced to make difficult decisions on the most productive use of his forces. He carefully coordinated Navy assets with those of the Army in order to provide adequate defense for both. Unfortunately, his decisions were based on incorrect or missing information, exacerbated by a lack of intelligence support from Washington.

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[1] John Costello, *Days of Infamy* (New York: Pocket Books, 1994), 44.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Prange, *At Dawn We Slept*, 39.

[4] Ibid., 44.

[5] Ibid., 46-47.

[6] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 250

[7] Husband E. Kimmel, Rear Admiral, USN (Ret.), *Admiral Kimmel's Story* [book on-line] (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955, accessed 03 January 2003); available from http://www.rooseveltmyth.com/KimmelStory/; Internet.

[8] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 252.

[9] *Report of the Commission Appointed by the President of the United States to Investigate and Report the Facts Relating to the Attack Made by Japanese Armed Forces Upon Pearl Harbor in the Territory of Hawaii on December 7, 1941* (Hereafter referred to as *Roberts Commission Report*) [database on-line] (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1942, accessed 02 January 2003); Internet, 2.

[10] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 253.

[11] Ibid.

[12] *Roberts Commission Report*, 2.

[13] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 114.

[14] Prange, *At Dawn We Slept*, 593.

[15] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 114.

[16] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 115-116.

[19] Ibid., 116-117.

[20] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[21] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 113-117.

[22] *Roberts Commission Report*, 4.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Prange, *At Dawn We Slept*, 133.

[25] Costello, *The Pacific War*, 104.

[26] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 62.

[27] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 14-15.

[30] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[31] *Report of Navy Court of Inquiry* [database on-line] (Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944, accessed 02 January 2003); Internet, 304-310.

[32] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[33] *Report of Navy Court of Inquiry*, 309-310.

[34] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[35] *Roberts Commission Report*, 21-22.

[36] Ibid., 18.

[37] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[38] *Report of Navy Court of Inquiry*, 307-308.

[39] Ibid., 300.

CHAPTER 3

INTELLIGENCE FAILURES

Information is knowledge, and knowledge is power. So is a lack of information, or incorrect information, a lack of power? Did the senior Navy leadership hold back the capability necessary for Admiral Kimmel to defend his fleet? Admiral Kimmel believed that he could rely on Washington to give him the best intelligence to predict the Japanese intentions. With the growing tensions leading up to the early days of December, there seem to be few navy leaders who did not believe that a war with Japan was imminent. Moreover, the history and character of the Japanese military indicated that when war broke out, it would most likely be with a surprise strike at American forces. The only questions seemed to be where and when.

There seems to be little doubt that Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short, though charged with the defense of Hawaii, were not given all the information that they needed. The investigations in the years following the Pearl Harbor attack have uncovered numerous messages and intelligence findings that were not passed to the Hawaiian commands. Why would these commanders not be given this information? Part of the problem seems to stem from the decision to move America's Pacific defensive perimeter from Hawaii to the Philippines. This change in policy also changed the thinking in the minds of many of Washington's planners. General MacArthur was now on the forward periphery, and Pearl Harbor was thousands of miles inside it. There seems to have been an unwritten assumption that the Hawaiian commanders were now secondary in importance and "need to know."[1]

Admiral Kimmel's first indication that the Pacific Fleet was not getting all the necessary information from Washington came soon after he took command as CIINCPACFLT. Vice Admiral Wilson Brown, who had just come from a job in the Navy Department, indicated to Admiral Kimmel that there was confusion in Washington concerning the responsibility for furnishing information to CINCPACFLT. The Operations Department considered it the responsibility of the Intelligence Department, while Intelligence pointed to Operations as the responsible office. Admiral Kimmel, concerned that he had been missing critical information, addressed this matter in a letter to the Chief of Naval Operations on 18 February 1941. Admiral Stark replied that he had conferred with the head of the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), Captain Kirk, who had acknowledged ONI's responsibility to ensure Admiral Kimmel received all essential information.[2] Under this system, decoding of messages was the responsibility of the Office of Communication, but the translation, evaluation, and dissemination of messages fell under the control of ONI.[3]

Admiral Kimmel's anxiety about being "kept in the loop" was not fully abolished with this response, and two months later, he hand-delivered a second letter to the CNO. His remarks demonstrate his growing concerns, and extended a request that Washington should provide greater support:

> The Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, is in a very difficult position. He is far removed from the seat of government, in a complex and rapidly changing situation. He is, as a rule, not informed as to the policy, or change of policy, reflected in current events and naval movements and, as a result, is unable to evaluate the possible effect upon his own situation . . . Full and authoritative knowledge of current policies and objectives . . . would enable the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, to modify, adapt, or even re-orient his possible courses of action to conform to current concepts. This is particularly applicable to the current Pacific Situation, where the necessities for intensive training of a partially trained Fleet must be carefully balanced against the

> desirability of interruption of this training by strategic dispositions, or otherwise, to meet impending eventualities . . . It is suggested that it be made a cardinal principle that the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, be immediately informed of all important developments as they occur and by the quickest secure means available.[4]

Admiral Stark again assured Admiral Kimmel that he would be kept informed of all important developments as they occurred. With two separate assurances from the highest admiral in the U.S. Navy, Admiral Kimmel felt confident that he was now a priority for essential information. Information flow did, in fact, improve after these two letters, but as time went on and December approached, the intelligence that was provided began to diminish again.

Admiral Kimmel was more reliant on intelligence support from Washington than even he realized. Most notable among the missing intelligence were the intercepted Japanese messages. Since 1935, American military code breakers had been reading large amounts of Japan's coded messages under the project known as "Operation MAGIC." The Japanese diplomatic code was given the unassuming name of "PURPLE."[5] Through sheer ingenuity, the Americans had been able to construct a copy of the Japanese machine used to transmit PURPLE messages, and had been able to determine that the code settings were changed on a ten-day cycle. Eight copies of the PURPLE decoding machine were built, and one was initially scheduled to be delivered to Pearl Harbor. However, three PURPLE machines, including the Pearl Harbor machine, were traded to the British government for centimeter radar technology and a British copy of the German Enigma coding machine.[6] This deal was meant to assist London in anticipating any Japanese moves against Singapore or Australia, while providing the Americans with an edge over the Germans. However, one of the remaining PURPLE machines was sent to

the Cavite naval base in the Philippines in January 1941. It was intended to give General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Thomas C. Hart timely intelligence on Japanese moves.

The MAGIC intercepts offer the most striking example of the decision not to pass information to Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short . The PURPLE Machines had secretly been created to allow the United States to decode Japanese diplomatic messages, and extreme secrecy surrounded this capability.[7] In order to protect secrecy, dissemination of the MAGIC intercepts was highly limited, and did not include either of the Hawaiian commanders. Despite this extremely important well of knowledge, neither Admiral Kimmel nor Lieutenant General Short was ever brought into the program. They were not even aware of the existence of the PURPLE Machines.[8]

Instead, the Hawaiian commanders were only given knowledge of the content of some of the decoded Japanese messages. Some Japanese messages were quoted directly in messages from the service chiefs, while other messages merely alluded to substance of decoded intercepts. Nevertheless, neither Admiral Kimmel nor Lieutenant General Short was receiving the entirety of the decoded messages. It seems inexcusable that Washington would not provide CINCPACFLT all intercepted Japanese message traffic. Even if a PURPLE machine could not be provided to Admiral Kimmel, copies of all messages should have been sent to his command. This would not have been difficult, as a similar system had already been established. A system of checks and balances was set up with Station CAST in the Philippines to ensure that the station received copies of any PURPLE messages that had not been received.[9]

The information that Admiral Kimmel did not receive from the PURPLE messages directly impacted his decisions on the defense of Pearl Harbor. As argument

against Admiral Kimmel, critics point to a letter written by the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of War on 24 January 1941. Citing this letter as evidence, they charge that the admiral knew an aerial attack on the fleet in harbor was possible, and that he failed to prepare for this possibility. In the letter discussing the defense of the Hawaiian area, the Secretary of the Navy listed six types of attack to which the Hawaiian forces might be vulnerable. Listed in order of importance, the first two were an aerial bombing attack and an aerial torpedo attack. The third was sabotage. Admiral Kimmel, Lieutenant General Short , and Rear Admiral Bloch all received copies of this letter in February 1941.

