

## REPORT OF ROBERTS COMMISSION

JANUARY 23, 1942.

The PRESIDENT,  
*The White House.*

SIR: The undersigned were appointed by Executive order of December 18, 1941, which defined our duties as a commission thus:

to ascertain and report the facts relating to the attack made by Japanese armed forces upon the Territory of Hawaii on December 7, 1941.

The purposes of the required inquiry and report are to provide bases for sound decisions whether any derelictions of duty or errors of judgment on the part of United States Army or Navy personnel contributed to such successes as were achieved by the enemy on the occasion mentioned; and, if so, what these derelictions or errors were, and who were responsible therefor.

The Congress speedily supplemented the Executive order by granting the Commission power to summon witnesses and examine them under oath.

The Commission held three meetings in Washington, December 18, 19, and 20, and, on the latter day, proceeded to Honolulu, T. H., where the Commission arrived December 22 and held meetings December 22, 23, 24, and 26 at the headquarters of the Hawaiian Department, Fort Shafter, and December 27, 29, 30, and 31, 1941, and January 2 and 3, 1942, at the submarine base, Pearl Harbor; and January 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Honolulu. January 10 the Commission left Honolulu for Washington, D. C.; held meetings January 12, 13, and 14; arrived at Washington January 15 and held further meetings January 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23.

The Commission examined 127 witnesses and received a large number of documents. All members of the Military and Naval Establishments, and civil officers and citizens who were thought to have knowledge of facts pertinent to the inquiry, were summoned and examined under oath. All persons in the island of Oahu, who believed they had knowledge of such facts, were publicly requested to appear, and a number responded to the invitation and gave evidence.

Various rumors and hearsay statements have been communicated to the Commission. The Commission has sought to find and examine witnesses who might be expected to have knowledge respecting them. We believe that our findings of fact sufficiently dispose of most of them.

The evidence touches subjects which in the national interest should remain secret. We have, therefore, refrained from quotation of testimony or documentary proof. Our findings, however, have been made with the purpose fully and accurately to reflect the testimony which as respects matters of fact is substantially without contradiction.

It is true, as we have found, that due to the enormous demand on the Nation's capacity to produce munitions and war supplies, there

was a deficiency in the provision of matériel for the Hawaiian area. This was but natural, in the circumstances, and was well known to the Government departments and local commanders. We have made no detailed findings on the subject since, as will appear from our report, we find that this deficiency did not affect the critical fact of failure to take appropriate measures with the means available.

At our hearings reference was made to what has long been a matter of common knowledge—that there are, and have been, diverse views of national policy respecting the basing of the entire United States Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, T. H. 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.

Regrettable loss of life and extensive damage resulted from the air raid. The nature of that damage and the details of the measures taken to repair it have no direct bearing on the execution of the mandate appointing this Commission, and the subject is dealt with in our report only to the extent that it bears on questions of responsibility for the disaster.

The evidence taken covered a wide scope. The Commission intentionally invited such latitude of testimony and inquiry in the belief that thereby incidental light might be thrown upon the main issues involved. As an example, the Commission heard evidence to show what had been done at Pearl Harbor and on the island of Oahu by naval and military commands subsequent to December 7, 1941, in the view that this might throw some light upon the matters submitted for our consideration. Again, the Commission heard much testimony as to the population of Hawaii, its composition, and the attitude and disposition of the persons composing it, in the belief that the facts disclosed might aid in appraising the results of investigative, counterespionage, and antisabotage work done antecedent to the attack of December 7, 1941.

The Commission visited the naval base at Pearl Harbor and air fields of the Military and Naval Establishments, as well as the Army posts and forts and certain of the coast fortifications on the island of Oahu.

The minutes of each meeting of the Commission are of record. The statements of witnesses received in the meetings previous to that of December 22 have been recorded in summaries. All testimony received at the meeting of December 22 and the subsequent meetings was stenographically reported and transcribed.

The oral evidence received amounts to 1,887 typewritten pages, and the records and documents examined exceed 3,000 printed pages in number.

Appended hereto is a map of the island of Oahu showing the location of the principal naval and military establishments.

All the testimony and evidence received have been considered and, as the result of its deliberations, the Commission submits the following:



## FINDINGS OF FACT

## I

About 7:55 a. m. Honolulu time (1:25 p. m. eastern standard time) on Sunday, December 7, 1941, Japanese forces attacked Army and Navy installations and ships of the Pacific Fleet in Oahu, T. H.

Although the United States and Japan were at peace on that morning, Japan planned to announce to the Secretary of State of the United States at 1 p. m. of that day, eastern standard time (7:30 a. m. Honolulu time) the severance of diplomatic relations and simultaneously to attack the island of Oahu and Pearl Harbor. The military preparations for this breach of international faith and honor were put in train, and the forces for its consummation had been dispatched weeks prior to any intimation of the planned severance of relations.

## II

The Territory of Hawaii comprises the group of islands known as the Hawaiian Islands. This group consists of the larger islands—Hawaii, Maui, Molokai, Oahu, and Kauai—and a number of smaller islands. They extend from Hawaii in the south some 300 miles in a northwesterly direction, including Kauai in the north. For purposes of certain developments and protection, the islands of Midway, Wake, Johnston, Palmyra, Christmas, and Canton had been placed under the responsible naval and military heads in the Hawaiian area.

The importance of the Territory of Hawaii from a national defense standpoint is the fact that Pearl Harbor, the main outlying naval base in the Pacific, is located in the island of Oahu, one of the Hawaiian group. For this reason all measures for the protection and defense of the Territory have centered in and around Oahu, the other islands being garrisoned by minor forces only. A main outlying naval base, such as Pearl Harbor, is intended for the use of the fleet for taking on fuel and supplies, for recreation and rest of the fleet personnel, and for the repair and refitting of ships.

## III

It has been well known that the policy of the United States as to affairs in the Pacific was in conflict with the policies of other governments. It was realized by the State, War, and Navy Departments of the United States that unless these policies were reconciled war in the Pacific was inevitable.

