



Pearl Harbor 7/12/41, by Peter Herde,
 (*Pearl Harbor, 7 Dezember 1941*, © 1980
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 Milano, 2001, RCS Libri S.p.A., Milano, 2001

Private translation from the Italian translation.

SOURCES:

- ADAP (Atken zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik), documents related to the German Foreign Policy from 1918 to 1945 (= DGFP, Documents of German Foreign Policy).
- Army Pearl Harbor Board (= Report of the Army Pearl Harbor Board).
- IMTFE (International Military Tribunal for the Far East), Proceedings, Exhibits (typewritten).
- KP (Kimmel Papers), American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wy.
- KTB 1. Slk. (Kriegstagebuch 1. Seekriegsleitung, RM 7/22-31), Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg i.Br.
- KTB-MA (Kriegstagebuch des Marine-Attachés und Leiters der Grossetappe Japan-China, vol. 4: 10.9.1941-31.1.1942), *ibid.*
- MAE (Ministero degli Affari Esteri = Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Rome
- Polit. Archiv des AA Bonn (Political archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bonn).
- PRO (Public Record Office) London, Cabinet, Foreign Office.

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Precious information came to me from conversations at Princeton with George F. Kennan and F.W. Deakin, while prof. Chihiro Hosoya introduced me to the mentality of the Japanese in 1941 and the literature of his country.

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...I also thank prof. Jürgen Rohwer, prof. Alberto Santoni and the participants to the international convention "The wartime turning-point of December 1941," held in Stuttgart in September 1981. The merit for the publication of this Ital-

ian edition belongs completely to prof. Renzo De Felice, with all my gratefulness.

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...the Soviet troops, led by Zhukov inflicted at the end of August severe losses to the Japanese enemy thanks to a great superiority of tanks and artillery. The fact that this humiliating defeat took place during the negotiations of the German-Soviet pact burdened even more the relations between Japan and Germany and determined, as we shall see, the future attitude of the Japanese towards the USSR.

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The negotiations initiated on 12 November in Berlin between Ribbentrop and Molotov – during which the Foreign Minister of the Reich wanted to carry forward his attempt to mediate between Japan and the Soviet Union – hit a dead end; Molotov, in fact, did not want to be involved with Iran and India, nor did he want to get stuck in a clash with Great Britain, nor, even less did he want to be embarrassed in a coalition with Germany and Japan, but wanted to confront current questions, such as those concerning Finland and the Balkans⁸⁶. The negotiations broke up on these rocks. Ribbentrop's idea of a four-some block turned out to be a pipedream and Hitler saw confirmation of his own opinions. With that even the question of regulating the relations between Japan and the USSR had become a question belonging exclusively to those two countries: the Japanese had already started negotiations in that direction, without waiting for the results of Molotov's visit to Berlin⁸⁷. At the time of the negotiations with the Soviets, Konoye and Matsuoka were not remotely aware of what Hitler was plotting against the Soviet Union. The negotiations for a neutrality or non-aggression pact ran aground at the end of 1940 on the Sakhalin Question⁸⁸, and only Matsuoka's visit to Moscow in March-April 1941 enabled the conclusion of the treaty to be reached.

⁸⁶ Sommer, *op. cit.*, p. 469 etc. (Sommer, Th., *Deutschland und Japan zwischen den Mchten 1935-1940: Von Antokominternpakt zum Dreimächtepakt*, Tübingen 1962.)

⁸⁷ Lupke, *Japans Russland politik von 1939 bis 1941*, Frankfurt – Berlin 1962, p. 79 etc.; Sommer, *op. cit.*, p. 477 etc.; Hillgruber, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

⁸⁸ Lupke. *op.cit.*, p. 64 etc.

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⁸⁵ On the divergent existing plans during the late summer and autumn of 1940 cfr. Hillgruber, *op.cit.*, p. 247 etc. Cfr. Sommer, *op.cit.*, p. 474 with note 61, who – rightly in my opinion – does not believe in a totally coherent behaviour from Hitler, as I hope to demonstrate further on about his position concerning an eventual Japanese attack on Siberia in 1941.