Without a doubt, in the spring of 1941 Admiral Kimmel was well aware of the possibility of an attack by carrier-borne aircraft, and this was of the highest concern for Secretary Knox. Yet by November 1941, Admiral Kimmel had received a differing view from the CNO concerning the most likely danger from the Japanese. On 27 November the CNO, Admiral Stark sent a message to CINCPACFLT and the Asiatic Fleet Commander that stated that the message was to be considered a war warning. In the message, the CNO expressed the belief that Japan was expected to make aggressive moves in the following days, most likely an amphibious expedition against the Philippines, Thai, the Kra Peninsula, or Borneo.[10] Guam, Samoa, and the continental districts had been directed to take precautions to guard against sabotage.[11] This message became known as the "war warning message." On 30 November, a second message from the CNO to the commander of the Asiatic Fleet, with a copy provided to CINCPACFLT, also indicated that Japan was expected to launch an attack against the Kra Peninsula.[12] The view being fed to Admiral Kimmel by Washington was that the Japanese would strike in the Western Pacific, and mid-Pacific areas needed to be on alert for saboteurs.

Analyzing the information provided by the CNO, Admiral Kimmel continued to make his war preparations with the view that fleet training was paramount. Nothing in the "war warning message" indicated any direct threat to the Hawaiian Islands. Conversely, the CNO was advocating the view that Japanese aggression would first be seen in the Far East. Even Guam and Samoa, much closer to the Japanese threat, had been directed to protect against sabotage.

The logical conclusion, as reached by Admiral Kimmel, was that Hawaii was not considered in any immediate threat from the Japanese Fleet. In his view, Japan would initiate a war with the United States in a strike against American interests in the Far East. As a critical part of War Plan Orange, the Pacific Fleet would defeat Japanese naval forces in the Western Pacific. To do this, the fleet required constant training in preparation for war. If Admiral Kimmel forces in Hawaii were to assume a defensive posture against an unlikely attack, they would have to sacrifice essential training. He chose to accept the risk of attack and continue to train his fleet.

Following the "war warning message" from the CNO, information continued to build in Washington about the impending hostilities with Japan. Alerted by the British in November 1941, Naval Intelligence officials had learned of the Japanese communications plan for alerting their embassies and consulates concerning the imminence of war with the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands. By using the Radio Tokyo broadcast, the Japanese planed to code this information as a fictitious weather report. The statement "Higashi no kaze ame," translated as "East wind rain," was to serve as a warning that war with the United States was unavoidable, and that embassies and consulates should begin

destroying classified information. Similar codes would refer to war with the British, Dutch, and Russians.[13]

Beginning on 28 November, American Intelligence stations around the world, assisted by British and Dutch stations in the southern pacific area, were directed to monitor the daily broadcast from Tokyo for this message. With this, the United States might have a few days notice before the Japanese initiated hostilities. The naval communications intelligence station at Pearl Harbor was one of these stations. On the evening of 3 December 1941 a navy station on the United States East Coast intercepted the message and relayed the intercept to Naval Communications Intelligence Headquarters in Washington. However, none of the other stations, either American or allied, were aware the message had been detected. The presumption by these other stations was that the message had not been sent.[14] This message was later referred to as the "Winds Message."

During the Hart Investigation, Captain Laurance F. Safford, head of the Communications Security Section of Naval Communications, testified about the handling of the information in the "Winds Message." According to Captain Safford, "Both Naval Intelligence and the Navy Department C. I. Unit regarded the "Winds Message" as definitely committing the Japanese Government to war with the United States and Britain, whereas the information of earlier dates had been merely statements of intent. We believed that the Japanese would attack by Saturday (6 December), or by Sunday (7 December) at the latest."[15] Acting on this information, and believing it to be of utmost significance, Captain Arthur H. McCollum, Office of Naval Intelligence Far East Section Head, drafted a lengthy message to the Commanders of the Pacific and Asiatic fleets.

This message summarized the significant events to date, and ended with a direct warning that war with Japan was imminent. However, the message was never sent, again leaving Admiral Kimmel in the dark concerning the Japanese intentions. [16]

It is inconceivable how any responsible leadership could fail to keep subordinate commanders informed as to likely dates of attack. Whether or not the CNO and his staff were fully convinced of the significance of the "Winds Message," Washington owed it to the Hawaiian commanders to inform them of the possibility of Japanese action during this projected timeframe. Admiral Kimmel's defensive decisions were based on the shortage of resources available, and his inability to implement some defensive measures for extended periods. Yet, Naval Intelligence regarded the "Winds Message" as indications of attack within a *very specific* four-day period, between 3 December and 7 December. Knowledge of these specific dates would have allowed the Hawaiian commanders to place their forces on higher alert through 7 December. Admiral Kimmel was relying on Washington to provide him just this type of intelligence. Had Admiral Kimmel been given this information, he may have chosen to implement the air patrols or send the fleet out to sea until 7 December had passed. Lieutenant General Short may have instituted continuous radar coverage for Oahu, or he may have dispersed his aircraft. Instead, they were never given the information that would have enabled them to act.

Another of the most critical pieces of information that Admiral Kimmel never received was a message sent to the Japanese consul in Hawaii on 24 September 1941. Commonly referred to as the "bomb plot message" or the "harbor berthing plan" in the post-attack investigations, it was a critical clue to the intentions of the Japanese government. Sent in the Japanese consular code, which was relatively easily read by U.S.

intelligence codebreakers, it was "backshelved" until early October due to the heavy emphasis on messages encoded in the more important PURPLE code. When it was decoded, it revealed a highly suspicious order to a Japanese Naval Officer who was a member of the consul's staff. The message divided Pearl Harbor into five subareas, and directed that regular reports be made concerning the location of vessels within these five subareas, most specifically aircraft carriers and warships.[17]

Except for one other specific in this message, the Americans may have attributed this request for information to Japanese attempts to keep track of the location of the fleet. However, the message also requested specifics about which wharves, buoys, docks, and anchorages vessels were located at, and distinct reporting when there were two or more vessels alongside the same wharf. [18] This was a very unusual instruction, since the Japanese had not requested this specific information for any other region. As Admiral Kimmel would later testify, this specific intelligence order pointed only to one thing: an attack upon ships in port. Otherwise, this information was pointless and lost all value when ships moved in and out of port. As if to emphasize the time criticality of this intelligence, on 15 November the Japanese consul was directed to make the "ships in harbor" report irregularly, but at least twice a week. Additionally, on 29 November another message directed, "We have been receiving reports from you on ship movements, but in future will you also report even when there are no movements?"[19]

Admiral Wilkinson, the Director of Naval Intelligence, discounted the importance of this direction to the Japanese consul. During the Joint Congressional Committee Hearing he testified that the request for specific locations of ships was not without value, but that it "did give an inference of work going on aboard [a ship] which would be of

value to the question of when she might be moved, what her state of readiness [was]."[20] But that view does not answer why the Japanese did not simply order the consul to report which ships had work going on onboard. Moreover, in a separate message on 2 December, the Japanese instructed their diplomats to also report on the presence of antiaircraft balloons and torpedo nets in and around Pearl Harbor.[21] This information clearly pointed to attempts to ascertain the defenses of the harbor.

