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NAVY DEPARTMENT
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From: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations.
To: The Secretary of the Navy.

Subject: Report of Army Pearl Harbor Board—Comments concerning.

1. The following comments on the Report of the Army Pearl Harbor Board are submitted.

2. The Army findings as to the basic cause of the surprise are not at variance with the findings of the Navy Court. In brief, they are that no one in authority appreciated the danger to which Pearl Harbor was exposed and consequently the Army and Navy Commanders in Hawaii were preoccupied with training activities to the exclusion of adequate alertness against attack.

3. There was general agreement between the Army Board and the Navy Court in the following particulars as to lack of awareness of danger:

a. It was impossible for United States agents to get information in Japan, while Japanese agents were given free rein in Hawaii and encountered little difficulty in transmitting intelligence by cable.

b. The information that did reach Washington was not correctly evaluated, and vital parts of it either never were sent to Hawaii or else got there too late.

c. Estimates of Japanese intentions were based predominately on what the Japanese were likely to do, rather than upon what they could do. All basic plans contain the assumption that hostilities might be opened by an air attack on Oahu, but this assumption was generally ignored during the period preceding the attack. It is of interest to note in this connection that AA batteries of ships in port were ready to open fire when the Japanese planes came in. This is evidence that Admiral Kimmel was less blind to the potential danger than was the Army Command. [2] The Army forces had no ammunition at mobile guns and

it was a matter of hours before it could be distributed from the magazines to the anti-aircraft batteries.

d. The Army was in readiness against sabotage. The Navy condition of readiness, though far from fully effective, was designed to meet air attack. In this connection, the Army Board (Page 229 of the Record) observes that there was conflict in the nature of the information sent to Hawaii, in that Navy Department messages were predominate with warning of conflict while War Department messages were predominate with the idea of avoiding conflict and taking precautions against sabotage and espionage.

e. The Army air warning system was usable, but was being used for training—not for warning—when the Jap planes came in.

4. The Army Board finds that General Short established cordial relations with the Navy, but did not accomplish fully the detailed working relationship necessary for his full information in the performance of his mission. For example, the Board points out that General Short was under the impression that distant reconnaissance was being adequately provided by naval task forces in connection with exercises (he apparently knew that no such exercises were in progress on 7 December), that Admiral Kimmel failed to acquaint him with certain messages he received from the Navy Department (there is conflict of testimony as to some of these), that General Short hesitated to inquire as to the details of naval arrangements, and that he was not informed of the fact that a Japanese submarine had been attacked off Pearl Harbor in the early morning of 7 December (the Naval Court explains that Admirals Kimmel and Bloch withheld report of this attack until the contact could be verified, in view of many false contacts that had occurred; the air attack began before verification was obtained). This finding of the Army Board is in conflict with the Navy finding that relations—official as well as personal—were not only cordial but adequate. I am inclined to agree with the Army Board for reasons discussed in the next paragraph.

[3] 5. The Army Board criticises the command arrangements in Hawaii. There was no unity of command, and no integrated staff to evaluate information and to attend to the details of coordinating defense measures. Certain joint plans had been prepared which were sound in concept, but defective in that neither Service had the means to carry them out. Furthermore, for the most part, these plans did not become effective until an emergency arose, and the emergency came too suddenly to permit effective implementation. Unity of Command could have been put into effect (but was not put into effect before the 7th of December) by the President, or by agreement between the Departments, or by local arrangement. My comment on this is as follows:

a. Coordination by mutual cooperation, which was the system in effect in Hawaii until after the attack, is a well recognized system of Command. Personally, I consider it inferior to unity of Command in circumstances such as existed in Hawaii, but it is a fact that this system has worked effectively elsewhere during the current war. I think Kimmel and Short were at fault in not making the system work better than it did.

b. The lack of coordination in Hawaii was not in itself a disease, but a symptom of the deeper ill—lack of awareness of danger. As stated by the Army Board, local Commanders were unwilling to put war measures into effect because they would interfere with training.

6. The Army Board finds it difficult to understand the relations between the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, the Commander Hawaiian Sea Frontier, the Commandant, FOURTEENTH Naval District, and the local Air Commander (Rear Admiral Bellinger). The Board makes the comment "The Army had a difficult time in determining under which of the three shells (Kimmel, Bloch, or Bellinger) rested the pea of performance and responsibility." My comment as to this is that there are some unavoidable complexities in the Command relationships between a fleet, a frontier, and a fleet base in the frontier. [4] However, in this case, there was no possibility of misunderstanding the fact that all naval forces were under Admiral Kimmel. He and General Short should have been able to work out better arrangements for cooperation than they did. The reasons why they did not have been discussed in paragraphs 4 and 5 above.