## IV

Plans and preparations against the contingency of war are the joint responsibility of the military and naval authorities, and, within the limits of funds and authorizations provided by the Congress, were being ceaselessly carried out.

Under these plans the general function of the Army is to conduct military operations in direct defense of United States territory. The general function of the Navy is to conduct naval operations to gain and maintain control of vital sea areas, thereby contributing to the defense of the coastal frontiers.

Specific plans for the protection of the Hawaiian area against every contingency had been prepared. These included joint Army and Navy war plans, and War Department and Navy Department plans subsidiary thereto which establish the Hawaiian coastal frontier, assign tasks and forces to both Army and Navy for its joint defense, and prescribe that the system of coordination between the responsible Army and Navy commanders shall be by mutual cooperation.

## V

The responsibility for the joint defense of the Hawaiian coastal frontier rested upon the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, and the commandant, Fourteenth Naval District, the latter acting as a subordinate of the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet. The commander in chief of the fleet, in addition, was assigned the task of protecting the territory within the Hawaiian naval coastal frontier by destroying hostile expeditions and by supporting land and air forces in denying the enemy the use of land positions within that frontier, and the further task of covering the operations of the Hawaiian coastal frontier forces. The commanding general, Hawaiian Department, could properly deal, respecting defense measures and dispositions, with either the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet or the commandant of the Fourteenth Naval District.

The commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet from February 1 to December 17, 1941, was Admiral Husband E. Kimmel. The commandant, Fourteenth Naval District, from April 11, 1940, to date is Rear Admiral Claude C. Bloch. The commanding general, Hawaiian Department, from February 7 to December 17, 1941, was Lt. Gen. Walter C. Short.

A local joint defense plan entitled "Joint Coastal Frontier Defense plan, Hawaiian Coastal Frontier," was prepared by General Short and Rear Admiral Bloch, the latter acting under the direction of Admiral Kimmel. Each commander adopted a standing operating procedure, or standing orders, to carry out his obligation under the joint agreement. This joint coastal frontier defense plan was intended to become operative upon order of the War and Navy Departments or, as agreed upon by the local commanders in the case of an emergency, a threat of hostile action, or the occurrence of war.

## VI

The means available to the Army, for the fulfillment of its mission, consist of coast defense and antiaircraft artillery, mobile ground forces, the Hawaiian air force, and an aircraft warning service. The supporting elements of the Navy consist of local naval defense forces comprising light surface craft and shore-based aircraft not assigned to the fleet. The fleet as such was not charged with the defense of Pearl Harbor, except that certain aircraft attached to the fleet, when present, and the antiaircraft weapons of such units of the fleet as were in port, were available.

It was recognized that, prior to furnishing the full war strength garrison, insufficient forces were available to maintain all the defenses on a war footing for extended periods of time. The respon-



sible commanders made numerous recommendations to the War and Navy Departments for additional forces, equipment, and funds which they deemed necessary to insure the defense of the Hawaiian coastal frontier under any eventuality. The national situation permitted only a partial filling of these requirements. However, presupposing timely dispositions by the Army and Navy commands in Hawaii, the forces available to them were adequate to frustrate a surprise air attack or greatly to mitigate its effectiveness.

## VII

In a letter of January 24, 1941, the Secretary of the Navy advised the Secretary of War that the increased gravity of the Japanese situation had prompted a restudy of the problem of the security of the Pacific Fleet while in Pearl Harbor. The writer stated:

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.

The writer stated that the—

inherent possibilities of a major disaster—

warranted further speedy action to—

increase the joint readiness of the Army and Navy to withstand a raid of the character mentioned \* \* \*.

The letter proceeded:

The dangers envisaged in their order of importance and probability are considered to be: (1) Air bombing attack, (2) air torpedo plane attack, (3) sabotage, (4) submarine attack, (5) mining, (6) bombardment by gunfire.

It stated the defenses against all but the first two were then satisfactory, described the probable character of an air attack and urged consideration by the Army of dispositions to discover and meet such attack and provision of additional equipment therefor. It concluded with recommendations for the revision of joint defense plans with special emphasis on the coordination of Army and Navy operations against surprise aircraft raids. It also urged the conduct of joint exercises to train the forces to meet such raids.

The Secretary of War replied February 7, 1941, giving the present and prospective status of the Hawaiian Department in respect of airplanes and antiaircraft artillery, and stating with respect to the other proposals of the Secretary of the Navy that a copy of the letter was being forwarded to the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, with direction to him to cooperate with the local naval authorities in making the suggested measures effective.

Admiral Kimmel and General Short received copies of these letters at about the time they assumed the commands which they held December 7, 1941. Rear Admiral Bloch also received copies.

The joint coastal frontier defense plan and plans subsidiary thereto envisaged the possibility of an air attack and estimated that, if made, it would most likely occur at dawn. An agreement between the Hawaiian air force and the commander, Navy patrol wing 2, established the responsibilities for the joint use and operation of the available air forces of the Army and Navy. The standing operating procedure, Hawaiian Department, and standing orders of the United

States Pacific Fleet and the Fourteenth Naval District also prescribed measures for protection against air attack. Frequent joint drills and exercises were conducted during the year 1941 to insure such measures would be effective.

### VIII

For months prior to December 7, 1941, the Secretary of State was repeatedly in contact with the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, not only in Cabinet meetings, but in meetings of the war council; and on the occasions of those contacts, and in conference with the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, discussed negotiations with Japan and the growing tensivity of the relations of the United States with Japan. At meetings of the war council the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations were also present. The Secretary of State constantly kept the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy informed of the progress of the negotiations, and all three of these officials were cognizant of the growing threat of hostilities and of the military and naval needs and measures consequent thereupon. The Secretaries of War and Navy were in constant touch with the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations, and imparted to them the information received from the Secretary of State and the results of their conferences with him. The latter officers in turn advised the responsible commanders in the field of the progress of events and of the growing threat of hostilities. The responsible commanders in the Hawaiian area were aware that previous Japanese actions and demonstrated Axis methods indicated that hostile action might be expected prior to a declaration of war.