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Captain Allan G. Kirk, had suspicions that the September Bomb Plot Message might be a precursor to an air strike against Pearl Harbor, and wanted to forward this information to CINCPACFLT. However, Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner, the director of Navy War Plans, had established authority over dissemination of intelligence information to the Pacific commands. Admiral Turner refused to pass this information on to Admiral Kimmel. Captain Kirk's objections were strong and pointed, but failed to persuade Rear Admiral Turner. Admiral Turner had prided himself on what he regarded as his ability to predict the movements of the Japanese. He firmly believed that Japan's intentions were to push north and attack Russia. Despite all the estimates coming from the Far East Section of ONI which predicted a southward movement of Japanese forces, Admiral Turner refused to be swayed. By controlling the information disseminated to the Pacific, Turner filtered out any indications that might conflict with his prediction of a Japanese grab at Russian territory.[22] Regardless, Captain Kirk forcefully demanded that CINCPACFLT be informed of this crucial information. Never on good terms with Captain Kirk, Rear Admiral Turner became offended by the arguments from the ONI head. Known for a violent temperament and his intolerance to dissention over his authority, "Terrible

Turner" removed Captain Kirk from his post in October 1941and had him reassigned far from the Office of Naval Intelligence. Captain Theodore S. Wilkinson became the new head of ONI.[23]

Admiral Turner's refusal to pass information to Pacific commands did not stop there. On 1 December 1941, he was again opposed in his judgement, this time by Captain Arthur H. McCollum, the head of the Far East Section of ONI. Recognizing the growing signs of what he felt was imminent Japanese aggression in the Pacific, Captain McCollum drafted a comprehensive message detailing intelligence reports of Japanese naval dispositions and movements. However, in an effort to avoid confrontation with "Terrible Turner's" projections, the message did not make any predictions as to Japan's intentions. When presented with this message, Turner told Captain McCollum that the Pacific Fleet had been placed on a war footing already, and refused to approve the message. Again, Turner had crushed significant information from ever reaching Admiral Kimmel.[24]

A lack of military intelligence was not the only thing that hampered Admiral Kimmel's attempts to make sound decisions. The State Department had been playing a game of hardball with the Japanese, in an effort to quench their expansion through Asia. The political wrangling directly affected nearly all aspects of American-Japanese relations, including political, military, and social. As part of ongoing talks, in early November 1941, the Japanese ambassador, Kichisaburo Nomura, aided by a special envoy, Saburo Kurusu, made proposals aimed at easing the growing tensions between the two countries to Secretary of State Cordell Hull. On 5 November, the Japanese

government sent a message to Ambassador Nomura mandating a deadline for negotiations to reach an accord.

> Because of various circumstances, it is absolutely necessary that all arrangements for the signing of this agreement be completed by the 25th of this month. I realize that this is a difficult order, but under the circumstances it is an unavoidable one. Please understand this thoroughly and tackle the problem of saving the Japanese-United States relations from falling into a chaotic condition. Do so with great determination and with unstinted effort, I beg of you.[25]

The criticality of the deadline being "absolutely immovable" was stressed again in a second message on 11 November, and yet again in a third message on 15 November.[26]

On 16 November, yet another pleading message was sent to the Japanese ambassador, which stated

> The fate of our Empire hangs by the slender thread of a few days, so please fight harder than you ever did before . . . In your opinion we ought to wait and see what turn the war takes and remain patient. However, I am awfully sorry to say that the situation renders this out of the question. I set the deadline for the solution of these negotiations in my #736 [message] and there will be no change. Please try to understand that.[27]

Finally, on 22 November, Tokyo sent another message in which they relented slightly, extending the deadline to 29 November, but stressing "This time we mean it, that the deadline absolutely cannot be changed. After that things are automatically going to happen."[28]

Although all of these messages were decoded, none of them were ever sent to Admiral Kimmel. These messages clearly indicate a finality to the Japanese negotiations with the United States, and would have given Admiral Kimmel indications of a specific time when things would begin to "automatically" happen.

The ambassador presented the first of Japan's proposals to Secretary Hull on 6 November. Unimpressed with the Japanese stance, Secretary Hull briefed President

Roosevelt later in the day. His view was that the U.S. could expect a strike by Japan at any time. On 17 November, Ambassador Nomura presented the second of Japan's proposals, which again was received with lukewarm enthusiasm by Secretary Hull. Then, on 20 November, Ambassador Nomura received permission to extend the deadline for negotiations by four days, to 29 November. MAGIC intercepts had given the Americans backdoor knowledge of both of these deadlines.[29]

The negotiations carried through until 25 November, when news of Japanese naval forces nearing the Kra Peninsula led President Roosevelt to believe that the Japanese intended to conduct an amphibious landing there. In a burst of anger, the president directed Secretary of State Hull to present the Japanese delegation with a ten-point, uncompromising position. Among these ten points were the demand for Japanese withdrawal from China and Indo-China, abandonment of the Japanese agreement with Germany and Italy, and the signing of a pact of nonaggression with the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands. President Roosevelt knew that these terms were entirely unacceptable to the Japanese government, and left them with no room for negotiation.[30] The United States had just slapped the face of the Japanese.

The next day, 26 November, Secretary Hull presented these terms to the Japanese, which were received as an insult to the Japanese people. The nearly desperate pleas of Ambassador Nomura, who realized the significance of the American position, could not sway Secretary Hull. Although Ambassador Nomura stated that his government would need time to consider the new demands, in reality, the talks had ended. From that moment, the Japanese decision to attack Pearl Harbor was irrevocable.[31]

The American position had pushed Japan into a corner. Both President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull realized the implications of this: the only realistic outcome from such a hard stance would be war. Yet, critical information about the diplomatic face-off was never passed to the military commanders in the Pacific, who needed to be ready to parry any Japanese thrust. Neither Secretary Hull's assessment of the possibility of a Japanese strike, nor information concerning the PURPLE intercepts about the two deadlines ever was sent to CINCPACFLT.

Combined with the other information that was never received in Hawaii, the Pacific Fleet Command was unprepared for the assault they were about to face. Admiral Kimmel had been trusted with the security of the pacific, and then left without the support he desperately needed.

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[1] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 11.

[2] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[3] *Office of Naval Intelligence: About ONI—Our History* [website on-line] (accessed 04 April 2003); available from http://www.nmic.navy.mil/history.htm; Internet.

[4] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[5] Costello, *The Pacific War*, 85-87.

[6] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 10-11.

[7] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 55.

[8] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 11.

[9] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[10] Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Lonely Ships: The Life and Death of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1976), 135.

[11] Edwin T. Layton, Rear Admiral, USN (Ret.), Roger Pineau, Captain, USNR (Ret.), and John Costello, *And I Was There: Pearl Harbor and Midway-Breaking the Secrets*, (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1985), 215.

[12] *Roberts Committee Report*, 6-9.

