PEARL HARBOR: WHY SURPRISE?

by

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PRECIS

Bien que la surprise soit un problème omniprésent dans les relations internationales, on retrouve fréquement dans la littérature des explications contradictoires et complimentaires de ce phénomène. Après avoir revu les principales théories défendues dans les explications actuelles de la surprise on examinera leur utilité dans la comprehension de la surprise américaine lors de l'attaque Japonaise à Peafl Harbor.

La thèse se propose d'analyser quatre principales variants de la surprise des croyances on images incorrectes, des habitudes organizationnelles, de rivalités bureaucratiques, enfin la falsification de l'information. On reunira systematiquement les donness dont disposaient les responsables Americains. Par la suite on evaluera l'impact de tous ces facteurs sur les prévisions Americaines quant à la probabilité d'une attaque Japonaise.

A l'encontre des interprétations généralement reconnues la thèse ne se satisfait pas de l'explication communément appelée 'signal-noise'. Elle ne peut se contenter non plus des rivalités bureaucratiques ou d'une mauvaise administration de l'information. Le facteur central fut la strategie Japonaise de "desinformation", s'ajoutant à un manque flagrant d'attention face aux capacités militaires du Japon. Ces deux facteurs, ensemble, expliquent la surprise Americaine.

ABSTRACT

Although surprise has been a pervasive problem in international relations, a number of contradictory and complementary explanations of its causes are current in the literature. This study begins by reviewing current explanations to specify their arguments and then examines their usefulness in explaining American surprise when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

The thesis analyzes four major hypotheses of surprise, faulty beliefs and images, organizational routines, bureaucratic politics and deception. It then surveys systematically the information available to American decision makers and assesses the impact of each of these several factors on American estimates of the probability of a Japanese attack.

Contrary to prevailing interpretation, the thesis does not find the 'signal-noise' explanation convincing. Nor were bureaucratic politics or information mismanagement important factors. The central factor was Japan's strategy of disinformation which built on inadequate attention to Japan's capabilities. These two factors together explain American surprise.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, they achieved a stunning tactical surprise. Because it was the costliest naval disaster in the history of the United States, analysts were led to examine the causes of the surprise. Frequently, the underlying purpose of the analysis was to find scapegoats for the disaster. The hearings before the Joint Committee of Congress, the most elaborate and exhaustive investigation, laid the blame squarely on the field commanders - Admiral Kimmel and General Short - who were promptly relieved from command. These investigations, however, did not provide a satisfactory explanation of the surprise.

Scholarly interest in the explanation of surprise, a complex and ubiquitous phenomenon, persists. There have been numerous instances of surprise - Hitler's attacks on Russia and Norway, the Chinese intervention in the Korean War, China's attack on India, the Yom Kippur War - to mention only a few. Also, the consequences of surprise in an era of advanced technology would be even more devastating. Thus, Pearl Harbor and other surprises have been the subject of extensive study and various explanations have been put forward.

Before examining these explanations, it is necessary to establish that American decision makers were in fact surprised when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. This is necessary because there is a large body of literature - the revisionist histories of the Second World War - that contends that the attack on Pearl Harbor was not a surprise at all, and that the Roosevelt administration had 'a sinister design' in provoking Japan to attack the United States.[1] It argues that Roosevelt 'tried to create an incident' that would draw the United States into the European War. After the outbreak of war in Europe, Roosevelt had taken one step after another to provoke Hitler

to attack the United States. When he did not oblige, the Roosevelt administration increased pressure on the Japanese till they had no alternative but to attack the United States. This argument is not consistent, however, with the evidence.

The evidence indicates that although American decision makers did expect a Japanese attack of some sort; even that they considered it probable in the immediate future, they did not expect Japan to attack Pearl Harbor. As Wohlstetter has pointed out, "There was absolutely nothing in magic that established such a Japanese intent clearly and firmly. And even if there had been, there would still have been doubt as to whether Pearl Harbor was to be included in the Japanese plan of attack."[2] American leaders were surprised that the Japanese chose Pearl Harbor as a target in the first place, and that they chose an air attack rather than sabotage. At the very least then, the attack on Pearl Harbor was a tactical, if not a strategic surprise.

It is evident, therefore, that the revisionist explanation of the attack on Pearl Harbor is not fully satisfactory since it does not address, nor can it explain the tactical surprise that occured.