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It was the navy who was supposed to bear the weight of the war against Great Britain and was, therefore, more interested in any possible easing of British pressure. At the end of November 1940 an exchange of opinions took place between the naval attaché in Tokyo, Captain Paul Wencker and admiral Otto Schniewind³. Wencker pointed out that in Japan there were influential circles who saw the “Tripartite Pact” only as move to prevent a war against the United States. The advantages that Germany could gain from a Japanese attack on Singapore were, in his opinion, far superior than the disadvantages deriving from an eventual entry of the United States in the war, opinion which was also shared by the Supreme Command of the German Navy.

³ Salewski, *Die deutsche Seekriegsleitung 1935-1945*, vol. 1: 1935-1941, Frankfurt 1970, p. 495 etc.

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In mid-March a new report by Wencker arrived from Tokyo. The naval attaché was pointing out that an immediate attack by the Japanese would be surely successful; however, with respect to a few months before, he had an essentially different opinion about what would have been more convenient for Germany. He maintained, in fact, that it would have been better if Germany and Italy could defeat the British without the help of Japan, as a Japanese attack in the Asian south-east would have brought a total block of maritime lanes and the US intervention would lengthen the war.

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As always, Ribbentrop pulled out the “usual refrain”, as his interpreter called it, about the overwhelming military superiority of Germany, even though, to tell the truth, since the meetings

with Molotov in November 1940, he was not so sure of victory anymore³⁰.

³⁰ Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 540. (Schmidt, P., *Statist auf diplomatischer Bühne 1923-45*, Bonn 1949.)

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Whatever we know about how the negotiations happened comes only from Japanese sources; only free access to Soviet documents could throw more light on this subject. The original intention of Japan was to reach a non-aggression pact; Molotov, however, pushed in the direction of a neutrality treaty that should have also contained a Japanese renunciation of the concessions obtained on the Island of Sakhalin. Already in the autumn of 1940 all these questions had been carefully considered by the Japanese politicians a military and had been the subject of negotiations with the USSR. Within the draft of the non-aggression pact submitted to the Russians on 30 October, 1940⁴⁸, the Japanese had strictly stuck to the German-Russian non-aggression pact, undoubtedly to draw the USSR closer to the "Tripartite Pact". On the other hand, on 18 November⁴⁹, the Soviets had presented the draft of a neutrality treaty. It is not clear what aim they were pursuing, as the contents of the decisive paragraphs (1 and 2) of both projects were almost identical; the only nuance that differentiated the two projects was, according to the Soviets, that each contractor not only was to abstain from "any aggressive initiative" against the other country, as set out in the Japanese project, but was to commit to the preservation of "peaceful and friendly relations"⁵⁰. With such irrelevant differences it was not difficult for Matsuoka to agree to the Soviet demands; on 9 April he signaled to Molotov the Japanese agreement to sign a neutrality treaty identical to the Soviet proposal of 18 November 1940⁵¹.

⁴⁸ Text in Lupke, *op cit.*, p. 169 etc.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 171 etc.

⁵⁰ The Japanese view according to which the Soviets did not want a non-aggression pact as they excluded any territorial conquests (the southern part of the Island of Sakhalin and northern Kuriles) and to which Lupke refers to (*op. cit.*, p. 90 etc .) cannot explain the attitude of the USSR. Without the possibility to see the Soviet documents it is im-

possible to be sure of Stalin and Molotov's real intentions.

⁵¹ Exhaustive details in Lupke, *op. cit.*, p. 98 etc.