### IX

October 16, 1941, the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, and the commander in chief of the fleet were advised by the War and Navy Departments of the changes in the Japanese Cabinet, of the probability of hostilities between Japan and Russia, and of the possibility of an attack by Japan on Great Britain and the United States. Both commanders were warned to take precautions and to make preparatory dispositions which would not disclose their strategic intentions or constitute provocation as against Japan. Admiral Kimmel made certain dispositions of units of the fleet, and placed additional security measures in effect in the operating areas outside Pearl Harbor. At that time various task forces of the Navy were engaged in training operations and maneuvers which were deemed highly important to the training of the fleet personnel, and the Army was also conducting intensive training, particularly of its air arm. The responsible commanders testified that to undertake increased defense measures respecting Pearl Harbor and the Hawaiian area would necessitate curtailment of training, if not its virtual suspension, and they thought the situation was not such as to require this.

November 24, 1941, the Chief of Naval Operations sent a message to Admiral Kimmel, in which he stated that, in the opinion of the Navy Department, a surprise aggressive movement in any direction by the Japanese, including an attack on the Philippines or Guam, was a possibility; that the doubt as to favorable outcome of pending



negotiations, the statements of the Japanese Government, and the movements of its army and naval forces, supported this opinion. The communication enjoined secrecy to prevent complication of the tense existing situation. The message advised that the Chief of Staff of the Army requested that the local senior Army officers be advised that he concurred in the despatch. This message was seen by both the commander in chief of the fleet and the commanding general of the Hawaiian Department.

The responsible commanders in Hawaii knew that negotiations had been continued through October and November, and were awaiting further developments. November 27, 1941, the Chief of Staff of the Army informed the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, that the negotiations with Japan seemed to be ended, with little likelihood of their resumption; that Japanese action was unpredictable; that hostilities on the part of Japan were momentarily possible; that in the event hostilities could not be avoided the United States desired that this Nation should not commit the first overt act; that the department commander was not to be restricted to any course which would jeopardize his defense. The message directed him, even prior to hostile action, to undertake such reconnaissance and other measures as he deemed necessary, but to carry them out in such a way as not to alarm the civil population or disclose his intent. He was directed to restrict the information contained in the message to the minimum of essential officers, and to report to the Chief of Staff the measures taken. The purpose of this message was communicated by the department commander to the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet.

On the same day (November 27, 1941), the Chief of Military Intelligence sent a message to the intelligence officer on the staff of the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, directing him to inform the commanding general and his chief of staff that negotiations with Japan had practically ceased; that hostilities might ensue; and that subversive activity might be expected.

On the same day (November 27, 1941), the Chief of Naval Operations sent a message to the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet, which stated in substance that the dispatch was to be considered a war warning; that the negotiations with Japan in an effort to stabilize conditions in the Pacific had ended; that Japan was expected to make an aggressive move within the next few days; that an amphibious expedition against either the Philippines, Thai, or Kra Peninsula, or possibly Borneo, was indicated by the number and equipment of Japanese troops and the organization of their naval task forces. It directed the execution of a defensive deployment in preparation for carrying out war tasks. It stated that Guam, Samoa, and continental districts had been directed to take appropriate measures against sabotage, and that a similar warning was being sent by the War Department. It ordered that the addressee inform naval district and Army authorities. The commander in chief of the fleet communicated the purport of this message to the general commanding the Hawaiian Department of the Army.

At the time of our hearing General Short had no independent recollection of the last-mentioned message, although he felt that it must have been shown to him.

November 27, 1941, the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, in response to the direction of the Chief of Staff that he report measures taken, informed the Chief of Staff that he had alerted his command against sabotage and that he was maintaining liaison with the Navy. No reply referring to this message was sent by the War Department; but General Short testified that he considered the Adjutant General's message referred to in the next succeeding paragraph a reply.

November 28, 1941, the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, received from The Adjutant General of the Army a message stating that the critical situation required every precaution to be taken at once against subversive activities, within the scope of the Army's responsibility; that all necessary measures be taken to protect military establishments, property, and equipment against sabotage, against propaganda affecting Army personnel, and against all espionage. The message disclaimed ordering any illegal measures, and warned that protective measures should be confined to those essential to security, so as to avoid unnecessary publicity and alarm. The message stated that identic communications were being sent to all air stations and, on November 28, the Chief of the Army Air Forces sent such an identic message to the commanding general, Hawaiian Air Force.

November 29, 1941, the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, replied to the last-mentioned message, outlining at length and in detail the measures taken to prevent sabotage of military establishments and property and essential industrial and public-utility installations. No reply was sent by the War Department to this message. General Short testified that he considered this series of messages a tacit agreement that the measures taken were all that were intended by the Department.

November 29, 1941, the Chief of Naval Operations sent a message to the commander in chief of the fleet, which was in substance a quotation of the Chief of Staff's despatch of November 27 to the commanding general, Hawaiian Department; and in addition directed the addressee to take no offensive action until Japan had committed an overt act, and ordered certain action in case hostilities should occur.

November 30, 1941, the Chief of Naval Operations sent a despatch to the commander in chief of the Asiatic Fleet, and also forwarded the message to the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet for his information, in which it was stated the indications were that Japan was about to launch an attack on the Kra Isthmus, directing the commander in chief of the Asiatic Fleet to do certain scouting, but to avoid the appearance of attacking. Admiral Kimmel testified that he had viewed this message as indicating that the Navy Department was not expecting a Japanese attack on Hawaii.

The Navy Department sent three messages to the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet; the first of December 3, 1941, stated that it was believed certain Japanese consulates were destroying their codes and burning secret documents; the second of December 4, 1941, instructed the addressee to destroy confidential documents and means of confidential communication, retaining only such as were necessary, the latter to be destroyed in event of emergency (this was sent to the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet for information



only); and the third of December 6, 1941, directing that in view of the tense situation the naval commands on the outlying Pacific islands might be authorized to destroy confidential papers then or later, under conditions of greater emergency, and that those essential to continued operations should be retained until the last moment.

The foregoing messages did not create in the minds of the responsible officers in the Hawaiian area apprehension as to probable imminence of air raids. On the contrary they only served to emphasize in their minds the danger from sabotage and surprise submarine attack. The necessity for taking a state-of-war readiness which would have been required to avert or meet an air-raid attack was not considered.