[13] *Record of Proceedings of an Examination of Witnesses Convened by Order of the Secretary of the Navy to Record the Testimony Pertinent to the Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, on 7 December 1941* (Hereafter referred to as *Proceedings of the Hart Inquiry*) [database on-line] (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944, accessed 02 January 2003); available from http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/pha/hart/hart-00.html; Internet, 394.

[14] Ibid, 393.

[15] Ibid, 394.

[16] Ibid, 387-395.

[17] *Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, Congress of the United States, Seventy-Ninth Congress* (Hereafter referred to as *Joint Congressional Committee Report*) [database on-lilne] (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, accessed 02 January 2003); available from http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/pha/congress/part_0.html; Internet, 182.

[18] Ibid., 182.

[19] Ibid.,182-184.

[20] Ibid., 184.

[21] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 175.

[22] Ibid, 187-189.

[23] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 34-35.

[24] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 191-192.

[25] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 107-112.

[30] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 30-32.

[31] Ibid., 32-33.

CHAPTER 4

THE SECOND PEARL HABOR: ATTACK ON THE PHILIPPINES

In the events of 7 December 1941, many similarities exist between the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor and the Army Air Corps in the Philippines. Both forces were poised for war with Japan on that fateful morning. Both expected a sudden attack by the Japanese to signal the start of the war. The Japanese had scheduled both for attack at approximately the same time, although bad weather delayed the strike on the Philippines by many hours. Most importantly, both forces were caught unprepared by attacking Japanese aircraft, and suffered major losses that would significantly influence the opening months of the war.

These parallels show the similar situation that Admiral Kimmel and General MacArthur found themselves in after the last attacking Japanese aircraft turned back toward their bases, their mission complete. Yet, the treatment of these two commanders could not have been more different. Admiral Kimmel was removed from command less than two weeks after the destruction of the Pacific Fleet. A few months later, Admiral Kimmel was forced into retirement, and spent the war years responding to questions, allegations, and false accusations. His honor and competence were continually questioned. He received incredibly hateful mail from a public outraged at the devastation and losses. One former circuit judge even venomously wrote that Admiral Kimmel should " . . . try to show that you are a real man by using a pistol and ending your existence, as you are certainly of no use to yourself nor the American people."[1]

In striking contrast to Admiral Kimmel's fate, General MacArthur never faced a single investigation into how his forces were caught on the ground unprepared.[2] He

retained command in the Philippines until it was obvious that the islands would fall to the Japanese, and President Roosevelt ordered him to evacuate to Australia. To the American public, he was seen as a hero. President Roosevelt awarded him the Congressional Medal of Honor and appointed him Supreme Allied Commander of the Southwest Pacific Theater. He went on to successfully command one of the two American drives through the Pacific to the Japanese homeland, and was appointed to command the occupation forces in post-war Japan. His highly successful career finally culminated during the Korean conflict.

MacArthur's success compared to Admiral Kimmel's ruin seems even more inequitable when the differences in their situations are considered. General MacArthur seems to have had the most support of any commander in the Pacific Theater. His command in the Philippines was seen as America's garrison against Japanese aggression, and he was supported as such. His command was provided with the best intelligence and information relating to Japanese intentions. He, and the leaders in Washington, expected an attack against the Philippines, while Admiral Kimmel received ambiguous and conflicting messages from Washington. Certainly few, if any leaders in Washington expected an attack on Oahu.

In the late 1930s, War Plan Orange had envisioned that American and Philippine forces would fight a sacrificial action in the Philippine archipelago, without any realistic hope of holding the islands against the ever-increasing power of Japan.[3] The only purpose in opposing the Japanese in the Philippines would be to deny them, for a time, the use of Manila Bay as a forward base for their navy.[4] Yet, both American and Philippine leaders realized the importance and the vulnerabilities of the Philippine Islands. Positioned

between Japan and the resource-rich Dutch East Indies, American forces in the Philippines posed a serious threat to Japan's plans for expansion and a "Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere." In 1940, this became even more pronounced when President Roosevelt began to cut the flow of war materials, such as steel and petroleum, to Japan.[5] As her need for these materials grew more desperate, Japan would most likely look to gain control of the Dutch East Indies, and the strategic position of the Philippines would be America's best hope for countering their moves. Critics of War Plan Orange argued that it failed to take into account the strategic importance of the Philippines, and that equipping the archipelago for an adequate defense would cost much less than recapturing the islands from the Japanese. General MacArthur was one of the adamant critics of War Plan Orange as it was initially conceived, and insisted that he could successfully defend the Philippines.[6] He pushed hard to have the plan rewritten to hold the islands against any invasion.

By April 1941, General MacArthur persuaded the army of the necessity to retain the Philippines. The Americans turned to air power as their main defense of the archipelago. Believing in the might of the new B-17 heavy bomber, revisions were made to War Plan Orange that placed great emphasis on the new bomber. Under revisions, heavy bomber forces would mount a strategic defense of the theater by bombing Japanese bases and naval invasion forces. The Americans were relying on the B-17s ability to destroy any invasion fleet before it could put troops ashore.

The Philippine islands, however, were only lightly fortified; the air power in the Philippines consisted of about forty obsolete fighters and a handful of outdated medium twin-engine bombers, hardly sufficient for stopping a Japanese move to the south.[7] A

drastic defense build up was required. This increase in military strength was approved by the Chief of Staff of the Army, General George C. Marshall, on 31 July 1941.[8] Consequently, the army embarked on an ambitious plan to expand current airfields to accept modern heavy bombers, build a network of strategic roads, and construct fighting positions and shelters.[9] General MacArthur's air force was authorized 272 new B-17 heavy bombers, and his army was given top preference for modern equipment and weapons.[10]

The dramatic about-face in the decision to hold the Philippines is obvious in the political dealings that occurred to provide equipment to the forces there. Unable to allocate enough of the new B-17 bombers coming out of the factories to the Philippines, the American government turned to the British. The United Kingdom had been designated to receive large numbers of the new bombers to assist in the war against Germany. Despite the growing need of the British for American war materials, and counter to the U.S. plans for a "Europe first" strategy in case of a two-front war, the Americans asked the British to give up their B-17s in order to redirect them to the Philippines. The British agreed, sensing that a strong buildup in the Philippines would assist the United Kingdom in their defense in the Far East.[11]

In addition to the British bombers, in August 1941, the Army also was forced to stop plans to provide a force of 108 B-17 bombers to the Hawaiian Department. These bombers had been requested in order to provide the Hawaiian Islands a defense against Japanese aircraft carriers.[12] As an unintended effect of this action, the Hawaiian Department was unable to assist Admiral Kimmel in patrolling the Hawaiian waters, which then led to his decision to abstain from regular patrols.

