

[2] 5. The Commanding General, Hawaiian Department, is being directed to give immediate consideration to the question of the employment of balloons barrages and the use of smoke in protecting the Fleet and base facilities. Barrage balloons are not available at the present time for installation and cannot be made available prior to the summer of 1941. At present there are three on hand and eighty-four being manufactured--forty for delivery by June 30, 1941, and the remainder by September. The Budget now has under consideration funds for two thousand nine hundred and fifty balloons. The value of smoke for screening vital areas on Oahu is a controversial subject. Qualified opinion is that atmospheric and geographic conditions in Oahu render the employment of smoke impracticable for large scale screening operations. However, the Commanding General will look into this matter again.

6. With reference to your other proposals for joint defense, I am forwarding a copy of your letter and this reply to the Commanding General, Hawaiian Department, and am directing him to cooperate with the local naval authorities in making those measures effective.

/s/ HENRY L. STIMSON,  
Secretary of War.

A true copy. Attest:

H. Blesener,  
H. BLESENER,  
Captain, U. S. Navy,  
Judge Advocate.

[24]  
Op-56E2-AJ  
(SC)A7-2(2)/TFI

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

D-27196

Navy Department

February 13, 1941.

From: Director, Naval Districts Division

To: Director, War Plans Division

Subject: Air Defense of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. (See War Mr. of Feb. 7, 1941 to SecNav.)

1. Returned. It is recommended that a copy of the subject letter be sent to the Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Fleet and the Commandant of the 14th Naval District.

/s/ Alex Sharp  
ALEX SHARP

(Pencil Notation: Done OMB712 of 11 Feb. M.)

A true copy. Attest:

H. Blesener,  
H. BLESENER,  
Captain, U. S. Navy,  
Judge Advocate

EXHIBIT No. 25

(Exhibit No. 25 is a fitness report on Admiral Husband E. Kimmel from 1 October 1941 to 17 December 1941. This report is reproduced in four parts and will be found as Items Nos. 6, 7, 8, and 9, EXHIBITS-ILLUSTRATIONS, Navy Court of Inquiry. These illustrations are bound together following the printed exhibits of the Navy Court of Inquiry.)

EXHIBIT No. 26

SECRET

27 MAY 1940

DEAR JO: Yours of the 22nd just received. I shall endeavor to answer it paragraph by paragraph. First, however, I would like to say that I know exactly what you are up against, and to tell you, that here in the Department we are up against the same thing.

Why are you in the Hawaiian Area?

Answer: You are there because of the deterrent effect which it is thought your presence may have on the Japs going into the East Indies. In previous letters I have hooked this up with the Italians going into the war. The connection is that with Italy in, it is thought the Japs might feel just that much freer to take independent action. We believe both the Germans and the Italians have told the Japs that so far as they are concerned she, Japan, has a free hand in the Dutch East Indies.

Your natural question may follow—well, how about Italy and the war? I can state that we have had Italy going into the war on 24 hours notice on several different occasions during the last two weeks from sources of information which looked authentic. Others have stated that it would occur within the next ten days. I have stated personally that cold logic would dictate her not going in for some time. It is anybody's guess. It may be decided by the time this reaches you. Events are moving fast in Northern France.

The above in itself shows you how indefinite the situation is.

Along the same line as the first question presented you would naturally ask—suppose the Japs do go into the East Indies? What are we going to do about it? My answer to that is, I don't know and I think there is nobody on God's green earth who can tell you. I do know my own arguments with regard to this, both in the White House and in the State Department, are in line with the thoughts contained in your recent letter.

I would point out one thing and that is that even if the decision here were for the U. S. to take no decisive action if the Japs should decide to go into the Dutch East Indies, we must not breathe it to a soul, as by so doing we would completely nullify the reason for your presence in the Hawaiian area. Just remember that the Japs don't know what we are going to do and so long as they don't know they may hesitate, or be deterred. These thoughts I have kept very secret here.

[2] The above I think will answer the question "why you are there". It does not answer the question as to how long you will probably stay. Rest assured that the minute I get this information I will communicate it to you. Nobody can answer it just now. Like you, I have asked the question, and also—like you—I have been unable to get the answer.