Having established that the decision makers in Washington were indeed surprised when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, this study turns to examine the literature with regard to the explanation of the surprise attack. Most of the explanations of surprise have relied primarily on psychological arguments.[3] They refer to images, beliefs, ideological biases, wishful thinking, all of which play a part in determining which facts the observer will notice and which he will ignore, the weight he will attach to the selected facts, the pattern into which he will fit them and the conclusions he will draw from them.[4] Psychological explanations have at least two

variants, the first emphasizes the 'content of beliefs' and the 'image of the opponent', and the second refers to its cognitive dynamics.

The 'content of beliefs' refers to the background image or the long term component of the protagonists' views of each other, one's goals and military potential relative to the opponent's aims and ultimate military potential, and the likely outcome of the conflict. The 'image of the opponent' consists of the opponents' current intentions and capabilities. Both beliefs and images act as a screen through which information about the opponent passes and is selectively interpreted and assimilated to conform to preexisting expectations of the adversary's behavior.[5] This explanation suggests that American decision makers believed themselves to be the legitimate defenders of the status quo in the Far East, and that it was Japan, aligned as it was with Germany and Italy, who was threatening to disrupt the balance of power and American security. They also believed that their capabilities were so much greater that it would be unrealistic for Japan to attack the United States, since the outcome of the conflict would be so disadvantageous to the Japanese. In the context of the current crisis, American decision makers perceived Japan to be a small and weak adversary whose aggressive posture was a bluff. If Japan did harbor aggressive intentions, it would avoid being involved in war directly with the United States. Therefore, they did not anticipate an attack on Pearl Harbor. In other words, their beliefs and images were responsible for the failure of American decisionmakers to anticipate an attack on Pearl Harbor.

The second variant of the psychological explanation of Pearl Harbor emphasizes information processing and its cognitive dynamics. Jervis has detailed numerous biases of information processing: (a) Information by

itself is frequently ambiguous and derives its meaning only when it is interpreted against one's beliefs and images. (b) Information is interpreted in reference to one's current concerns. (c) Information is interpreted against historical analogies, usually first hand experiences. (d) Information is interpreted according to one's desires and expectations. (e) When the flow of information contradicts established beliefs and images, it is either (i) ignored, dismissed or denied; (ii) reinterpreted to fit the established picture; (iii) the source is discredited; (iv) if the source is trustworthy, the information is accepted as such, but images and expectations are not updated; (v) there is search for more information that supports one's expectations; (vi) when discrepant information gets too uncomfortable, only marginal readjustments are made in one's beliefs and expectation.[6] Janis and Mann refer to additional biases in information processing - viz. congruence seeking and defensive avoidance.[7]

This explanation argues that information about Japan's intentions was ambiguous and lent itself to several plausible interpretations given this ambiguity. American decision makers selected those interpretations that were congruent with their preexisting beliefs and images. Consequently, they did not consider the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor at all. In other words, the failure of American decision makers to anticipate an attack on Pearl Harbor was a result of "the conditions of human perception and stems from uncertainties so basic that they are not likely to be eliminated, though they might be reduced."[8]

The variant emphasizing beliefs and images is static in that it assumes incoming information about Japanese intentions was irrelevant to the decision makers and did not affect their beliefs and images. The variant referring to

information processing and its cognitive dynamics is more dynamic in its stress on the ambiguity of the information, but nevertheless ignores a wide range of potentially relevant factors. Both these variants of the psychological explanation suffer from what Ben-Zvi refers to as "the reductive fallacy - the tendency of the cognitive-perceptual framework to reduce surprise to a single matrix of misperception" and to "overlook an entire complex of relevant factors that are unrelated to the question of human perception."[9] Thomas Schelling has explained the complexity of the phenomenon of surprise as follows:

> "Surprise, when it happens to a government is likely to be a complicated, diffuse bureaucratic thing. It includes neglect of responsibility, but also responsibility so poorly defined or so ambiguously delegated that action gets lost. It also includes gaps in intelligence, but also intelligence, that like a string of pearls too precious to wear, is too sensitive to give to those who need it. It also includes the alarm that had gone off so often that it has been disconnected. It includes the inalert watchman, but also one who knows he'll be chewed out by his superior if he gets his higher authority out of bed. It also includes the contingencies that occur to no one, but also those that everyone assumes somebody else is taking care of. It includes straight forward procrastination, but also decisions protracted by internal disagreement..." [10]

Drawing on Schelling's argument, this study now turns to look at other plausible explanations of surprise and then construct a more satisfactory explanation of the failure of American decision makers to anticipate and prepare for a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

One of the plausible explanations of surprise refers to institutional factors. It has at least two variants: (a) organizational procedures and (b) bureaucratic politics. The variant referring to organizational procedures deals with the impact of standard operating procedures on information processing.