## X

December 1, 1941, the Director of Naval Intelligence issued a bulletin which, under the caption "Japanese Naval Situation," stated:

Deployment of naval forces to the southward has indicated clearly that extensive preparations are under way for hostilities. At the same time troop transports and freighters are pouring continually down from Japan and northern China coast ports headed south, apparently for French Indochina and Formosan ports. Present movements to the south appear to be carried out by small individual units, but the organization of an extensive task force, now definitely indicated, will probably take sharper form in the next few days. To date this task force, under the command of the commander in chief, Second Fleet, appears to be subdivided into two major task groups, one gradually concentrating off the southeast Asiatic coast, the other in the Mandates. Each constitutes a strong striking force of heavy and light cruisers, units of the combined air force, destroyer and submarine squadrons. Although one division of battleships also may be assigned, the major capital ship strength remains in home waters, as well as the greatest portion of the carriers.

The Naval Intelligence Service in Hawaii, due to lack of information indicating that the bulk of Japanese carriers were at sea, concluded they were in home ports.

## XI

At about noon, eastern standard time (6:30 a. m. Honolulu time), December 7, an additional warning message, indicating an almost immediate break in relations between the United States and Japan, was dispatched by the Chief of Staff after conference with the Chief of Naval Operations, for the information of responsible Army and Navy commanders. Every effort was made to have the message reach Hawaii in the briefest possible time, but due to conditions beyond the control of anyone concerned the delivery of this urgent message was delayed until after the attack.

## XII

The commanding general, Hawaiian Department, the commander-in-chief of the fleet, and the commandant, Fourteenth Naval District, their senior subordinates, and their principal staff officers, considered the possibility of air raids. Without exception they believed that the chances of such a raid while the Pacific Fleet was based upon Pearl Harbor were practically nil. The attack of Sunday, December 7, 1941, was therefore a complete surprise to each of them.

While General Short and Admiral Kimmel conferred frequently with respect to joint Army-Navy plans and procedures, they did not, on or subsequent to November 27, 1941, hold any conference specifically directed to the meaning of the messages received from the War and Navy Departments or concerning action required to be taken pursuant to those messages.

For some time prior to November 27, 1941, the War Department and the Navy Department had under consideration the possibility of sending Army airplanes to Wake and Midway and withdrawing Marine planes then on those islands; of relieving marines stationed there by the substitution of units of the Army. General Short, Admiral Kimmel, and Rear Admiral Bloch had been in conference concerning this proposal.

At the time of the receipt of the messages of November 27 by Admiral Kimmel and General Short, respectively, this proposal was a subject of discussion. General Short held discussions with Admiral Kimmel on November 27, December 1, 2, and 3 concerning this matter in an effort to compose certain differences of view. At one of these conferences Admiral Kimmel inquired of his war-plans officer, Captain McMorris, who was present, concerning the probability of a surprise air attack on Oahu. According to General Short, Captain McMorris replied there was no probability of such an attack; and, according to Captain McMorris, his reply was that the Japanese would never so attack. According to the testimony Admiral Kimmel and General Short did not discuss means or measures for Hawaiian defense to be adopted in the light of the messages.

On and after November 27, 1941, the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, and the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet, independently took such action as each deemed appropriate to the existing situation. Neither informed the other specifically of the action he was taking, and neither inquired of the other whether or not any action had been taken, nor did they consult as to the appropriateness of the actions taken by them respectively.

After receipt of the messages of November 27 the following action was taken:

The commanding general, Hawaiian Department, ordered alert No. 1 (see next succeeding paragraph) into effect on November 27, and it was maintained in effect until December 7. At the same time he ordered that the aircraft warning system operate daily from 4 to 7 a. m. The commandant of the Fourteenth Naval District, in his capacity as base-defense officer, called a conference of all the destroyer commanders of the inshore patrol, advised them that something might happen, and that they should be on the alert. The commander in chief of the fleet made certain dispositions of units of the fleet for the purpose of strengthening his outposts to the south and west of the Hawaiian Islands, and also issued an order that any Japanese submarines found in the operating areas around the island of Oahu should be attacked. This order went beyond the authority given him by the Navy Department.

In the Hawaiian Department's standing operating procedure governing the defense of the Hawaiian coastal frontier, three states of



readiness were prescribed, known as alert No. 1, alert No. 2, and alert No. 3. Alert No. 1 was thus defined:

This alert is a defense against acts of sabotage and uprisings within the islands, with no threat from without.

Alert No. 2 was thus defined:

This alert is applicable to a condition more serious than alert No. 1. Security against attacks from hostile subsurface, surface, and aircraft, in addition to defense against acts of sabotage and uprisings, is provided.

Alert No. 3 was thus defined:

This alert requires occupation of all field positions by all units, prepared for maximum defense of Oahu and the Army installations on outlying islands.

### XIII

The responsibilities of the Army included the installation and operation of an aircraft warning system for the detection of water-borne and air-borne craft at a distance from the coast. Throughout the late spring and summer of 1941 the Army was engaged in the installation of permanent facilities for this purpose on the Hawaiian Islands. Permanent installations had not, on December 7, 1941, been completed. By November 27, 1941, certain mobile equipment had been installed at temporary locations, and was being operated intermittently throughout the day for the purpose of training personnel in its operation. On November 27, 1941, in connection with the order for alert No. 1, the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, ordered that this system be operated each day during the period from 4 until 7 a. m. It was intended that in the near future the Navy should have officer personnel in the information center, but up to December 7 such officers had not been designated. In accordance with the order in effect, the system closed at 7 a. m. Sunday, December 7. A noncommisioned officer who had been receiving training requested that he be allowed to remain at one of the stations, and was granted leave so to do. At about 7:02 a. m. he discovered what he thought was a large flight of planes slightly east and north of Oahu, at a distance of about 130 miles. He reported this fact at 7:20 a. m. to a lieutenant of the Army who was at the central information center, having been detailed there to familiarize himself with the operation of the system. This inexperienced lieutenant, having information that certain United States planes might be in the vicinity at the time, assumed that the planes in question were friendly planes, and took no action with respect to them. The recording of the observation made indicated that these airplanes were tracked toward the island and then lost.