I realize what you are up against in even a curtailed gunnery schedule. I may say that so far as the Department is concerned you are at liberty to play with the gunnery schedule in any way you see fit, eliminating some practices for the time being and substituting others which you may consider important and which you have the means at hand to accomplish. Specifically if you want to cut out short range battle practice and proceed with long range practices or division practices or experimental or anything else, including anti-air, etc., etc., which you think will be to the advantage of the Fleet in its present uncertain status—go ahead. Just keep us informed.

We have told you what we are doing about ammunition; we will attempt to meet any changes you may desire.

We have given you a free hand in recommending ships to come back to the Coast for docking, etc.

You ask whether you are there as a stepping off place for belligerent activity? Answer: obviously it might become so under certain conditions but a definite answer cannot be given as you have already gathered from the foregoing.

I realize what you say about the advantages of returning to the West Coast for the purpose of preparation at this time is out of the question. If you did return it might nullify the principle reasons for your being in Hawaii. This very question has been brought up here. As a compromise, however, you have authority for returning ships to the Coast for docking, taking ammunition, stores, etc., and this should help in any case.

As to the freeing of personnel:—Nimitz has put the personnel problem before you. I will touch on it only to the extent that I have been moving Heaven and Earth to get our figure boosted to 170,000 enlisted men (or even possibly 172,300) and 34,000 marines. If we get these authorized I believe you will be comfortable as regards numbers of men for this coming year. I know the convulsion the Fleet had to go through to commission the 64 destroyers and some other ships recently. I am thankful that convulsion is over. I hope the succeeding one may be as light as possible and you may rest assured that Navigation will do everything it can to lessen this unavoidable burden on the Forces Afloat.

I had hoped your time in the Hawaiian area would have some indirect or incidental results regardless of anything else, such as—

(a) Solving the logistic problems involved, including not only supplies from the U. S. but their handling and storage at Pearl Harbor.

(b) Training, such as you might do under war conditions.

[3] (c) Familiarity of Task Forces with the Midway, Aleutian, Palmyra, Johnston, Samoa general area, in so far as may be practicable.

(d) Closer liaison with the Army and the common defense of the Hawaiian area than has ever previously existed between Army and Navy.

(e) Solving of communication problems involved by joint action between Army and Navy and particularly stressing the air communications.

(f) Security of the Fleet at anchor.

(g) Accentuating the realization that the Hawaiian group consists of considerably more than just Oahu.

You were not detained in Hawaii to develop the area as a peacetime operating base but this will naturally flow to a considerable extent from what you are up against.

As to the decrease in the efficiency of the Fleet and the lowering of morale due to inadequate anchorages, air fields, facilities, service, recreation conditions, for so large a Fleet:

I wish I could help you. I spent some of my first years out of the Naval Academy in the West Indies,—I remember the last port I was in after a 22 month stay and where we didn't move for 6 months; and there was not even one white person in the place. The great antidote I know is WORK and home-made recreation such as sailing, fishing, athletics, smokers, etc. You can also move Task Forces around a good deal for seagoing and diversion; just so you be ready for concentrations should such become necessary. We will solve the oil situation for you for all the cruising you feel necessary.

In my letter of May 22nd I mentioned the possibility of moving some units of the Fleet to the Atlantic. This might be a small movement, or it might grow to a modified Rainbow No. 1,—modified as to assumptions and as to the distribution of the forces. In other words, a situation that we might be confronted with would be one in which the Italian and German Fleets would not be free to act, but might be free to send a cruiser or so to the South Atlantic. In such a case there would be no need to send very extensive forces to the Atlantic, and the continuance of the Fleet in the Pacific would maintain its stabilizing influence.

Units that might be called to the Atlantic, under such a modified Rainbow situation, to provide for conditions that *now* appear possible, would be a division of cruisers, a carrier, a squadron of destroyers, possibly a light mine layer division, possibly Patrol Wing One, and possibly, but more unlikely, a division of submarines with a tender.