The buildup in the Philippines went well throughout the second half of 1941. General MacArthur was greatly pleased, and remarked in a 28 October letter to General Marshall "I wish to reiterate my appreciation of the splendid support you and the War Department are giving me. No field commander could ask more."[13]

Notwithstanding General MacArthur's optimistic outlook, by early December 1941, American air power in the Philippines was still only a fraction of what was planned. Major General Brereton's forces included only 74 medium and heavy bombers, of which only 35 were the new B-17 Flying Fortresses, 175 pursuit aircraft, and approximately 55 aircraft of other various types.[14] Although the majority of the promised aircraft had not yet been received, this was still the strongest American air force outside of the continental United States.[15] This force actually possessed more planes than the Hawaiian Department. Indicative of the position of the Philippine defenses as the top priority, the Army had even considered the transfer of Hawaii's remaining twelve B-17s to the Far East Air Force (FEAF).[16]

As the strength of USAFFE and the FEAF grew, General MacArthur became more self-assured about his ability to defeat any Japanese invasion force. However, he also began to concentrate on war under his own terms. Despite the U.S. Army belief in War Plan Orange, General MacArthur openly stated that he did not necessarily intend to follow Washington's war plans. He did little to coordinate his air power, concentrating instead on his ground forces. He also refused to coordinate his ground efforts with those of the Navy. According to MacArthur, the "Navy had its plan, the Army had its plans . . . and we each had our own fields."[17] MacArthur's poor cooperation forced Admiral Hart to complain to Admiral Stark. With little assistance from the Army, and recognizing that

MacArthur's dramatic plans for the defense of the Philippines were unlikely to succeed, Admiral Hart was advised that in the event of war he should abandon Manila rather than allow his naval squadron to be captured or destroyed there.[18]

General MacArthur was certainly guilty of not communicating with Admiral Hart. The two did not have a good relationship, and MacArthur shunned attempts by Admiral Hart to develop joint plans. While both commanders lived only yards apart in the Manila Hotel, they rarely had any contact except when forced together for conferences, instead working daily business through their aides.[19] General MacArthur even spoke condescendingly of Admiral Hart, once telling him "Get yourself a real fleet, Tommy, then you will belong."[20] It is probable that this friction was to blame for MacArthur's neglect to consult with Admiral Hart on many matters. In the days following the onslaught of Japanese aggression, General MacArthur chose to declare Manila an "open city" as of midnight on 24 December 1941, but did not consult with Admiral Hart concerning his decision. With invading Japanese forces closing in, General MacArthur certainly hoped to prevent unnecessary destruction of the city, but his decision seriously hurt the Navy. His failure to coordinate with Admiral Hart meant that MacArthur had no idea of the amount of time that the Navy required to evacuate. Admiral Hart was forced to evacuate his naval base on short notice. Great quantities of valuable equipment had to be destroyed to prevent them from falling into Japanese hands, since there was no time to move them. Probably most importantly, a large portion of the Navy's Mark 14 torpedo stock had to be destroyed, rather than moved. The loss of these torpedoes would hamper the ability of the submarine force for many of the critical opening months of the Pacific war.[21]

Unlike the situation in Pearl Harbor, most American military leaders expected any Japanese assault to occur in the Far East, and the Philippines were one of the most likely targets. American commanders in the Philippines were aware that Japan was conducting covert and overt intelligence gathering operations against the American forces. Japan's intentions against the Philippine Islands were much more noticeable than those in Hawaii. Particularly brazen in their attempts to gain intelligence in the Philippines, the Japanese had sent reconnaissance flights over the islands the week before the attack, even in broad daylight. Though spotted by American interceptors, the Army pilots were restricted from taking any offensive action, due to Washington's desire that Japan fire the first shot in any war.[22] Japan's interest in the islands was obvious, and General MacArthur must have known they would be attacked.

With the new emphasis on making a stand in the Philippines, General MacArthur and Admiral Hart were given access to the MAGIC radio intercepts. A PURPLE decoding machine was sent to station CAST in the Philippines. Unlike other intercept stations around the world, station CAST was given the ability to decode the intercepted Japanese transmissions.[23] This ability ensured that the commanders had access to the same information as was being decoded in Washington.

The Navy had oversight of Station CAST, since it was co-located with the headquarters of the 16th Naval District. General MacArthur denied ever having received the MAGIC radio intercepts, but Admiral Hart acknowledged having received them.[24] According to General MacArthur, the Navy hoarded the MAGIC messages and rarely passed information on to the Army. However, in July 1941 a system had been set up to share the messages the Army headquarters.[25] Despite General MacArthur's claims, he

was routinely getting copies of the MAGIC intercepts. In November 1941, the station was moved to the Malinta tunnel on Corregidor, which provided the Army with easier access to the intercepts.[26] MacArthur had been brought into the MAGIC "clan," and was fully aware of the abilities of the program. Even if MacArthur was not being given the MAGIC intercepts, it is nearly unbelievable that the commander of the U.S. Army forces facing the expected onslaught of the Japanese Empire would not demand to read all significant intercepted Japanese traffic. It would have been his duty to do so, and if he was not reading the MAGIC messages, he is just as guilty of not fulfilling his duties. Whereas Admiral Kimmel had been held to the fire although he was not given access to the most critical information, General MacArthur had access to this information, did not use it, and was never held to the same standard.

General MacArthur's first notice that war had broken out occurred around 3:00 a.m. on the morning of 8 December when his chief of staff phoned him with the news, which was confirmed by Admiral Hart at 3:55 a.m.[27] Upon learning of the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt ordered General MacArthur into action. By direction of the President, Brigadier General Leonard T. Gerow, the Chief of U.S. Army War Plans, phoned MacArthur at approximately 4:30 a.m. Manila time to order him to take action according to the Rainbow plans. General Gerow also warned MacArthur "I wouldn't be surprised if you get an attack there in the near future."[28] MacArthur's confident response was that his forces were ready for any action. In addition to the telephone call by General Gerow, the order to battle was radioed by the War Department. The dispatch arrived in Manila at 5:30 a.m. local time.[29] The message explicitly stated that hostilities between

the two countries had commenced, and directed General MacArthur to "carry out tasks assigned in Rainbow Five so far as they pertain to Japan."[30]

One of the prime missions required by the Rainbow 5 plan was that the U.S. Army Air Force would conduct "air raids against the Japanese forces and installations within tactical operating radius of available bases."[31] To Major General Brereton, the need to establish air superiority meant that the initial assaults would be against the concentration of Japanese air bases in Formosa. In fact, in the months before the Japanese assault, American planners had drawn up preliminary plans for a B-17 attack on Formosa.[32] Major General Brereton went to General MacArthur's headquarters to discuss sending his B-17 bombers on a raid against these bases. He arrived at 5:00 a.m., but was told by Major General Sutherland that MacArthur was busy. Sutherland told Brereton that he would obtain permission from MacArthur to conduct the raid, but that Brereton should prepare a reconnaissance flight for Formosa.[33]

Major General Brereton again tried to get permission at about 7:00 a.m., but Sutherland again told him that MacArthur was busy. At 9:30 a.m., after hearing reports that Japanese planes had bombed areas in northern Luzon, Brereton again called Sutherland to get permission from MacArthur, and was again told to wait for orders. About ten minutes later, Sutherland called back and directed Brereton to conduct the reconnaissance flight.[34] Brereton finally received a telephone call from General MacArthur at 11:00 a.m. According to Major General Brereton, MacArthur gave Brereton the discretion to use offensive air power, and Brereton discussed his plans for a reconnaissance flight, followed by a bombing raid by two squadrons of B-17s.[35]

General MacArthur later denied ever having given this permission or having even discussed a possible raid, stating that he would have rejected the idea because of the heavy Japanese defenses on Formosa.[36] General MacArthur's assertion that he would have rejected any raid on Formosa is suspect, since later that same day (after Clark Field had been attacked) he sent a message to the War Department informing them that he had ordered a bombing raid on Formosa for the next morning.[37]

At 12:35 p.m., while the American bomber crews were conducting the briefing for the Formosa bombing, the first of three waves of Japanese planes attacked Clark Field. Japanese bombers and strafing fighters destroyed eighteen of the thirty-five B-17s, fifty-three P-40 and three P-35 pursuit planes, and most of the miscellaneous aircraft.[38] Another squadron of P-40s was destroyed by an attack on Iba Field.[39] In a little over one hour, the FEAF strength had been cut in half.