On November 27, 1941, there was sufficient partially trained personnel available to operate the aircraft warning system throughout 24 hours of the day, as installed in its temporary locations. An arc of nearly 360° around Oahu could have been covered.

Admiral Kimmel, on and prior to December 7, 1941, assumed that the aircraft warning system was being fully operated by the Army, but made no inquiry after reading any of the messages of October and November from the War and Navy Departments as to what the fact was with respect to its operation.

## XIV

The joint coastal frontier defense plan provided that, when it became effective, the Army should conduct an inshore airplane patrol, covering the circumference of the island of Oahu to a distance of about 20 miles. Prior to December 7, 1941, no inshore patrol was conducted, except during drills and maneuvers. Pilots were being trained on weekdays, and the training involved flying around the confines of Oahu from about 8 o'clock in the morning throughout the day. On Sunday morning no inshore airplane patrol was conducted.

## XV

Under the joint coastal frontier defense plan, when the plan became effective the Navy was to conduct distinct air reconnaissance radiating from Oahu to a distance of from 700 to 800 miles. Prior to December 7, 1941, no distant reconnaissances were conducted, except during drills and maneuvers. The fleet from time to time had task forces operating in various areas off the island of Oahu and, in connection with such operations, carrier and patrol planes conducted reconnaissances of the operating areas. The sectors searched, however, constituted but small arcs of the total arc of 360°, and rarely extended to a radius of 700 miles.

Means were available for distant reconnaissance which would have afforded a measure of security against a surprise air attack.

General Short assumed that the Navy was conducting distant reconnaissance, but after seeing the warning messages of October and November from the War and Navy Departments he made no inquiry with respect to the distant reconnaissance, if any, being conducted by the Navy.

## XVI

There were, prior to December 7, 1941, Japanese spies on the island of Oahu. Some were Japanese consular agents and other were persons having no open relations with the Japanese foreign service. These spies collected and, through various channels transmitted, information to the Japanese Empire respecting the military and naval establishments and dispositions on the island.

In Hawaii the local Army Intelligence Service has always devoted itself to matters pertaining to Army personnel and property; and the local Naval Intelligence Service to matters pertaining to Navy personnel and property. In addition, prior to the establishment of an office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Hawaii, Naval Intelligence investigated enemy activities amongst the civil population. When the Bureau's office was established it was agreed by the three governmental agencies that the Bureau should take over and become primarily responsible for investigation of matters connected with the civil population, and that the three services should cooperate with each other. Efforts were made by the Bureau to uncover espionage activities in Hawaii. The United States being at peace with Japan, restrictions imposed prevented resort to certain methods of obtaining the content of messages transmitted by telephone or radio telegraph over the commercial lines operating between Oahu



and Japan. The Bureau and the local intelligence staffs were unable, prior to December 7, to obtain and make available significant information respecting Japanese plans and fleet movements in the direction of Hawaii.

In the summer of 1941 there were more than 200 consular agents acting under the Japanese consul, who was stationed in Honolulu, T. H. The naval district intelligence office raised a question with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and with the intelligence officer of the Hawaiian Department of the Army, whether these agents should not be arrested for failing to register as agents of a foreign principal as required by statutes of the United States. In conferences respecting this question, the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, objected to the arrest of any such persons at least until they had been given notice and an opportunity to register, asserting that their arrest would tend to thwart the efforts which the Army had made to create friendly sentiment toward the United States on the part of Japanese aliens resident in Hawaii and American citizens of Japanese descent resident in Hawaii and create unnecessary bad feeling. No action was taken against the agents.

It was believed that the center of Japanese espionage in Hawaii was the Japanese consulate at Honolulu. It has been discovered that the Japanese consul sent to and received from Tokyo in his own and other names many messages on commercial radio circuits. This activity greatly increased toward December 7, 1941. The contents of these messages, if it could have been learned, might have furnished valuable information. In view of the peaceful relations with Japan, and the consequent restrictions on the activities of the investigating agencies, they were unable prior to December 7 to obtain and examine messages transmitted through commercial channels by the Japanese consul, or by persons acting for him.

It is now apparent that through their intelligence service the Japanese had complete information. They evidently knew that no task force of the United States Navy was anywhere in the sector northeast, north, and northwest of the Hawaiian Islands. They evidently knew that no distant airplane reconnaissance was maintained in any sector. They evidently knew that up to December 6 no inshore airplane patrol was being maintained around the periphery of Oahu. They knew, from maps which they had obtained, the exact location of vital air fields, hangars, and other structures. They also knew accurately where certain important naval vessels would be berthed. Their flyers had the most detailed maps, courses, and bearings, so that each could attack a given vessel or field. Each seems to have been given a specified mission.

## XVII

The passes and liberty granted the personnel of the Army and Navy in Hawaii on Saturday, December 6, were normal for a period when the forces were not upon a war footing, with the following exceptions: The normal Army guard had been increased by approximately 100 percent; two battalions of infantry were held in reserve for antisabotage defense; antiaircraft gun crews were maintained on ships in harbor for instant defense; all Navy personnel, with the exception of those authorized to be absent, were required to be in

their quarters at midnight; all places of amusement in Honolulu and all entertainments at the Army posts were closed at midnight; all saloons and drinking places in Honolulu were closed at midnight.

On the night of December 6 numerous officers of the Army and Navy attended social functions at various points on the island of Oahu, principally the usual Saturday functions at the various posts and naval establishments. The commanding general, Hawaiian Department, and the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet were both guests at dinners away from their posts of command on that evening, but returned to their quarters at an early hour.