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...doctor Richard Sorge... Already before Matsuoka's departure for Berlin he had sent to Moscow the news received from his Japanese informers about the intention of Konoye and of certain Japanese political and military leaders to sign a non-aggression treaty with the USSR, to cover Japan's backyard in its planned expansion towards the Asiatic south-east. It was obviously this information which allowed Stalin to reach a quick agreement with Matsuoka. ...thanks to his collaboration with serious and respectable newspapers, as in 1936 with the Frankfurter Zeitung, ...Strangely, since the summer of 1941 even the Gestapo had more the suspicion than the certainty of his belonging to the German Communist Party (KPD), although his political activity during the Twenties was easily documentable: this proves his ability in hiding from the Nazi organizations and the poor efficiency of the Secret State police. His collaboration with Karl Haushofer's pro-Nazi magazine Geopolitik and his activism within the Nazi ranks of Tokyo contributed to dissipate any suspicion. ...Sorge tied a solid friendship in Tokyo with general Eugen Ott, at the time still Germany's military attaché, to whom he was introduced by doctor Zeller of the German daily Tägliche Rundschau, printed in Tokyo and then abolished in December 1933. Ott who became ambassador on 28 April 1938 had actively taken part as a collaborator of Schleicher to the opposition movement that, in the period between the end of 1932 and early 1933 had opposed Hitler's ascent. Having found, after the Nazi's victory, another field of intervention, he managed to escape the revenge which, instead, befell his master and inspirer. With the help of some friends from the Reichswehr, in that same year, 1933, he obtained a transfer to Japan... The protections he enjoyed within the Wehrmacht, his ability and his nationalistic ideas made even Hitler forget his past, so much that he reached the rank of ambassador. As we will be able to see, Ott represents an exception among the crowd of Nazi diplomats often too servile and incompetent: he was well in-

formed, he dared express here and there some critical opinion, did not report only what Hitler and Ribbentrop wanted to hear and was often autonomous in analyzing situations. ...in 1942 ...he was replaced by his party fellow and former collaborator of the “Ribbentrop Bureau”, Heinrich Georg Stahmer, a classic example of Nazi diplomacy, who, as we will see, ignored completely the reality of the Japanese political situation⁶⁸. ... Ott escaped Hitler’s wrath and spent the last part of the war in Peking (until 1947), before returning to Germany. His declarations at the Tokyo War Crimes trials were of a certain importance and, later, until the Fifties and Sixties, he was always amenable to give information to historians hungry for news.

⁶⁸ Martin, *Deutschland und Japan*, cit., p.122 etc. About his quite “servile” reports, *ibid.*, p. 214. Stahmer’s capabilities were put in doubt also by Sommer, *Deutschland und Japan zwischen den Mächten 1935-1940*, cit., p.396, note 6. About the protection given to Ott by Beck, after the events of early 1933 cfr. Sommer, *op. cit.*, pp. 20 and 107 etc.

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On 29 September Nomura met with the Chief of Staff of the US Navy, Admiral Stark. During the meeting, to which Admiral Turner also took part, the Japanese ambassador was informed that it was mainly the problem of the Japanese troops stationed in China that stalled the agreement. Furthermore, Stark assured Nomura that the US would not attack Japan and that in case of a two-ocean war, it would have adopted a purely defensive posture in the Pacific⁵²².

⁵²² Nomura to Toyoda 30 September: Hearings 12, 45.

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Note 69: Ott’s statement, according to which he ignored the date of the attack against the USSR, which Sorge would have learned from Scholl (Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 97, note 13), seems to be only an attempt to clear himself.

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Note 857: About the meeting between the Japanese Ambassador to Rome, Horikiri and Mussolini cfr. Ciano, *Diario 1937-1943*, curated by Renzo De Felice, Milano 1980, p. 563. The scant information in German possession came from KTB 1. Skl. RM 7/30, pp.463, 494, 522 etc. Individual information

that Wenneker received from Maeda. KTB-MA, pp. 171 etc. 196, 201. Cfr. In particular Herde, *Italien*, cit., p.80 etc.

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Note 921: Kameyama said: *ibid.*, 26188 etc. Cfr. also 26205 etc. also. According to his deposition, the Japanese were able to decode three or four out of the eight-nine American codes. On 15 October 1941, Capt. Maeda told the German Attaché Wenneker that the Japanese navy was able to decode a certain number of American State telegrams; KTB-MA, Vol. 4, p.85.

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From 21,00 hrs. on, Kramer tried to deliver to the recipients of “Magic” the thirteen parts of the note of which he had realized the importance... tried to reach Admiral Stark... he was not at home... Kramer then tried to trace by telephone Admiral Turner but even he could not be found...

