

Out Goes Konoye, In Comes Tojo

U.S. for November 25, after which all talks would be broken.

All in all, it must be remembered that no one in the United States publicly was privy to this knowledge. However, did the cabinet crisis in Japan cause a panic and hysteria in America? No. The common people in the U.S. were attentive to world news, but there arose no mass hysteria. They believed in themselves. Moreover, news from the Atlantic Ocean gripped the minds of the people more.

Hideki Tojo was a leader completely committed to the idea of going to war to supply Japan's people with valuable oil and other materials. Vast resources and commodities lay within the scope of the Japanese military hemisphere: Thailand's vast expanse of rice, Malaysia's rubber, nickel and tea, and the East Indies oilfields. Economically, militarily, politically, socially, and religiously it was all gumdropped under the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Had it not been for Tojo, Japan might have secured most of the materials it needed by bartering with countries. For example, Japan was an extremely active and extensive buyer of South American materials during the few years prior to 1941. Her purchases of mica in Brazil had jumped from 4 metric tons in 1937 to 624 in 1940; there were Chilean and Peruvian copper, Bolivian tungsten, and strategic Brazilian castor beans, an important lubricant for high-speed engines. The importation of castor beans, for example, rose from 344 metric tons in 1937 to 19,063 in 1940.

These economic statistics were no secret. However, some of the most important items Japan missed were exactly what the U.S. embargoed, items such as valuable mercury. Those purchases in 1940 were 40 times

the amounts Japan acquired in 1938. Mercury was valuable in fulminates for detonating high explosives and in antifouling paint for ship bottoms. Scrap iron and steels and high octane gasoline were other strategic items on the embargo list.

U.S. military commanders were secretly warned in some astonishing sense, but military objectives were numerous. By November, U.S. leaders had changed their minds that Tokyo was going to attack the Soviet Union. They were able to push along the following theories by November of 1941, a push on the very rich (Netherlands) oil fields of Sumatra, Borneo or Java, or the land bases in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore—all of which were within existing WW II bomber range. That was due in part to the indirect method of following ship movement by their RDF signaling and the chatter between ships and shore stations, primarily dubbed the Kaigun Anjo. Less deceptive than, say, Purple, the British, the Dutch, the Chinese government of Chang Kai-shek and the U.S. were intercepting and deciphering the traffic system of Japanese warships and merchant ships, called Marus. Giant warships need oil tankers to keep them running, and these too were tracked.

Throughout the month of November, long and short-wave radio traffic between Tokyo and their correspondents in Washington, and ship movements, increased in a crazy fashion. Tojo would not relinquish any holdings of Chinese conquest—and the U.S. was not going to release whatsoever oil and economic sanctions: the stalemate.

Since oil was an important nerve for any extended military operation, the East Indies seemed a likely target. However, this was still only a guess to American leaders. Japan had at her disposal some forty-two million barrels of oil. Once it was gone, Japan would be dry. It would last about a year and a half, and then it would all be gone.



On Trek to Far-Northern Outposts

On November 1, 1941, the Japanese naval code was profoundly changed. On the fifth, Tokyo began sending barrels of secret messages. The emissaries in Washington D.C. were notified that a complete message would be sent in 14 separate transmitted parts. The eventual scrutinized message told Japanese diplomats to break off all negotiations, but the diplomats never knew why. Nor did Magic!

In the middle of the month, U.S. intelligence discovered Japan's carrier fleet to be operating in strict radio silence. Magic's interpretation was that this was evidence of an invasion...somewhere. Using cryptography, each band of men and women worked long hours without recognition. There were intercept operators, translators, RDF experts, cryptographers and couriers. CAST contained about 75 specialists. HYPO had about 140. NEGAT was manned by 300. About 32 or 33 specialists worked on RDF at Pago Pago, Samoa, Midway, Dutch Harbor, and Oahu. It has been estimated that 1000 Japanese military intercepts were handled daily by the specialists on Oahu alone.

Sometimes the job involved trying to pinpoint vessels. Other times it was a game of following sightings. It was a great game of tracking whatever, from aircraft carriers to tiny oil tankers.

U.S. intelligence also depended on the ability of the 17 undercover observers in Far Eastern ports, in addition to any Magic information. As it turned out, a couple of pieces were never turned over to HYPO. Pre-war acrimony, to make it short, between military services and even interservice rivalries such as the Naval Office of War Plans, office of naval communications, and office of naval intelligence, kept certain key elements of information from HYPO.