For nearly seven hours, General MacArthur had refused to authorize any offensive action against the Japanese. Despite repeated requests from Major General Brereton, MacArthur failed to commit his bombers. Neither did he act to protect his air force. If he had chosen not to bomb Formosa, then he should have ordered that the aircraft be moved south, out of the range of the Japanese planes. The airfields on Mindinao, although unable to protect all his planes, could have accepted many of them.[40] Instead, his inaction cost half of his main bomber force. Consequently, the remainder of the B-17 bombers were evacuated to Australia, where they could continue the fight against the Japanese while still being protected. The hope that B-17s would stop the Japanese lay smashed in the smoking wrecks of the bombers on Clark Field.

The effectiveness of B-17 bombers conducting an unescorted raid on Formosa is debatable. If the air war over Europe is any indication, many of the planes would have been lost during the attack. However, this does not excuse General MacArthur for his refusal to order a strike or to move his planes to safety. With the knowledge of Japanese bombing attacks on Pearl Harbor and northern Luzon, his inaction as overall commander leaves him open to much blame.

What caused General MacArthur to hesitate in ordering his bombers into the air, either to attack or to positions out of range of the Japanese bombers? Almost certainly, some of his reluctance to conduct offensive operations may have been a naive belief that he could keep the Philippines out of the war. After five tours of duty in the Philippine islands, General MacArthur had unquestionably developed a deep affection for the country and the people. Part of his close ties to the Philippine government may have been financial attachments to the Quezon government. In the years before the war, while he was serving as a defense advisor to the Philippine government, MacArthur had been drawing a huge salary, the result of incentives offered by President Quezon to obtain MacArthur's expertise.[41] His annual salary of $33,000 was almost unheard of, and made him one of the most highly paid officers of any military in the world.[42] These conflicting loyalties may have pushed him to make an inexcusable mistake: he may have, even if for a short time, placed the good of the Philippines above the good of America. Though he had often boasted of the readiness of his army, he may have realized that his forces were not yet ready to stop any Japanese invasion. His army existed mostly on paper, in reserve personnel who were poorly trained and equipped. These reserves constituted three-fourths of his ground force.[43] MacArthur may have seen the eventual futility of resistance

to the Japanese. Perhaps he believed that if no aggressive action came from the Philippines, then possibly the Japanese would discount the threat from the islands, at least long enough for reinforcements to arrive from America.

General MacArthur's hesitation about launching offensive operations from Luzon is indicated in a 1954 statement, in which he said the following:

> My orders were explicit not to initiate hostilities against the Japanese. The Philippines while a possession of the U.S. had, so far as war was concerned, a somewhat indeterminate international position in many minds, especially the Filipinos and their government. While I personally had not the slightest doubt we would be attacked, great local hope existed that this would not be the case. Instructions from Washington were very definite to wait until the Japanese made the first "overt" move.[44]

General MacArthur's above reference not to initiate hostilities was a convenient position to fall back on. In reality, Japan had already fired the first shot at Pearl Harbor.

Even if General MacArthur did believe this, the reality of the situation must have struck home when the Japanese Fifth Air Group bombed northern Luzon at 9:30 a.m.[45] This must have been a clear signal to MacArthur that the Japanese had no intention of leaving the Philippines untouched. Under these circumstances, any competent commander would have made some move to either use or protect such valuable assets.

Whatever caused General MacArthur to wait for over seven hours before making a decision to use his bombers resulted in the unnecessary destruction of his air force. Since he was the overall commander of forces in the Philippines, this needless waste of precious air assets falls on his shoulders. Moreover, his decision to declare Manila an open city without coordination with the Navy resulted in even more loss of critical weapons and ammunition. As a commander, he clearly failed during these crucial

periods. Why was he not held responsible, as were Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short?

Public opinion may have been greatly responsible for the difference in treatment of these commanders. The attack on Pearl Harbor was sudden and decisive, and American troops were unable to inflict any serious losses on the Japanese. Additionally, it was such a surprise that Japan would reach so far out into the Pacific to strike the U.S. Consequently, the American public saw Pearl Harbor as a disaster, evoking emotions of outrage and shame. Conversely, the attack on Clark Field was overshadowed in the media by the extreme emphasis on the tragedy at Pearl Harbor. Though it was still a significant blow to the United States military might in the Pacific, the remainder of the Army in the Philippines still stood relatively intact. These forces would roll back from the blow and continue to fight against the Japanese flow through the Pacific. General public perception was that these forces, unlike those in Hawaii, had not suffered a grievous injury but could resist the Japanese. As their resistance continued over the following months, they rapidly gained the attention and support of the American public, as did the commander, General MacArthur. By the time General MacArthur left the Philippines, his staunch defense of the islands had essentially become the symbol of American opposition to Japan.

Despite the growing public support for General MacArthur, President Roosevelt was furious with MacArthur's poor showing in the Philippines. General MacArthur had consistently assured the administration that he could defend the Philippines against any Japanese onslaught after 1 December 1941, when he felt he had enough forces. Instead, he had been caught by surprise, and thereafter consistently beaten back, until it was obvious that the Philippines would fall. In President Roosevelt's mind, MacArthur had

willfully and repeatedly misguided Washington about the defensive situation in the Philippines.[46]

The assertion that General MacArthur had been less than completely honest about the abilities of his force seems to hold merit when looking at MacArthur's inconsistent remarks before and after the start of the war. The United States had been relying on the buildup of forces in the Philippines to provide a deterrent to war. Failing that, they were to significantly delay any Japanese southward movement. General MacArthur's claims that his forces were ready for anything were contradicted in assertions made in 1946, where he stated that " . . . air forces in the Philippines, containing many antiquated models were hardly more than a token force with insufficient equipment, incomplete fields and inadequate maintenance."[47]

Despite General MacArthur's inconsistencies and President Roosevelt's apparent disapproval of him, General MacArthur had many supporters. His overwhelming approval in the public's eye helped him brush off those fateful hours on 8 December when his inaction cost America the greatest barrier to their southward expansion in the Far East. His subsequent appointment as Supreme Allied Commander of the Southwest Pacific Theater ensured his role in history, and placed him as the representative of the President of the United States at the formal surrender ceremonies on *USS Missouri*. At that point, even more than ever before, he was a national hero. His image was indelibly linked to America's victory over Japanese aggression. After the war, it would have been nearly impossible to chastise this icon over errors made during the opening moments of a four year war. Although General MacArthur should have been held responsible, it was

much easier to allow these events to fade into history. For Admiral Kimmel, however, his fate was already sealed.

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[1] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[2] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 6.

[3] Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 58-60.

[4] Ibid., 56-58.

[5] Beck, *MacArthur and Wainwright*, 4.

[6] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 56.

[7] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 53.

[8] Beck, *MacArthur and Wainwright*, 5.

[9] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 53.

[10] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 60.

[11] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 71-72.

[12] Ibid., 73-74.

[13] Beck, *MacArthur and Wainwright*, 5.

[14] Love, *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, 119.

[15] Ibid.

[16] D. Clayton James, "The Other Pearl Harbor," *Military History Quarterly* 7, no. 2, (1994): 24.

[17] Love, *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, 118.

[18] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 60.

[19] Hoyt, *The Lonely Ships*, 142-143.

[20] Love, *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, 120.