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At around 19,00 hrs. the Japanese, having just decoded the first eight or nine parts of the message 32, interrupted their work to go with Nomura to the Mayflower hotel. A feast had been organized in a reception room of that hotel in honor of Hidenari Terasaki, the man in charge of espionage in the Occidental hemisphere, who, in view of the imminent war, was to leave Washington and go to South America³³. Kurusu, not aware of the Pearl Harbor attack, had pleaded in vain with Tokyo not to let go Terasaki – difficultly replaceable - until the end of the negotiations³⁴. Saturday evening, 6 December, Terasaki was bid farewell; it seems that in that occasion whisky and sake were not absent. Anyhow the Japanese employees returned to the embassy only around 21,30 hrs. to decode the last four or five parts of the note from Tokyo. Around midnight all thirteen parts were ready.

In contrast with the instructions contained in the *pilot message*, no clean copy of the note was immediately typed³⁵, as Tokyo had ordered not to deliver this delicate secret document in the hands of a typist; on the other hand, however, none of the embassy’s employees or officers was familiar with American typewriters. None of them knew yet that this delay would have very grave consequences. The decoders waited hours the arrival of the fourteenth part, then, at

dawn, embassy counselor Iguchi sent everyone home. Most of them must have just laid down when, between 7 and 8, the Japanese naval attaché found in the embassy's mailbox the RCA and Mackay radiograms containing – as it turned out - the fourteenth part of the note and the order to Kurusu and Nomura to deliver the same note to Hull at 13,00hrs. As the cablegrams were marked “*Very Important*”, were asked by telephone to return to the embassy³⁶. They were all at their work stations only between 09,30 and 10,00 hrs. The longest cablegrams, usually being the most important, were the first to be decoded. At the same time, embassy Secretary³⁷ Katsuzo Okumara, the only trustworthy person able to write with a Western machine, started typing the first thirteen long parts of the note. In the next room, embassy Chancellor Nakajima and Kurusu's secretary, Yuki, were making corrections on the text. Around 10,30 hrs. one of the decoders deciphered a brief message labeled “Extremely urgent, of maximum importance” that spread terror among the employees; in it, the two ambassadors were ordered to deliver the note.

³² Yuki: IMTFE, Proc. 26210. Cfr. Butow, Tojo, cit., p. 380, Kahn, *The Codebreakers: The Story of Secret Writing*, New York 1967, p. 51.

³³ Hearings 12, 234.

³⁴ Hearings 9, 4202. Cfr. Wohlstetter, *op. cit.*, p. 207 etc.

³⁵ Like this Yuki: IMTFE, Proc. 26211.

³⁶ Yuki: IMTFE, Proc. 26212; cfr. Butow, *Tojo*, cit., p. 380; Kahn, *op. cit.*, p. 55 etc.

³⁷ “Embassy Secretary” to be understood as a rank

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The American diplomat arrived there and listened for three minutes (from 14,18 to 14,21) to the reading that the Minister was giving him in a hard tone of the note that soon after Thomsen would transmit to the State Department. Ribbentrop added the following words: “Your President wanted this War: here it is”³⁷. At 15,00 Hitler started his speech that had been announced on the radio³⁸.

³⁷ George F. Kennan, at the time a member of the American Embassy in Berlin, gives a plastic description of these events: *Memoirs 1925-1950* Boston – Toronto, 1967 p.134 etc. I vividly thank the author for the stimu-

lating conversation I had with him about this historical period. ADAP, XIII, 2, m.577 etc. demonstrates that Morris received Ribbentrop's note before Hitler's speech. Kennan's assertion to the contrary was due to a memory gap. Cfr. Also Polit. Archiv des AA Bonn, notes of the interpreter Schmidt: 1941, Part II, n.46866 etc.; *ibid.*, Office of the Secretary of State, documents concerning war with America, voll. 1 and 2 (3.12.1941 – 30.11.1943), *passim*.