One was the so-called "bomb plot message" or secret signals that had been passed on from Honolulu to Tokyo. This involved a thoroughly detailed grid-map of the defenses of Pearl Harbor by a Japanese agent naval ensign Takeo Yoshikawa. Yoshikawa was known as a mild-mannered man called Tadashi Morimura. The original message was dated September 29, but was actually not decoded in Washington by N until October 10, a day after the U.S. Army intelligence got it.

The encoding J-19 (Tsu) report drew special attention to U.S. vessels in Oahu with a precision no other Japanese coded message had ever stated, whether in Hawaii, San Francisco, Seattle, Panama or any Far East lands. No claim by any senior American intelligence officer has been found that resembled or paralleled its picky contents in all of 1941.

In November, several similar messages in another code had been picked up by a surveillance team of U.S. Signal Corps, but it was never relayed to any Navy department. The F.B.I. was host to secret information hinting Pearl Harbor was going to be a target, but because the source was a double agent playboy, the despot king of the F.B.I, Hoover, did not value the information. However, none of the confidential Purple intercepts from Washington D.C. were reported to Hawaii, for two reasons: service rivalry and the timing of a security leak that took Washington D.C. by surprise in

THUMBSKETCH OF THE AUTUMN

August of 1941. The leak took place just before the special meeting of Roosevelt and Churchill. From two top secret high level allied communication sources, both London and Washington D.C., Tokyo had been forewarned by an unknown spy that the two statesmen were going to meet in August. This was a leak of volcanic proportions.

Before they met, the Japanese knew about the Atlantic Conference. That essentially created a paranoia in D.C. circles. And, a door was shut tight among America's intelligi, which for those at Pearl Harbor mailed them a price to pay. Specific diplomatic intercepts that Washington D.C. picked up were not relayed to anyone in Pearl Harbor for four long months; incidentally, ultra intercepts decoded were shut to F.D.R.

Admiral Turner, head of War Plans, vetoed all diplomatic Purple intercepts, even to Admiral Kimmel, Commander in Chief of U.S. Pacific fleet, and Admiral Edwin T. Layton, main fleet intelligence officer of the Pacific.

An effective warning came as early as November 15, when in the form of a secret press presentation, Gen. George Marshall let it be known that the United States had broken Japanese codes. He predicted that the U.S. was on the brink of war, and expected to be on the watch all early December. It wasn't made public. Even though a generalization, where did he get that idea?

The answer appears to lay in a 1946 postwar naval history report entitled *The Campaigns of the Pacific War* edited by Capt. F.M. Trapnell, USN, Capt. J.S. Russell, USN, and Lieut. Commander J.A. Field, Jr., USN, working under the Naval Analyses Division of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey.

In this report is a set of November 5 radio dispatches originated by Admiral Osami Nagano, Chief of the Japanese Naval General Staff to CinC Combined Fleet. They

should have used these in the movie *Tora Tora Tora*. In part, see side bar box. No doubt, Gen. Marshall had read it.

A new revolutionary era of thinking was surmised by America's war leaders that made Roosevelt believe strategic air power alone was powerful enough to knock out enemy invasions. It was a plan to use the long-range power of the B-17, for both launching air strikes on the homeland of Japan and to defend the Far East.

To the extent that bombers seemed logically more powerful than any other force, and 150 of these bombers cost less than a modern battleship, it was perceived right to strengthen the bases on the Philippines and Pearl Harbor. Beginning September of 1941, the bombers began shuttle flying from the West Coast to Hawaii, Wake, Midway, Australia, and the Philippines. An estimated secret Washington report warned that the Pearl Harbor outpost would need at least 160 B-17 air force bombers to protect the Hawaiians, while 130 were needed for the Philippines outpost.

If Japan declared war, America's leaders were making a sure bet that the Soviet Union would allow U.S. bomber forces to use the Soviet base in Vladivostok. (Stalin never did.) That perceived base, plus the northern Philippines, seemed an ample deterrent until a counterstrike was ready. The U.S. thought in terms of a counterattack. U.S. Congress voted to stay in session indefinitely because of the precarious war situation.

As the Japanese military machine seemed to rev up, the biggest question facing Roosevelt and his military planners was: could the various fleets of Imperial Japan show a cadence and pattern?

Japanese warship movements and their train appear

In part, it said 1. In view of the fact that it is feared war has become unavoidable with the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands, and for the self preservation and future existence of the Empire, the various preparations for war operations will be completed by the first part of December. 2. The CinC Combined Fleet will effect the required preparations for war operations in accordance with Imperial Headquarters Order #1. 3. The CinC of the China Area Fleet will continue operations against China and at the same time effect required preparations for war operations.

to be divided into two time frames in late November. There was the standby phase from November 17-25. There was the green light phase of November 25-December, which as we know was December 7.