The percentages of strength in the Army present for duty on the island of Oahu at 8 a. m. December 7, 1941, reported by all major echelons and posts, were: Twenty-fourth Infantry Division, 90 percent; Twenty-fifth Infantry Division, 85.6 percent; Coast Artillery Corps, 87.5 percent; Air Force, 88.9 percent; miscellaneous, including department headquarters, ordnance, quartermaster, and medical, 92 percent. Estimated general percentage, 88.8 percent. Reports from large ships and destroyers that were in Pearl Harbor during the attack show 60 percent of officers on board and 96 percent of the men. Of 75 vessels of the fleet, of all kinds, 49 commanding officers were aboard during the attack and 22 were en route to their ships, 1 was on another ship, and 1 was on authorized leave, which leaves 2 for whom we are unable to account.

Intoxicating liquor is sold on the island of Oahu, and men on pass or on liberty have the opportunity to buy and consume it. Following the established procedure, at home and abroad, the Army exercises disciplinary control of men on pass through its military police, and the Navy of men on liberty by the use of shore patrols. These organizations take into custody any person showing evidence of intoxication. On the night of December 6-7, 1941, from 6 p. m. to 6 a. m., arrests of soldiers by the military police, for intoxication, were 38, and arrests of sailors by the Navy shore patrol, for intoxication, were 4. By comparison the arrests of civilians for drunkenness on that night were 39. Thorough inquiry disclosed there is no evidence of excessive drinking by any officer of either service on that night. The evidence shows that as respects the use of intoxicating liquor and intoxication, the conditions amongst the men of the Army and of the Navy on the night of December 6 compare closely with similar conditions for the several preceding months. On Saturday, December 6, 1941, the usual percentage of enlisted strength entitled to passes or liberty took advantage of such privilege to spend the afternoon or evening in the city of Honolulu. Application of this ratio to total numbers of all the services then on the island of Oahu and in Pearl Harbor, amounting to about 75,000 men, indicates that no less than 11,000 soldiers, sailors, and marines visited Honolulu that afternoon and evening.

In normal times more enlisted men of both services are absent from duty by permission on Saturday nights than on other nights; and on Saturday nights more officers are customarily absent than on weekday nights.

On the morning of Sunday, December 7, Army posts and naval vessels and stations were adequately manned, for the readiness and alert then in effect, by men fit for duty.



## XVIII

The attack on the morning of December 7, 1941, was a combined air-raid and submarine attack on the island of Oahu, a bombardment of Midway, and a continuous air attack and bombardment on Wake Island.

Available information indicates that the force attacking Oahu consisted of either three or four Japanese carriers, with supporting surface craft and a few small submarines, and that this force had maintained radio silence during its approach, which, except for the submarines, was from the northward of Oahu.

In the attack on Oahu a suspicious object was sighted in the prohibited area off Pearl Harbor at 6:30 a. m., by the U. S. S. *Antares*. Between 6:33 and 6:45 this object, which was a small submarine, was attacked and sunk by the concerted action of a naval patrol plane and the U. S. S. *Ward*. A report of this action by the *Ward* reached the naval-base watch officer at 7:12 a. m., who notified his chief of staff. The ready destroyer was despatched to investigate, but no alert warnings were issued based upon this report. Another small submarine was fired upon, depth-charged, rammed, and sunk inside the harbor between 8:35 and 8:43 a. m. A third small submarine grounded in Kaneohe Bay and was captured. There is no evidence of any damage by torpedoes fired by these submarines.

Pearl Harbor was provided with an antitorpedo net which would have prevented the entrance of torpedoes into the harbor, and would have revealed the entrance of a submarine. The procedure prior to December 7, 1941, was to keep the net closed during the hours of darkness, opening it only when necessary for a vessel to pass through. It was kept open during daylight hours, on the theory that, during daylight, the channel entrance destroyer, the net vessel, and other vessels in the vicinity, would detect a submerged or partially submerged submarine. December 7 the net was opened at 4:58 a. m. for the entrance of two mine sweepers. It was kept open until 8:40 a. m., when it was closed by orders. The net was not damaged. The submarine was first sighted in the harbor at 7:45 a. m. The time of its entrance is not known, but probably it passed in about 7 a. m.

An estimated force of from 150 to 200 fighting, bombing, and torpedo planes simultaneously attacked Pearl Harbor and all air bases on Oahu at about 7:55 a. m. All attacking planes had withdrawn before 11 a. m. As a result of the attack serious loss of life was caused and serious damage was inflicted on ships in the harbor, and planes, hangars, and other facilities at Hickam Field, Ewa Field, Ford Island, Wheeler Field, Bellows Field, and Kaneohe.

The major part of the damage to ships in Pearl Harbor resulted from torpedoes launched from planes. The torpedoes were of an obsolete type, altered to increase their explosive load, to decrease their radius, and fitted with side vanes to insure functioning in shallow water—a weapon peculiarly adapted to an attack such as the one delivered upon ships in Pearl Harbor. Many of the bombs had extra heavy cases, and appeared to be modified armor-piercing shell.

December 7, 1941, at 9:30 p. m. Midway time (11:30 p. m. Honolulu time), a force believed to consist of two cruisers and two destroyers, approached from the southward, opened fire and shelled Midway Island for about 30 minutes. About noon December 8, 1941 (2:50 p. m. December 7, Honolulu time), some 27 land planes made a strafing and bombing attack on Wake Island. Some loss of life and damage to material resulted on each island. Attacks on Wake continued until its capture on December 22, 1941 (December 21, Honolulu time).

Immediately upon realizing that the Japanese were attacking, the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, ordered alert No. 3. The alert was executed with reasonable promptness. At the same time the commander in chief placed the fleet on a full war basis and issued a series of orders in an effort to intercept and destroy the attacking force.

Officers and enlisted men, in defending against the attack, demonstrated excellent training and high morale. Antiaircraft weapons aboard ship, which were not already manned, and antiaircraft weapons ashore, which were in position, were promptly manned. Junior officers and enlisted men on their own initiative procured from storage every possible automatic weapon. These weapons continued in action during and in spite of low-level strafing and dive bombing which have been known to demoralize even seasoned troops. At least three fighter pilots, in total disregard of their own safety, attempted to take off in the face of greatly superior forces then attacking their airdrome, but lost their lives in the attempt. A few fighter planes parked on an outlying gunnery training field, which was not attacked, took the air. This combined antiaircraft and fighter action resulted in the destruction of approximately 30 enemy aircraft, and a number of others were lost at sea because they were unable to rejoin their carriers.