[21] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 64-65.

[22] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 40

[23] *Roberts Commission Report*, 179.

[24] Beach, *Scapegoats*, 64.

[25] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 261-262.

[26] Love, *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, 260-261.

[27] Beck, *MacArthur and Wainwright*, 12-13.

[28] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 17.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Beck, *MacArthur and Wainwright*, 12-13.

[31] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 18.

[32] James, "The Other Pearl Harbor," 24.

[33] Beck, *MacArthur and Wainwright*, 12.

[34] James, "The Other Pearl Harbor," 26.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Love, *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, 122.

[37] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 264.

[38] Beck, *MacArthur and Wainwright*, 14.

[39] Love, *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, 121.

[40] Ibid., 123.

[41] Ibid., 113-115.

[42] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 268.

[43] Love, *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, 118.

[44] James, "The Other Pearl Harbor," 26-27.

[45] Ibid., 24.

[46] Love, *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, 125-126.

[47] Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 263.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

American justice has consistently stood on two major principles: innocent until proven guilty, and fairness in punishment. Admiral Kimmel received neither of these. Horrified and outraged over their country's unprecedented military defeat at Pearl Harbor, many Americans sought to find a way to vent their anger. Although the majority of the animosity was focused on the Japanese, many turned toward the American commanders in Hawaii to answer for the destruction and losses.

On Monday, 8 December 1941, less than twenty-four hours after the Japanese attack, some members of the House of Representatives demanded Admiral Kimmel's court-martial.[1] Although none of the facts were known about the Japanese attack or how much, if any, culpability lay at the feet of Admiral Kimmel, representatives were already convinced that he had failed in his duty. For them, the ability of the Japanese Navy to sail undetected the entire way to the Hawaiian Islands, strike a devastating blow to the United States military might, and then retire with insignificant losses was evidence enough. In their view, the only manner that this could be accomplished would be through a gross failure in Hawaii's defensive forces. Since military commanders are responsible for all that occurs under their command, Admiral Kimmel was therefore to blame.

Much of this grew from the American view of the Japanese. While some Americans recognized Japan as a country with a distinct culture and a formidable military power, others viewed the Japanese in a much more prejudiced manner. To many, the Japanese were a lower race of people who had just recently (within the preceding 100 years) begun to transform into a modern, industrialized society. Japanese were seen as

intellectually inferior. American newspapers portrayed the Japanese as small, squinty-eyed, buck-toothed simpletons, or worse yet, as "monkey men."[2] This was not the type of enemy that could develop and execute a masterful plan to attack America's military might in the heart of her pacific territory. Only an incompetent commander would allow himself to be surprised by such an inferior enemy, and therefore the commanders must be held responsible.

At the time, it was easy to focus on what went wrong in Hawaii. Little attention was given to the commands based in the United States that were tasked with supporting CINCPACFLT. This was a time when centralized military intelligence was only beginning to grow as distinct branches in each armed service, and its importance was still not fully realized. Few people knew the significant role that the ONI and its controlling authorities had played in supporting the fleet. Though far removed from the scene, Admiral Stark and his staff were just as guilty by their lack of support to the Hawaiian commands. Though the need for security is understandable, the decision not to provide CINCPACFLT with a PURPLE decoding machine is inexcusable. Trusted with the responsibility for the entire Pacific Fleet, and faced with a significant and imminent threat, Admiral Kimmel required every tool that would have given him an advantage over the enemy. Given the danger to the Philippines and the proximity of the islands to Japan, the selection of the Hawaiian PURPLE machine for diversion to the United Kingdom was logical. However, another machine should have been built immediately to replace Oahu's redirected device. The diversion of the decoding apparatus would have been only a minor inconvenience, and Oahu would have had knowledge of all of the decoded Japanese messages.

Since Washington was unable or unwilling to provide that machine, at a minimum, Washington owed it to CINCPACFLT to provide copies of all decoded Japanese PURPLE transmissions. This was not done, despite Admiral Kimmel's pleas to the CNO to improve the intelligence support. Admiral Kimmel and his staff could not have known that their intelligence support had been reduced; it was up to Washington to ensure the commander was provided all information.

In the Navy Department, Admiral Stark deserved a large amount of blame for the surprise at Pearl Harbor. In allowing Admiral Turner to control the dissemination of intelligence to Hawaii, he removed what might have been the most important tool available to Admiral Kimmel. Despite the growing signs of Japanese aggression in late 1941, he never indicated to Admiral Kimmel that the Hawaiian Islands might be a target for the Japanese. His messages indicated the growing concern that the Japanese would strike in the Far East, leading Admiral Kimmel to believe that the threat to Hawaii was minimal and that his efforts could be concentrated elsewhere. Most significantly, in the final hours before the attack, he declined an opportunity to alert CINCPACFLT of the possibility of a morning surprise strike. To turn down an opportunity to pass along information of this magnitude is inexplicable and inexcusable.

Civilian leaders are also to blame for Admiral Kimmel's lack of awareness of the imminent threat. As postulated by Carl von Clausewitz and recognized by many diplomats, war is an extreme but natural extension of political policy. It is the ultimate tool of diplomacy. Therefore, in any diplomatic situation that may lead to the use of military force, it is imperative that the civilian government works very closely with the military. Most specifically, the State Department must keep the military informed of the

political situation in any diplomatic skirmish, just as the military must keep this department informed of military actions which will affect the political condition. Diplomatic, informational, military, and economic efforts require careful coordination in order to have the greatest effect. The military and the State Department failed to coordinate these efforts in the weeks before the Japanese attack. Admiral Kimmel was never informed of the diplomatic maneuvering occurring between Secretary Hull and the Japanese ambassador. If he had known that Japan had been presented with an ultimatum which Japan could never accept, he may have realized that the Japanese were being pushed into a corner, and the likelihood of military confrontation had increased significantly. If the administration planned to engage in power politics against Japan, they owed it to their military commanders to keep them informed of what they were endeavoring to accomplish and what the possible repercussions may have been.

The same requirement for support to military commanders applies to material assistance. The requests by both Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short for more equipment and parts were considered secondary to the needs of the Philippines and the European conflict. With limited resources, the leaders in Washington were making the difficult decisions of which military units had priority. In view of unfolding events, the decision to prioritize Europe and the Philippines was logical. Though Admiral Stark had promised 100 flying boats to bolster the patrol capability around Hawaii, other priorities prevented the fulfillment of that promise before 7 December. Determined to train the fleet for war, Admiral Kimmel was also forced to make difficult decisions about his limited resources. Some decisions were correct, such as arranging ships in port to augment the harbor anti-aircraft defenses. Other decisions, such as choosing not to implement an air

patrol that was incapable of covering even one-fourth of the waters around Hawaii, may have added to the surprise of the attack.

Many people believed that this choice to forego air patrols constituted a failure of sound, professional logic or even a willful dereliction of duty. However, these views cannot be supported. Admiral Kimmel was acutely aware of his duty, and was forced to make a decision that he had hoped to avoid. Supported by intelligence estimates and messages from Washington, he based his choice upon the belief that the Japanese Navy posed relatively little direct threat to the Hawaiian Islands. Confident that he would receive warnings of any indications of Japanese moves toward Hawaii, he trusted in reports that showed the Japanese Navy concentrating in the Far East. Weighing these factors, he believed that the fleet patrol planes were more valuable in training the fleet than in supporting patrols for an enemy that did not constitute a significant threat. Using his professional judgement, he chose to take what was, in his view, a small risk for a larger payoff, and made these decisions with sound military judgement. This is all that can be asked of any commander.