Ever since the invasion of China, Japan's primary aim was to control the Asian natural resources and peoples through military aggression if need be. As stated elsewhere in this book, politically it was called the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The significance of this was that provocation or no provocation, Japan was locked into a policy of taking-over enormous economic resources, just like Germany and Italy, in the name of bettering oneself—or, as they would say, gaining access to vital economic resources. Military movement was a direct descendent of the political sphere.

Unlike Konoye, Tojo was a war hawk, and he had no intention of backing down. Before we continue with the vital diplomatic exchanges, and before we dispel the myth that the U.S. armed forces in the Pacific were on full alert but could not track any Japanese movement due to strict radio silence, we need to see what was going on with Japanese naval movements in the Far East in November.

By November 18, all information gathering forces appeared to be in the know that the concentration of Japanese warships in the Kuriles region was not being strengthened by thousands and thousands of ground troops. A branch of the intelligence command posts, or decoding centers, led by Captain Homer Kisner on Oahu—who had been practicing radio intercepts since 1933—he is still alive—somebody better get to this 94-year old veteran for a motion picture before he leaves us—detected myriad Japanese motions in late 1941. At the time 31 years old, Kisner was the radio traffic chief in charge of 65 radio operators. His men were the pick of the crop, according to Admiral Rochefort, the big cheese

According to the *Impact of Air Power* by Eugene Emme, there were some 100,000 trained pilots in the United States in 1941. Within some four years there existed over 2,300,000. There were about 23,000 officers and 16,000 cadets and 12000 airplanes on December 1, 1941, nationwide.

in charge of Station HYPO.

One pick of the crop—November 18, 1941—operator SN—his real name is incognito—discovered Fleet Air Command (Japan’s carrier force) to be in Hiptokappu Bay. Radio operator Merrill Whiting intercepted another message on November 20 that submarines were proceeding to the radio zone of the flagship, First Air Fleet. Before the month of November ended, Kisner and his code-breakers had compiled enough information to deduce Japan’s warships were basically divided into two separate carrier movements from the Empire, one in the Kuril Islands and the other extending to the south (South China Sea.) But, the exact number and ID was still unknown.

For Americans, the hopes of peace centered on diplomacy. To the unmitigating War Gods of this planet, diplomacy is the last barrier before a war, and to them it seemed that the U.S. was still finding ways of averting the mortal storm of war.

The newspapers and radio carried news about the shuttle diplomacy between Kichisaburo Nomura, the Japanese ambassador to the U.S., and former high-ranking admiral, Saburo Kurusu, special Japanese envoy, and Cordell Hull, U.S. Secretary of State.

As for the average American, he was existing in another world and paid more attention to enjoying football games and celebrating the routine Thanksgiving and Christmas festivals. The average American simply had another world to take care of.

In a pleasant Lanai beach house, a forty-six year old man and his wife, a beautician from a beauty parlor in Honolulu, were also enjoying Thanksgiving, in Hawaii.

Hawaii was a refreshing paradise that knows no brutal snow and winter. But, this was one man who no longer knew poverty or hunger. He was "Jimmie" F. Kuehn, a traitor who had just been paid \$14,000 for delivering U.S. fleet movements in Pearl Harbor from his beachfront home, using a series of radio transmissions and coded lights at night to the Japanese. But, his complete story is for another book to tell.

Fleet Exercise 191, planned since August, and very similar to a 1938 exercise in which Admiral H.E. Yarnell startled and demolished his opposing side by launching his aircraft in bad weather across horrific storm clouds north of Oahu, was a big event. Such naval exercises were a yearly event for training purposes. This was a big show, with over 120 aircraft and five battleships in the company of over 40 other warships and subs and long-range PBY scouts to try to catch "the other side."

It began November 19. Ships were at sea. Old fashioned blinker lights were the principal form of communication. All Thanksgiving furloughs were cancelled. Battle exercises commenced November 21. The attacking forces slowly began forming up around an extinct volcano, about 200 miles north of Oahu, which they reached by Sunday, November 23. By coincidence, or were there some psychic ramifications, this was the same exact spot that Yamamoto's forces would launch their December 7 attack.