Incoming information is processed in routine fashion and does not reach the central decision makers in time. Because of routine processing, 'potentially vital information' loses its urgency and results in a low estimate of the probability of an attack.[11]

In the context of the Japanese-American conflict, this explanation implies that the intelligence gathering agencies of the American government did have information about Japan's intention to attack Pearl Harbor. Such information as might have indicated Japan's intention to attack Pearl Harbor, lost its urgency in the maze of organizational routines and was delayed in reaching the central decision makers, who consequently considered an attack on Pearl Harbour improbable.

The variant involving bureaucratic politics argues that bargaining among the competing bureaucracies was responsible for their suppressing information about the adversary's intentions which resulted in an estimate of a low probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.[12] This variant implies, in the context of the Japanese-American conflict, that the relevant bureaucracies of the American government had conflicting interests and that at least some suppressed information about Japan's intentions in order to enhance their own interests. Consequently, the estimate was the result of bargaining among the competing bureaucracies.

Another plausible explanation of the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor focuses on deception - i.e., a deliberate stratagem of the adversary to deceive the recipient decision makers. This explanation argues that surprise occurs, not because of ambiguous 'signals' and distracting 'noise', but because the adversary calculatedly transmits disinformation about its intentions in order to make the recipients certain but wrong. Given this disinformation,

irrespective of their beliefs and images, they would make a very low estimate of the probability of an attack.[13] This explanation implies that the Japanese deliberately transmitted disinformation about their intentions and American decision makers used this information as the basis of their low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. This disinformation helped reduce the ambiguity, confusion and uncertainty about Japan's intentions and made American decision makers certain and wrong.

The foregoing discussion has introduced several plausible explanations of the failure of American decision makers to anticipate a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Drawing on these explanations, this study will now develop a set of hypotheses for the explanation of the surprise and test their validity against empirical evidence and seek to provide a necessary and sufficient explanation of surprise. These hypotheses are:

I. Faulty beliefs and images -> poor information processing -> low estimate of the probability of an attack.

To validate this explanation, empirical evidence must show that the decision makers did in fact have information about Japan's intention to attack Pearl Harbor, but due to faulty beliefs and images, they ignored or discounted its significance.

II. Defective organizational procedures -> routine information processing -> low estimate of the probability of an attack.

This hypothesis would be a valid explanation of surprise if empirical evidence indicates that information of an impending attack on Pearl Harbor was in fact available to the intelligence gathering agencies, but due to defective organizational procedures, the information was delayed in reaching the central

decision makers, who therefore made a low estimate of the probability of an attack.

III. Bureaucratic politics -> biased information processing -> low estimate of the probability of an attack.

To validate this hypothesis, empirical evidence must show that there was competition among the relevant bureaucracies and that they deliberately suppressed information about Japan's intentions in order to maximize their agency's interest and consequently, the low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor was a result of bargaining among the competing bureaucracies.

IV. Deception -> optimal information processing -> intended low estimate of the probability of an attack.

This hypothesis will be a valid explanation of surprise if empirical evidence shows that Japan calculatedly transmitted disinformation about its intentions which led American decision makers, using optimal information processing procedures, to make the intended low-estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

Having suggested several plausible hypotheses for the explanation of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, this study will attempt to establish criteria of a convincing explanation, since the discovery of some supporting evidence does not establish the validity of one explanation or the other, especially when the investigation is restricted to a single case study. One has to establish that the most plausible explanation is also "a necessary and sufficient" explanation of surprise. Alexander George has identified two alternative strategies - 'congruence' and 'process tracing' - for establishing

a necessary and sufficient explanation.[14]

The first strategy - congruence - provides for the establishment of a fit between the deductive logic of the explanation and the empirical evidence. George warns against prematurely concluding that an explanation is necessary, since the critical question is whether surprise could have occurred in the absence of this explanation. His solution is, either to construct an experimental design which would allow for the testing of other possible explanations, or to look for cases in which surprise occurred as a result of other factors.

He recognizes the limitations of single case studies and recommends that the investigator should perform 'mental experiments' or conduct mental rehearsals in his own mind in which he varies the critical variables in order to estimate the variance in results. Again, he cautions that the most an investigator can claim is that a given explanation may be a necessary condition and may be a more (rather than less) plausible explanation.