## XIX

The state of readiness prescribed for Army aircraft prior to the attack required them to be ready for flight only after 4 hours' notice. The type of alert in effect required all Army aircraft to be concentrated in order more effectively to guard against possible sabotage, instead of being dispersed in order to afford greater security against air attack, and greater facility in taking the air. This state of readiness, this concentration of airplanes, and the element of surprise, all contributed to the effectiveness of the Japanese attack, and resulted in such permanent or temporary disablement of airplanes that very few fighter airplanes were able to take the air during the course of the action. For the same reasons it was impossible to get airplanes into the air in time to trail the Japanese airplanes back to their carriers.

The aircraft warning system, which was remanned by about 8:30 a. m. December 7, 1941, failed during the balance of that day to furnish any reliable information of enemy aircraft returning to their carriers. Such information as it afforded indicated enemy forces to the southward and southwestward of Oahu. A report of an actual contact with an enemy carrier, which later proved to be erroneous,



gave credence to numerous reports from other sources indicating enemy carriers might be to the southward and southwestward thus causing futile searches in those areas.

On December 7 naval Task Force 8 was about 200 miles west of Oahu, proceeding toward Oahu. Another was about 700 miles west of Oahu. A third, Task Force 11, was in the vicinity of Johnston Island, about 700 miles southwest of Oahu. These task forces were engaged in operations connected with strengthening the defenses of the outlying islands.

On the morning of December 7, 1941, prior to the attack, the following searches of sea areas were being made. Six patrol planes were searching south and southeastwardly from Midway. Three patrol planes were in the air engaged in a joint exercise with submarines south of Oahu. Eighteen scouting planes from Task Force 8 had been dispatched to scout in advance of the force which was on its way to Oahu. These scouted to the southwestward of Oahu. After the attack the following searches were made: The 3 planes in the air south of Oahu, according to their standing orders, searched to the northwest of Oahu a distance of about 375 miles. Nine planes were dispatched by Task Force 8 and searched to the south and southwest of Oahu. Carrier planes of Task Force 11 searched in an area about 500 miles southwestward of Oahu. About 11:27 a. m. 2 heavy Army bombers and 4 light bombers took off to attack a carrier reported about 25 miles off Barber's Point. After failure to make contact the 2 heavy bombers searched first to the southwestward and then in areas to the northwest of Oahu. The other 4 searched to the southwestward. At 11:50 a. m. 6 Navy VS planes searched southward of Oahu. Thereafter 9 planes searched the sector southwest to northwest of Oahu. Two utility planes searched northward of Oahu to a distance of 300 miles, and 9 planes which had arrived from carriers and refueled searched some 200 miles to the northward. No contacts were made with enemy aircraft or carriers, except that 1 Navy airplane was attacked by a Japanese airplane some 300 miles north of Oahu. This incident was not reported until the next day.

#### SUMMARY OF THE MORE IMPORTANT FACTS

Pearl Harbor is an important outlying naval base, and its security is vital to both offensive and defensive operations. It is the Army's function to insure the security of Pearl Harbor against hostile 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.

Effective utilization of the military power of the Nation is essential to success in war and requires that the operations of the Army and the Navy be coordinated. Under the then existing plans the joint defense of the Hawaiian frontier was to be coordinated by mutual cooperation between the commanders concerned. Plans for the defense of the Hawaiian coastal frontier were prepared by the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, and the commandant of the Fourteenth Naval District, the latter acting as a subordinate of the

commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet. Adherence to such a plan prepared in advance of hostilities does not suffice to relieve commanders of their responsibility to apply and adapt the plan to the situation as it develops.

Where, as here, the defense of an area is the joint responsibility of two commanders who are to coordinate their activities by mutual co-operation, the first duty of such commanders in the case of an emergency is conference and consultation with respect to the measures to be taken under the existing plans and the adaptation of those plans in whole or in part to the situation.

At about the time that Admiral Kimmel and General Short assumed their respective commands, the War and Navy Departments were in correspondence with respect to adequate defense against air raids on Oahu and the naval base. The correspondence between the departments exhibits a deep concern respecting the probability of this form of attack. These commanders were acquainted with this correspondence. Nevertheless there has been amongst the responsible commanders and their subordinates, without exception, a conviction, which persisted up to December 7, 1941, that Japan had no intention of making any such raid. Consequently this form of attack was a complete surprise to all of the superior officers of Army and Navy stationed in the Hawaiian area. This conviction persisted notwithstanding messages containing warnings and orders, brought to the attention of both commanders over a period of weeks prior to the attack. As early as October 16 the commanders were warned of the possibility of an attack by Japan on the United States and were directed to take precautions and make preparatory dispositions in the light of this information. A significant warning message was communicated to both the local commanders on November 24. On November 27 each responsible commander was warned that hostilities were momentarily possible. The warnings indicated war, and war only.

Both of these messages contained orders. The commanding general was ordered to undertake such reconnaissance and other measures as he deemed necessary. The commander in chief of the fleet was ordered to execute a defensive deployment in preparation for carrying out war tasks. Other significant messages followed on succeeding days. These emphasized the impending danger and the need for war readiness.

In this situation, during a period of 10 days preceding the Japanese attack, the responsible commanders held no conference directed to a discussion of the meaning of the warnings and orders sent them, and failed to collaborate and to coordinate defensive measures which should be taken pursuant to the orders received. Dispositions as a result of the messages were independently made by each commander. Neither of them informed himself of the measures and dispositions taken by the other.

The dispositions so made were inadequate to meet a surprise air attack.

Both commanders were handicapped by lack of information as to Japanese dispositions and intent. The lack of such knowledge rendered more urgent the initiation of a state of readiness for defense.

The personnel, matériel, and equipment were insufficient to place the forces on a war footing and maintain them on that footing for



an extended period. These deficiencies did not preclude measures which would have to a great extent frustrated the attack or mitigated its severity.