Despite stormy weather at first, the exercises continued into Monday, November 24. Sometime around 3:30 pm, the whole exercise was suddenly called off. Sailors and aviators would find out Admiral Kimmel had received a compelling warning from Washington DC. Rear-Admiral Ingersoll sent the following:

Chances of favorable outcome of negotiations with Japan very doubtful x This situation coupled with statements of Japanese government and movements their naval and military forces indicate in our opinion that a surprise aggressive movement in any direction including attack on Philippines or Guam is a possibility. Chief of Staff has seen this dispatch....

All of Pearl was on alert, again. Vice-Admiral Halsey issued plans for a task group of 25 warships to protect Pearl. Halsey planned to protect Pearl by keeping the task group guarding Oahu until December the fifth.

At 8:48 pm. November 24, Radioman Second Class Jack Kage monitored a radio alert from Yamamoto's fleet. It was deciphered to be some kind of radio silence order for "the main force and its attached forces" with no specifications.

On November 22, 1941, a secretive coded message was deciphered by Magic. It read: After the 29th, things will automatically begin to happen. (November 28th, U.S. time.)

Consequently, two days later all top U.S. naval commanders were issued the aforementioned warning message from Ingersoll, followed three days later by the following, "This dispatch is to be considered a war warning . . . a surprise aggressive move by Japan is expected within the next few days, including Guam or the Philippines is a possibility." They were instructed to undertake no offensive action until Japan had committed an overt act. They were instructed not to alarm the civil populace. Hawaii, Manila, Panama, San Francisco were all placed on war alert.

Also on the 27th, U.S. commanders attended a conference in which, stemming from a Nov. 26 directive

from Adm. Stark, ordered Kimmel to deliver aircraft to Wake and Midway. The plan of Halsey was cancelled.

According to a book published in 1968 entitled **Pearl Harbor** by Vice-Adm. Homer K. Wallin, former student of Harvard Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto issued a radio dispatch on the 25th of November to the First Air Fleet, commanded by Adm. Nagumo. If he did, Yamamoto breaking radio silence, stated to the task force to "advance into Hawaiian waters....The first air raid is planned for the dawn of X-day (exact date to be given by later order.)

It further stated, "Upon completion of the air raid, the task force, keeping close coordination and guarding against the enemy's counterattack, shall speedily leave the enemy waters and then return to Japan. Should the negotiations with the United States prove successful, the task force shall hold itself in readiness forthwith to return and reassemble."

All U.S. naval intercept records regarding any November 24, 1941, Japanese naval dispatches are still classified and unreleased. According to historian Stinnett, this was one of two dispatches secretly sent Nov. 25. (Nov. 25 Tokyo time corresponds to Nov. 24 in North America.) The other was a quiet brief saying ships were to leave Hiptokappu Bay on the morning of November 26 and advance to 42° N by 17° E for refuelling. Stinnett also claims that none of the reports by either Wallin or the 1946 naval history report cited before were presented to the congressional investigations in 1945-46 or the 1995 special Pearl Harbor inquiry.

War did not break out between Imperial Japan and the U.S. on the 25th of November, on the date of Japan's red letter dateline for diplomacy, because the hand of Tojo secretly re-extended the dateline to November 27th and restated stalemate proposals to Cordell Hull. In America, hours before the deadline, intelligence reported to Hull and F.D.R. that a large convoy of Japanese ships was

sailing slowly south through the South China Sea.

In effect, President Roosevelt advised Secretary Hull to (re-)restate the American demands, including Japanese withdrawal from China. From the official translated transcript, a few post-war historians say that Hull meant that Japanese forces should leave China entirely except what they took over in 1931; others say he meant all evacuation which to the Japanese was unacceptable. Whatever the case, the Japanese viewed the stern and complicated reply from Hull as the latter. All thought of a *modus vivendi* was erased. Long efforts to negotiate were zero. (The earliest released report on the complicated *modus vivendi* was in the November 25, 1941, issue of the *N.Y. Times*.)

On November 27, ex-premiere Konoye, along with various elder statesmen, pleaded to Tojo's cabinet to continue negotiations for a peaceful settlement. Arguments ensued but, from the peaceful viewpoint, to no avail. On November 29, 1941, (Nov. 30 in Tokyo) the same date that Lieut. Rudolph Fabian intercepted a SM Code that Japanese forces were shifting major communications west of Formosa, the War Cabinet called on war, with negotiations inconsequential. It was to be a war waged on speed; a quick military attack to control the Far East and deliver a decisive hammer blow on Pearl Harbor.

On December 1 the Cabinet formally presented to Emperor Hirohito the final decision for bold war. The minutes of the presentation read: "Our negotiations with the United States regarding the execution of our national policy—adopted November 5—have finally failed.