George then discusses the criteria of a sufficient explanation and warns against assuming that any explanation would be able to account for all the empirical evidence. The relevant question therefore is, how much power to attribute to any single factor. The investigator would have to assess the contribution of other independent variables as well in order to assign causal weight to 'the most favored' explanation. The congruence procedure may be able to establish the importance of an independent variable; it will not be able to suggest whether another outcome would also be consistent with the same explanatory variable. Single case studies tend to overlook the fact that several other outcomes could be consistent with the given explanatory or independent variable. The explanatory power of the independent variable is

enhanced if it is consistent with one and only one value of the dependent variable.

Again, George suggests a process of mental experimentation (1) to assess the explanatory power of other variables - i.e., to ascertain that the dependent variable is consistent with the given explanatory variable and (2) to assess the probability that another outcome (dependent variable) may be consistent with the explanatory variable. In other words, the task is to ascertain that the given explanatory variable is not consistent with any other outcome.

Having established the methodology for testing the hypotheses, this study will, in subsequent chapters, (1) examine the historical background of the Japanese-American conflict (2) test each of the four hypotheses and (3) establish, by the process of elimination, a necessary and sufficient explanation of the failure of American decision makers to anticipate an attack on Pearl Harbor.

CHAPTER I

FOOTNOTES

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2. Roberta Wohlstetter, "Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision", (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), p.225.

3. These arguments are made by Ernest K. Lindley and Forrest Davis, "How the War Came" (New York: Simon Schuster, 1942); Herbert Feis, "The Road to Pearl Harbor", (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950); William Langer and E.S. Gleason, "The Undeclared War", (New York: Harper and Row, 1953); William Langer and E.S. Gleason, "The Challenge to Isolation", (New York: Harper and Row, 1952); Basil Rauch, "Roosevelt: From Munich to Pearl Harbor", (New York: Creative Age Press, 1958); Paul Schroeder, "The Axis Alliance and the Japanese-American Relations", (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958); Alexander George and Richard Smoke, "Deterrence and American Foreign Policy", (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); Abraham Ben-Zvi, "American Preconceptions and Policies toward Japan: A Case Study of Misperception", International Studies Quarterly, XIX, 2, 1975.

4. Avi Shlaim, "Failures of National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Yom Kippur War", World Politics, XXVIII, 3, 1976; p.357.

5. Glenn Snyder and Paul Diesing, "Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making and System Structure in International Crises", (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), Chap. IV.

6. ibid.

7. Irving Janis and Leo Mann, "Decision Making" (New York: Free Press, 1977).

8. Wohlstetter, op. cit., p.397.

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13. Barton Whaley, "Codeword Barbarassa", (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1973), p.242.

14. Alexander George, "The Causal Nexus Between 'Operational Code' and Decision Making Behavior: Problems of Theory and Methodology", a paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, February 1978.

JAPANESE-AMERICAN CONFLICT AND UNITED STATES STRATEGY TOWARD JAPAN - 1931 to 1941

CHAPTER II

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor can be analyzed as a failure of deterrence. This observation implies that the United States was pursuing a policy of deterrence toward Japan and that the attack on Pearl Harbor was a result of the failure of the deterrence policy. This discussion will provide an analysis of the phases of America's deterrent policy from its origin during the Manchurian crisis in 1931 to its failure which culminated in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. For this purpose, this discussion will address the following questions - (1) What is deterrence? (2) What are the conditions of deterrence success/failure? (3) What was America's deterrent strategy? (4) Why did it fail? Finally, a link will be drawn between deterrence failure and the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor.

Deterrence is a commonly used strategy of war prevention in a nation's security policy. It is directed toward potential aggressors with the aim of preventing the outbreak of hostilities.[1] Although deterrence is generally referred to in the context of nuclear weapons, it has been used as a strategy of war prevention in earlier historical periods when conventional weapons were used in warfare. Despite extensive theoretical writing on the subject of deterrence, there is no consensus among scholars as to the precise meaning of deterrence. Patrick Morgan has referred to the confusion in the usage of the term by pointing out the numerous definitions of deterrence.[2] These definitions vary from an attempt "to induce the adversary to do something, or refrain from doing something by threatening a penalty for non-compliance" to "frightening a state out of attacking, not because of the difficulty of launching an attack and carrying it home (because of strong

defense), but because the expected reaction of the opponent will result in one's own severe punishment."[3] Another variant of the definition is that the potential attacker calculates "the cost and benefit" of the consequences of the actions the defender is trying to prevent and "must rationally conclude not to attack."[4]

To overcome the dilemma of defining deterrence, theorists and practitioners refer to deterrence in its broadest possible sense to mean "discouraging the enemy from taking military action by posing for him the prospect of cost and risk outweighing his prospective gain."[5] This formulation applies to both, nuclear as well as conventional attacks. This discussion, however, will focus on conventional deterrence.