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Note 4: ...It would be important to see Roosevelt's telephone conversations: according to Safford (12.2.1962 to Barnes, KP Box 11) there was a direct line between the White House and the homes and offices of Stark and Marshall: "It was customary to make Dictaphone (or Ediphone) records of all conversations passing through the switchboard. These were subsequently transcribed "for the record" and the phonograph cylinders "erased". Very important records might be preserved". The first transcriptions that appeared in the FDR Memorial Library were used by R.J.C. Butow: cfr. *The Story Behind the Tapes*, in "American Heritage", Feb./Mar. 1982, p. 10 etc. Up to now nothing was found concerning Pearl Harbor.

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Note 26: Due to a void in the German documents we are obliged to reconstruct the Berlin events of 2 and 3 December through IMTFE, Proc. 34033 etc. (Oshima statements), Exhibit 605 and Hearings 9, 4200; cfr. ADAP, XIII, 2, n. 357, p. 767, note 6. In the telegram exchange between Indelli and Ciano there is a void concerning no less than the days between 18 November and 10 December 1941. For the details about the negotiations cfr. Herde, *Italien*, cit., p. 85 etc.

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In comparison to Kimmel, the army commander, Lt. Gen. Walter C. Short, was lesser figure Similarly to Kimmel who owed his fast rise both to personal talent, which others also had, and to his good relationship with the chief of staff of the Navy, admiral Stark, Short attained his high position thanks to his good relationship with the chief of staff of the army, Gen. Marshall. In 1940, the latter went on an inspection trip to Hawaii, where, at the time, the army was

still under the command of Maj. Gen. Charles D. Herron. **He deemed the defenses “excellent” and ordered only a reinforcement of the anti-aircraft units.**²⁷ During the great alarm of June 17, 1940, the army seemed to be all in order, and from that moment, anyhow, Marshall felt relatively appeased about Hawaii. ...Short assumed command in February 1940. ...Short came from the University of Illinois and knew Marshall since 1906; they were about the same age and had served together in the 1st US division during World War 1.

²⁷ F.C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall, Ordeal and Hope 1939-1942*, p. 169 etc.

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Later, in front of the Hewitt Commission and the Congress Commission, Kramer set a limit to his previous declaration: according to what he remembered, there would have only been mention of the breakdown of the Anglo-Japanese relations. Evidently his memory had been “refreshed” during a dinner with Adm. Stark that took place in September 1945⁷⁹, as his second declaration let off the hook Adm. Stark whom, along with Kimmel and Short, was among the most criticized.

⁷⁹ Cfr. Safford’s deposition: Hearings 8, 3579 etc.; Kramer’s: *ibid.* 9, 3955, 4054 etc., 4103, and Bratton’s: *ibid.* 9, 4520 etc. In this regard, Wohlstetter, *op. cit.*, p. 218. Farago, *op. cit.*, p. 326 etc. doubt the truthfulness of Safford’s deposition. It seems that the Japanese consulate in Honolulu received at 03,20 of 7 December such a message in “PA-K2” which it did not destroy in time and fell in the hands of the FBI. Of interest is also Safford’s declaration according to which, on Monday December 8, he received the order to destroy all the material which could incriminate Kimmel and Bloch: Hearings 8, 3565 etc. In a letter of 12 February 1962 (KP box 11) addressed to Barnes, Safford furnished further details: the “*Wind Message Execute*” had been transmitted in the Japanese Morse alphabet (“about 42 characters plus 3 accent signs” instead of the usual 26 characters) which could be received by about 150 radio operators of the US Navy, by 6 of the Army and about 12 from the British forces.

Starting November 1940 and after a series of consultations with the Minister of the Navy Oikawa, these plans became more concrete and on 7 January 1941, Yamamoto summarised them in a letter to the same Oikawa. Also in January the American Ambassador in Tokyo, Grew, received news of them through the Peruvian Legation, but considering the source quite obscure, neither he nor the American Secret Service experts gave it much weight. Whether it was or not a strange coincidence, the fact remains that this information arrived just while Yamamoto was perfecting his plans. Later, Roosevelt's adversaries used the concealment of this information to accuse the President⁶.

⁶ Cfr. Telegram of 27 January 1941 from Grew to Hull: Foreign Relations of the US 1941, IV, p.17. Cfr. Wohlstetter, *op. Cit.*, 368; Toland, *The Rising Sun*, p.172 etc.; Theobald, *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor*, cit., p.43; Prange, *op. cit.*, p.30 etc.