7. The Army Board stresses the point that General Short was dependent upon the U. S. Navy for information as to what the Japanese Navy was doing and for estimates of what the Japanese Navy could do. This view is obviously sound. It was a naval responsibility to keep not only General Short but also the War Department fully acquainted with the estimate of the Japanese naval situation.

There was some failure to pass on to General Short and the War Department information which should have been given to them by the Navy, but the basic trouble was that the Navy failed to appreciate what the Japanese Navy could, and did, do.

8. The Army Board reports on three matters which should be further investigated by the Navy. These are:

a. It was stated that the War Department received information from some naval agency that on or about 25 November radio intercepts had located a Japanese task force, including carriers, in the Marshall Islands. About 1 December it was reported that this force assumed radio silence. It is noted in the Record that this information never got to General Short. There is some reference to this incident in the Record of the Naval Court, but it was not followed up, presumably because the officer who was Director of Naval Intelligence at the time was not called as a witness. The matter is probably not of importance, since even if there actually was a Japanese force in the Marshalls it apparently had nothing to do with the attack on Pearl Harbor. However, for the sake of completing the naval Record, this matter should be pursued further.

b. The Army Board is of the opinion that Japanese midget submarines operated freely inside of Pearl Harbor for several days prior to the 7th of December, for the [5] purpose of obtaining information. This opinion is based on the testimony of an official of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who apparently reached his conclusions by a study of certain captured Japanese charts which were made available to F. B. I. by Naval Intelligence. So far as is known, there is no real ground for the supposition that Japanese submarines were able to roam around Pearl Harbor at will, but since the allegation is made in the Army Record, it is advisable to clear up any doubt that may exist by further naval investigation.

c. There is reference to the fact that information was obtained from naval and F. B. I. espionage over telephones and cables in Hawaii, but no record of what this information was. This should be cleared up.

9. The Army Board finds that the Chief of Staff of the Army was at fault in that he failed to keep General Short informed of the international situation and that he delayed in getting critical information to General Short. In these respects, the Army Report parallels the Naval Court findings as to the Chief of Naval Operations. The Army Board further finds that General Marshall was at fault and that he failed to keep his Deputies informed of what was going on, so that they could act intelligently in his absence; in that he did not take action on General Short's report on 28 November that he had established "Alert No. 1"; and in that he lacked knowledge of conditions of readiness in the Hawaiian Command.

10. The Army Board finds that General Short was at fault in that he failed to place his Command in an adequate state of readiness (the information which he had was incomplete and confusing, but it was sufficient to warn him of tense relations), in that he failed to reach an agreement with local naval officials for implementing joint Army and Navy plans and agreements for joint action, in that he failed to inform himself of the effectiveness of the long-distance reconnaissance being conducted by the Navy, and in that he failed to replace inefficient staff officers.

11. I find nothing in the Record of the Army Board to cause me to modify the opinions expressed in my endorsement on the [6] Record of the Naval Court of Inquiry, except in relation to the cooperation between Admiral Kimmel and General Short. In view of the extensive and explicit discussion of this phase of the matter by the Army Board, I am no longer of the opinion that cooperation between these two officers was adequate in all respects. The cordial, but informal, contact which they maintained evidently was not sufficient to coordinate the means at their disposal to the best advantage. However, as already pointed out, this fault was part and parcel of the general blindness to Japanese potentialities in the Central Pacific which was the basic cause of the Pearl Harbor disaster. The many details discussed by the Army Board and the Naval Court are useful in showing how this blindness redounded to our disadvantage, but they do not, in my opinion, prove anything more than that the two naval officers in the high commands concerned—Admiral Stark and Admiral Kimmel—failed to display the superior judgment they should have brought to bear in analysing and making use of the information that became available to them.

12. I recommend that the Secretary of the Navy cause further investigation to be made in the matters referred to in paragraph 8 above; namely, the alleged radio contact with a Japanese force in the Marshall Islands, the alleged presence of Japanese midget submarines inside Pearl Harbor prior to 7 December, and the substance of information obtained by naval and F. B. I. telephone and cable intercepts. I do not think it necessary to reconvene the Court for this purpose. The proposed investigation could be made by another Court, or by an investigating officer, for attachment to the Record of the original Court of Inquiry.

13. I find no reason to modify the recommendations I made in my endorsement on the Record of the Naval Pearl Harbor Court of Inquiry.

/s/ E. J. King.
E. J. KING.