Every commander knows that, like all human beings, he or she is fallible, and may reach an incorrect conclusion or choose a poor course of action. Usually his ability to make correct choices is also hampered by some amount of missing information. At this point, he must evaluate the information he has, make estimates of the information he does not have, and reach a conclusion based upon some risk that his estimates are incorrect. Doubt will cloud the judgement of a commander who fears the consequences of a wrong decision. He may choose a course of action that ultimately offers more personal protection, but which presents fewer advantages. Yet, by their nature, these commanders

can not lead a military to success in war. Victory requires commanders who are willing to take reasonable chances in order to gain significant advantages.

Admiral Kimmel consciously took these chances in his decisions for the defense of the Pacific Fleet. His decisions were based upon the best balance between protection of the fleet and preparing his men for war. He trusted that Washington would provide him enough warning before any conflict that he would be able to implement measures that would provide greater protection. He had a reasonable plan. Ultimately, parts of it failed. Yet, the failure was not due to Admiral Kimmel's ineffectiveness as a commander, but due to the plan's reliance upon support from Washington, which he did not get. Rather than accepting their responsibility for their failures, the leaders in Washington stood aside as investigations and public opinion destroyed Admiral Kimmel's reputation.

In order to work effectively, military commanders need to believe that leaders above them will support them. There is a fine line between a competent military commander who makes an incorrect decision, and a commander who is incompetent or guilty of dereliction of duty. In a profession where the enemy consistently employs deceit, competent commanders should not have to fear repercussions for miscalculations based on logical assumptions. They need to know that, while the confusion of war will present some setbacks or even outright defeats, they will still receive support as long as they serve in a professional, competent manner.

This is not to say that the support should be unconditional; commanders who show gross incompetence or a high disregard for their duties must be held responsible and replaced when appropriate. This was not done with General MacArthur after his inaction resulted in the loss of his principal means for defending the Philippine Islands.

Clearly, General MacArthur had significant advantages in predicting Japanese attack on his forces, which Admiral Kimmel did not. Admiral Kimmel was caught by surprise at a time when hostilities had not begun between the two nations, while General MacArthur was caught by surprise even with the knowledge that war had begun. Admiral Kimmel was hampered by a lack of material support and intelligence information. General MacArthur was given priority for all material and information support in the pacific theater. Admiral Kimmel consistently commanded in a professional manner, and made difficult decisions which, even after the Japanese attack, many navy flag officers agreed were sound. Conversely, even with the knowledge that hostilities had commenced, General MacArthur specifically failed to act to strike the enemy a blow although this was called for in existing war plans. His judgement in the hours after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor was certainly questionable, and his actions were lacking the decisiveness required of an officer of his rank.

While quick to sacrifice Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant General Short due to public opinion, the Roosevelt administration seemed willing to overlook MacArthur's negligence. This was convenient, since the battle for the Philippines was still ongoing. Replacement of the commander of the Far East forces would cause disarray in command, lower troop morale, create doubt among the Filipinos, and encourage the enemy. These effects were unacceptable when America was struggling to retain the strategically significant Philippines.

By the time that General MacArthur was finally evacuated to Australia, his resistance to the Japanese invasion had been glorified to such an extent that he was considered a national hero, despite the loss of the Philippines. The American public

respected and admired the stubborn refusal of "Dugout Doug" to surrender to the Japanese. His immortal words of "I will return" were symbolic of the American determination to destroy the Japanese military and push then out of every one of their pacific gains. MacArthur's great popularity made any action against him politically hazardous at best and suicidal at worst. Knowing that the American public needed heroes, President Roosevelt instead awarded General MacArthur the Congressional Medal of Honor for "conspicuous leadership in preparing the Philippine Islands to resist conquest."[3] Additionally, President Roosevelt ordered MacArthur to establish a northward drive from Australia through the Japanese-held islands in the western pacific. Over the next few years, his success in pushing the Japanese out of their island bases only served to reinforce his public support and make him more impervious to any reprimand concerning his performance in the Philippines. By the end of the war, MacArthur's inaction in the opening day of the war had been quietly forgotten.

Unfortunately, the unjust oppression and disgrace that Admiral Kimmel faced in the years following the attack on Pearl Harbor is magnified when compared with the treatment accorded to General MacArthur. Over sixty years after the Japanese launched America into the pacific war, an examination of the circumstances which led to Japan's surprise blow at Pearl Harbor shows the injustice levied upon a commander who served the United States Navy faithfully and professionally. Conversely, the failure to act against a commander whose inaction in the face of unquestionable danger raises questions about faith in military justice.

Today, the United States again finds itself involved in military conflict, many commanders may find themselves in circumstances similar to those experienced by

Admiral Kimmel. Today, the Global War on Terrorism pits the United States against an enemy that strikes by surprise at vulnerable areas. The pacific war was marked by an initial surprise assault, which was followed by nearly continuous confrontation in a systematic, gradual campaign against a nation. Conversely, the Global War on Terrorism will be punctuated by sporadic surprise attacks in a war with no front lines.

The Global War on Terrorism is a non-linear, non-regional type of war, where attacks on any American interest in the world may occur at any time. This form of war will require military commanders to maintain capable defenses for a great number of potential military and civilian targets. As military forces are tasked with more and more responsibilities, resources will be spread thinly to cover these assignments. Increased roles in homeland defense, crisis response, and overseas military operations will create a drain on military assets that may leave some locations inadequately prepared.

Much like Admiral Kimmel, military commanders may find themselves petitioning for more personnel or better equipment in order to protect their areas of responsibility adequately. In addition, like Admiral Kimmel, they may find that they are not given this support due to other needs that have a higher priority. These commanders will be faced with difficult choices to make on how to allocate their limited assets. Good commanders will make these decisions based upon the expected threat, the intelligence available, the resources available, and the necessity to conduct other military missions. Some risks may need to be taken to balance these considerations.

If an aggressor exploiting those risks successfully attacks a target, the action taken against the commander will establish a critical precedent. Commanders who have performed poorly, made decisions that have no reasonable basis, or neglected their duties

should be disciplined as appropriate. However, the military and civilian leaders should defend those commanders who have worked hard to fulfill their duty and have made rational judgments based on the information available. Those commanders deserve that faith and support. Detrimental sanctions against a commander based on public opinion will influence the future actions of many other commanders. Failure to support commanders who have acted properly will create doubt and distrust among military leaders. America cannot afford commanders who worry about that possibility and base their decisions on the protection of their career. Nor can it afford to remove every commander that suffers a defeat.

Ultimately, 7 December 1941 was a humiliation for America in more than military defeats. The differing treatments of Admiral Kimmel and General MacArthur stand as two instances where the concept of command accountability was improperly employed. There is still controversy over the handling of each of these officers. It is unlikely that any official action will ever be taken to vindicate Admiral Kimmel, and even more unlikely that any official action will hold General MacArthur's reputation up to scrutiny. The best that can be done is to use these events as lessons for future actions.

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[1] Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.

[2] An interesting sample of political cartoons by Theodor Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss) can be seen at "Dr. Seuss Went to War: A Catalog of Political Cartoons by Dr. Seuss" at http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dspolitic/; Internet.

[3] *MacArthur Wins the Medal of Honor: Text of Citation* [website on-line] (accessed 22 April 2003); available from http://www.homestead.com/douglassmacarthur/MedalOfHonor.html; Internet.

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