The technical problem of developing appropriate torpedoes was solved only a few months later in November 1941, as validated both by Genda and Mitsuo Fuchida ... the solution was as simple as could be: the depth penetration of standard torpedoes was reduced with the addition of special rear fins and the means were given to the pilots of further higher precision in order to hit the target⁷. Neither Admiral Stark, Chief of Staff, US Navy, nor the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, Admiral Kimmel, guessed that the Japanese would solve this problem, because as usual the Americans underestimated their technical capabilities. The Americans were certainly aware of the success of the British ships in sinking the Italian warships in the harbour of Taranto, which happened on 11 November 1940, where the depth was 25-30 metres, while Pearl Harbor was only 10 meters and 14 meters in the navigation canal⁸. Stark was convinced that the use of standard torpedoes required a minimum depth of 23 meters⁹. Consequently, the battleships deployed in Pearl Harbor were not protected by torpedo nets. But the Japanese using modified torpedoes and flying low during the drop were able to make several hits regardless of the low depth of the water.

⁷ Deposition of Shimada; MITFE, Proc.10194; M. Fuchida, *The Attack on*

Pearl Harbor, cit., p. 18; Lengerer and Kobler – Edamatsu, *op. cit.*, p. 649.

⁸ Cfr. Letter from Stark to Kimmel on 15 February 1941: Hearings 33, 1283 etc. About details of the British attack on the Italian warships in Taranto's Mare Grande cfr. *History of the Second World War*, United Kingdom Military Series: *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, Vol. 1, of I.S.O. Playfair, London 1954, p. 235 etc. The events of Taranto, communicated by the Japanese Military Attaché in Rome, were very useful to Yamamoto.

⁹ Hearings 33, 1283.

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Disregarding Short's order to turn it (the radar) off at 07,00 hrs., Lockhart kept it going to show Elliot some of its operating particularities¹⁹.

¹⁹ Deposition of Taylor (Hearings 27, 562), who pointed out that they disobeyed received orders.

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Benefiting from the radar findings the army could have given the alarm 45 minutes before and the navy 30 minutes before the attack. The planes would not have had time to take off but at least they could have been scattered around the airfields instead of being left in clusters, as Short had ordered in fear of sabotage; losses would certainly have been inferior²⁶. Ground based and naval anti-aircraft batteries would also have been able to prepare for combat. The general carefree attitude and scant experience of the troops and officers of air surveillance prevented it. The Japanese were, therefore, very lucky. Or maybe was it not by coincidence that the Japanese planes entered within the radar range right at the end of the operating schedule established by Short. We know that they arrived over Oahu 30 minutes early. Was it that the spies of the consulate in Honolulu found out this information? If so this would have influenced also the delivery of the last Japanese message in Washington and the hour of the beginning of the attack; but we also know that the morning of December 7 had been chosen since long as a favourable moment to attack. All this seems possible even though very improbable.

²⁶ Army board report, p. 33.

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The purpose was to gain a certain advantage of time over the Americans and to bilge them to sign the peace after the German victory over the USSR. These thoughts ended up being quite short-sighted and so many factors of uncertainty led to Japan's defeat. Having anyhow decided to enter the war for political reasons, disregarding any real balance of power, the choice to attack Pearl Harbor to remove a thorn from their side, rather than wait for the American isolationists to prevent America's entry into the war, seems to have been the right one. In fact, soon or late

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The 40 torpedo planes dropped one torpedo each of which only half hit an American ship; the others missed target or got stuck in the muddy bottom of the harbor⁶⁹.

⁶⁹ More precise data about the losses and the following repair of the ships in Wallin, *op. cit.*, p. 102 etc. Admiral Wallin was appointed to direct the rescue and repair operations of the ships. His book is, therefore, very credible; many photos can be found in it. Cfr. also Prange, *op. cit.*, p. 506 etc.

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...even if the Pacific fleet had not been decimated it could not have prevented the Japanese victories in the Asian South-east; at the most it could have delayed the invasion of Wake, of Micronesia and of Melanesia whose re-taking cost the Americans a heavy toll of blood.