If you desire to have task groups visit the Aleutians, and the islands in the mid-Pacific and south Pacific somewhat distant [4] from Hawaii, the possibility of such a call being made,—for the detachment of such a force to the Atlantic—should be borne in mind.

Also, it should be borne in mind, in connection with any movements of Navy units to the southward that a situation might arise which would call for visits to French or British possessions in those areas. We will strive to keep you informed on these points as the situation changes or develops.

I believe we have taken care of your auxiliary air fields by granting authority for leases and I may add that we are asking for authority to do something permanent in this connection in bills which we now have pending before the Congress and which should be acted upon within the next two weeks.

Fleet Training has recently sent you a letter with regard to targets and target practice facilities in general. We will do everything we can to assist you in this situation and I trust that something permanent will come out of it so that in future situations of this kind the 14th District will be much better off.

Regarding the carrier situation, we are prepared to go along with you on whatever you decide is best after you complete your survey.

Regarding splitting the Hawaiian Detachment back into its normal type commands:—We will naturally leave this matter entirely in your hands. If a part of the Fleet is brought to the Atlantic Coast, or if the main part of the Fleet is recalled to the West Coast, it may well, in any case, be necessary to formulate a task force for retention in Hawaii different from the composition of the present Hawaiian Detachment.

This letter is rather rambling and practically thinking out loud as I have read yours. Incidentally it should be read in connection with my letter to you of 22 May wherein was outlined the possibilities of having to send some ships to the Atlantic; and which you had not received when you wrote.

I would be glad if you would show Admiral Bloch this and also my last letter—as I want to keep him informed.

Rest assured that just as soon as I can give you anything more specific I will. Meanwhile keep cheerful and with every good wish as ever.

Sincerely,

Admiral J. O. RACHARDSON, USN,  
Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet,  
USS PENNSYLVANIA,  
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

P. S. The European situation is extremely critical. Italy may act by 5 June which seems to be another deadline drawn on information which once again looks authentic. However, it still is a guess.

[1]

EXHIBIT No. 27

SECRET

44/10

CNO File No. A16/01765

UNITED STATES FLEET

U. S. S. NEW MEXICO, Flagship

U. S. NAVY YARD, BIRMINGHAM, WASH.

October 22, 1940

From: The Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Fleet.

To: The Chief of Naval Operations.

Subject: War Plans—Status and readiness of in view of the current international situation.

1. Since the return of the Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Fleet, from his recent conference in Washington, and in view of the conversations that took place there, additional thought and study have been given to the status and readiness of the U. S. Fleet for war operations. As a result of this study, the Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Fleet, feels it to be his solemn duty to present, for the consideration of the Chief of Naval Operations, certain facts and conclusions in order that there may be no doubt in the minds of higher authority as to his convictions in regard to the present situation, especially in the Pacific.

2. In order to bring out more clearly all the aspects of this situation, it is necessary to review certain factors affecting it and to discuss them in the light of present events.

3. On the occasion of his first visit to Washington, in July, and in personal letters to the Chief of Naval Operations, the Commander-in-Chief stressed his firm conviction that neither the Navy nor the country was prepared for war with Japan. He pointed out that such an eventuality could only result in a long drawn out, costly war, with doubtful prospects of ultimate success. He left Washington with three distinct impressions:

*First.* That the Fleet was retained in the Hawaiian area solely to support diplomatic representations and as a deterrent to Japanese aggressive action;

*Second.* That there was no intention of embarking on actual hostilities against Japan;

[2] *Third.* That the immediate mission of the Fleet was accelerated training and absorption of new personnel and the attainment of a maximum condition of material and personnel readiness consistent with its retention in the Hawaiian area.

4. On the occasion of his second visit to Washington, in October, 1940, an entirely different impression was obtained. It is true that the international situation, between the two visits, had materially changed, principally in that the danger of invasion of the British Isles was considerably less imminent, with consequent reduced chances of the loss or compromise of the British Fleet; in that the United States had more closely identified itself with Great Britain; in that Japanese aggression had progressed to the domination of Indo-China and gave signs of further progress toward the Dutch East Indies; and, in the open alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan, reportedly aimed at the United States.