Japan will open hostilities against the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands.” On the same date the Japanese naval call signs were changed, once more.

The minutes of the presentation were not made privy to outsiders and, needless to say, the route of war was still unknown. However, the call change was noted by attentive eyes decoding information a million miles away. The change itself suggested fateful importance, because according to the records, never before had a change of Japanese code occurred twice within a month. Over 20,000 call signs, including 5-Num were changed. It was during this first week of December that two Magic messages were intercepted that requested even a greater exactness to the locations of warships in Pearl Harbor—in the harbor and when not in the harbor. Negat was undermanned, and it never deciphered these messages among all the tremendous call signs before December seventh.

But, Roosevelt read four Purple intercepts that December first, one dated November 28, “In a few days, U.S.-Japan negotiations will be defacto ruptured. Do not give the impression that negotiations are broken off,” intercepted by Station Sail.

Out across stormy, wintry North Pacific waters, a body of camouflaged fleet vessels pushed against churning waters. Imperial Japan’s carrier attack fleet was reaching the end of their secret 3600 mile voyage.

They were the carrier forces of Admiral Yamamoto, at sea commanded by Adm. Nagumo, and at sea since mid-November. They possessed an impressive array of two battleships, three cruisers, sixteen destroyers, six fully-loaded aircraft carriers and twenty-six submarines. They sailed for their target, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The British historian William H. Honnan, in his current book, **Bywater: The Man Who Invented the Pacific War**, credits Admiral Yamamoto’s battle plan inspiration to a novel entitled,

The fourth of December, the magical Kisner reports the Third Fleet carriers were still traceable and in the vicinity of Kyushu, the southernmost of the main islands of Japan. After the 5th, they too become quiescent. The Japanese between the 5th and 7th tried to trick Americans who were monitoring the airwaves. They tried to trick them into thinking the carrier fleet was still training in the Inland Sea. But, they didn't fool the expert Americans. Take one example. A radio air base in Kasumigaura pretended to send a fleet message to the carrier ships, then pretended to receive the reply. Radioman First Class Fred R. Thomson on Station AE at Sitka, Alaska, was able to detect the Kasumigauran transmission which was literally talking to itself via the same transmitter. That's how good some of America's operators were. This shows, if you have the time, you can catch them. But, as you shall read, one big slip up concerning time did occur that December. It involved RCA and not RDF or something else.

The Great Pacific War, written by a hard-drinking author named Hector C. Bywater in 1925. The novel was translated into Japanese and, for several years, remained a required reading for every Imperial Japanese navy officer.

On December second, Climb Mt. Niitaka was intercepted at Station H at 1:30 am, Hawaiian time by Joseph C. Howard. Station C and also Baker on Guam intercepted it also. From a little known footnote in history, it seems a Dutch naval attache named Captain Johan Ranneft was at the right place at the right time. On his visit to ONI in Washington DC, according to Pulitzer Prize winner and historian John Toland, he was inside ONI and saw on a naval intelligence map the carrier plots. Toland claims what Ranneft saw he later wrote in his diary. That diary was shown to the historian and in the diary a

location of Japanese carriers heading east was pointed out to him.

Whether signals escaped detection can only be surmised, as many naval records from the first seven days of December still remain classified. According to Stinnett, high-powered shore stations of Japan beamed radio signals like crazy in early December in the direction of the North Pacific. What was communicated can only be left to conjecture, as nothing is available in document form for historians. However, they tell of a clue that it presented to naval higher-ups. Although reports of enemy ships sailing south was known, something was cooking up north.

A civilian radio operator aboard the oceanliner *Lurline* which was taking civilian workers to Hawaii, also discovered the heavy radio output. His name was Leslie Grogan. Although he couldn't make head or tails out of it, he logged everything in his log book. Dates, times, even radio direction finder bearings. He and other crew members created a transcript of the broadcasts and RDF plots and, on the 3rd of December, turned it in to a Lieut. Commander George Reese of Naval Intelligence in Hawaii. That vital report has disappeared.

The original ship's log book stayed on the ship. however, when they arrived back to San Francisco, the Navy confiscated it. Without the official document, we can only go by the report filed later by Grogan to the shipper Matson Lines. The official log, it seems, was located by some cool detective work by Stinnett, that traced it as once being housed at the Federal Records Center in San Bruno, California, a branch of the National Archives. Somehow it lay there until someone must have seen the 1970 Hollywood movie *Tora Tora Tora*, saw a connection, and tried to trace it. We find someone filled out a withdrawal slip at the National Archives and took it. The faded withdrawal slip was found in 1991,