A considerable number of the Army and Navy personnel were on pass or liberty December 6, for the reason that the state of alert or of readiness demanded by the emergency had not been put into effect. With immaterial exceptions Army and Navy personnel had returned from leave and liberty hours before the attack ensued, fit for duty.

Both officers and men responded immediately in the emergency and exhibited initiative, efficiency, and bravery in meeting the raid.

Based upon its findings of fact, the Commission reaches the following

#### CONCLUSIONS

1. Effective utilization of the military power of the Nation is essential to success in war and requires: First, the coordination of the foreign and military policies of the Nation; and, second, the coordination of the operations of the Army and Navy.

2. The Secretary of State fulfilled his obligations by keeping the War and Navy Departments in close touch with the international situation and fully advising them respecting the course and probable termination of negotiations with Japan.

3. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy fulfilled their obligations by conferring frequently with the Secretary of State and with each other and by keeping the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations informed of the course of the negotiations with Japan and the significant implications thereof.

4. The Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations fulfilled their obligations by consulting and cooperating with each other, and with their superiors, respecting the joint defense of the Hawaiian coastal frontier; and each knew of, and concurred in, the warnings and orders sent by the other to the responsible commanders with respect to such defense.

5. The Chief of Staff of the Army fulfilled his command responsibility by issuing a direct order in connection with his warning of probable hostilities, in the following words: "Prior to hostile Japanese action you are directed to undertake such reconnaissance and other measures as you deem necessary."

6. The Chief of Naval Operations fulfilled his command responsibility by issuing a warning and by giving a direct order to the commander in chief, Pacific Fleet, in the following words:

This despatch is to be considered a war warning.

and

Execute an appropriate defensive deployment preparatory to carrying out the tasks assigned.

7. The responsible commanders in the Hawaiian area, in fulfillment of their obligation so to do, prepared plans which, if adapted to and used for the existing emergency, would have been adequate.

8. In the circumstances the responsibility of these commanders was to confer upon the question of putting into effect and adapting their joint defense plans.

9. These commanders failed to confer with respect to the warnings and orders issued on and after November 27, and to adapt and use existing plans to meet the emergency.

10. The order for alert No. 1 of the Army command in Hawaii was not adequate to meet the emergency envisaged in the warning messages.

11. The state of readiness of the naval forces on the morning of December 7 was not such as was required to meet the emergency envisaged in the warning messages.

12. Had orders issued by the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations November 27, 1941, been complied with, the aircraft warning system of the Army should have been operating; the distant reconnaissance of the Navy, and the inshore air patrol of the Army, should have been maintained; the antiaircraft batteries of the Army and similar shore batteries of the Navy, as well as additional anti-aircraft artillery located on vessels of the fleet in Pearl Harbor, should have been manned and supplied with ammunition; and a high state of readiness of aircraft should have been in effect. None of these conditions was in fact inaugurated or maintained for the reason that the responsible commanders failed to consult and cooperate as to necessary action based upon the warnings and to adopt measures enjoined by the orders given them by the chiefs of the Army and Navy commands in Washington.

13. There were deficiencies in personnel, weapons, equipment, and facilities to maintain all the defenses on a war footing for extended periods of time, but these deficiencies should not have affected the decision of the responsible commanders as to the state of readiness to be prescribed.

14. The warning message of December 7, intended to reach both commanders in the field at about 7 a. m. Hawaiian time, December 7, 1941, was but an added precaution, in view of the warnings and orders previously issued. If the message had reached its destination at the time intended, it would still have been too late to be of substantial use, in view of the fact that the commanders had failed to take measures and make dispositions prior to the time of its anticipated receipt which would have been effective to warn of the attack or to meet it.

15. The failure of the officers in the War Department to observe that General Short, neither in his reply of November 27 to the Chief of Staff's message of that date, nor otherwise, had reported the measures taken by him, and the transmission of two messages concerned chiefly with sabotage which warned him not to resort to illegal methods against sabotage or espionage, and not to take measures which would alarm the civil population, and the failure to reply to his message of November 29 outlining in full all the actions he had taken against sabotage only, and referring to nothing else, tended to lead General Short to believe that what he had done met the requirements of the warnings and orders received by him.

16. The failure of the commanding general, Hawaiian Department, and the commander in chief, Pacific Fleet, to confer and cooperate with respect to the meaning of the warnings received and the measures necessary to comply with the orders given them under date of November 27, 1941, resulted largely from a sense of security due to the



opinion prevalent in diplomatic military, and naval circles, and in the public press, that any immediate attack by Japan would be in the Far East. The existence of such a view, however prevalent, did not relieve the commanders of the responsibility for the security of the Pacific Fleet and our most important outpost.

17. In the light of the warnings and directions to take appropriate action, transmitted to both commanders between November 27 and December 7, and the obligation under the system of coordination then in effect for joint cooperative action on their part, 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 to carry out the responsibility assigned to such other under the provisions of the plans then in effect, demonstrated on the part of each a lack of appreciation of the responsibilities vested in them and inherent in their positions as commanders in chief, Pacific Fleet, and commanding general, Hawaiian Department.

18. The Japanese attack was a complete surprise to the commanders, and they failed to make suitable dispositions to meet such an attack. Each failed properly to evaluate the seriousness of the situation. These errors of judgment were the effective causes for the success of the attack.

19. Causes contributory to the success of the Japanese attack were: Disregard of international law and custom relating to declaration of war by the Japanese and the adherence by the United States to such laws and customs.

Restrictions which prevented effective counterespionage.

Emphasis in the warning messages on the probability of aggressive Japanese action in the Far East, and on antisabotage measures.

Failure of the War Department to reply to the message relating to the antisabotage measures instituted by the commanding general, Hawaiian Department.

Nonreceipt by the interested parties, prior to the attack, of the warning message of December 7, 1941.

20. When the attack developed on the morning of December 7, 1941, the officers and enlisted men of both services were present in sufficient number and were in fit condition to perform any duty. Except for a negligible number, the use of intoxicating liquor on the preceding evening did not affect their efficiency.

21. Subordinate commanders executed their superiors' orders without question. They were not responsible for the state of readiness prescribed.

Respectfully submitted.

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