Deterrence has been the concern of statesmen and strategists since the beginning of organized warfare. Its use had different policy implications for different situations. They varied from the show of force to making aggressive action costly and risky, to balance of power techniques in the form of elaborate alliances which would make the potential belligerent abandon his objective in the face of a superior combination of force without loss of esteem. These policy implications also included mobilization of one's forces and the exchange of military observers designed to strengthen one's alliance and 'signal' to the adversary one's preparedness. In the face of such deterrent policies, potential adversaries would have to calculate the cost-benefit ratio of carrying out an attack.

Having examined the meaning of deterrence and its use in preventing an adversary from deciding to attack, this discussion now turns to identify the conditions of deterrence success/failure. George and Smoke[6] and Robert Jervis[7]

have identified several conditions when an initiator is likely to challenge the defender's deterrent posture - i.e., when deterrence is likely to fail. They are classified under major categories: Major - (1) when the initiator is uncertain about the defender's commitment. (2) when the initiator regards that his action is calculable and controllable - i.e., when there is little risk of events getting out of hand. Minor - (1) when the initiator is not convinced of the adequacy and appropriateness of the defender's capabilities, regardless of his commitment. In other words, the initiator might consider the defender's deterrent threat to be a bluff. (2) when the initiator does not recognize the motivation of the defender's commitment. This may be because the initiator is not convinced that the defender's commitment is free from the constraints of domestic or allied opinion. (3) when the initiator feels that force alone will bring about the desired change in the status quo. (4) when the initiator feels that he is under severe time pressure - i.e., that there is very little time in which he can affect a change in the status quo, he is likely to challenge it. (5) when the initiator has a strong motivation to challenge the status quo. (6) when the initiator is unwilling to accept compensation for his demands elsewhere.

The above mentioned conditions indicate that deterrence may fail for one or more reasons. Consequently, states that seek to deter the initiator from attacking, must carefully consider not only the importance of the actions and eventualities they want to deter, but also the cost of deterrence failure before making a threat or a commitment. In other words, they must unambiguously specify what exactly they are trying to deter and what would the expected punishment be should the initiator choose to challenge their deterrent posture.

The deterrent posture itself should be designed to accomodate all the possible options that an initiator is likely to have in challenging the deterrent posture. Another possibility that decision makers should consider is that deterrence failure can be prevented by changing the pay off structure of the initiator so as to make the existing status quo a more attractive proposition than the new one.

Decision makers, however, usually concern themselves with ways of making their commitments and deterrent threats more credible. They identify those actions that they regard as challenges to their commitments and specify the expected response to the challenge of their deterrent posture. This they do by increasing their stakes in the maintainence of the deterrent posture by 'burning all their bridges' or 'making an irrational commitment' so as to 'signal' to the adversary that the commitment being made is so vital that no response would be too costly to defend it.[8] The problems of deterrence failure, however, lies, not only in the failure to make a commitment, but also in the fact that the adversary may not recognize it as such, or that he may see no alternative to forcibly altering the status quo.

It is in light of these observations about deterrence failure that this discussion turns to examine a very expensive instance of deterrence failure in American history which led to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. It will analyze the development of the conflict of interest between the two protagonists, identify America's deterrent strategy and explain why it failed. The discussion of the developing conflict and the American response to it will be divided into three phases corresponding to the phases in America's deterrent strategy. In order to analyse this deterrent strategy however, it will be helpful to

examine briefly Japanese-American relations with the aim of identifying American commitments in the Far East and the reasons why Japan chose to challenge them.

The Japanese and the Americans had formally come into contact after Commodore Perry's visit to Japan in 1853. Commercial relations grew between them as each country found a market for its products in the other: Japan exported silk to the United States and the United States exported cotton and tobacco to Japan. But this trade alone could not support Japan's growing industries and population. Japan therefore turned westward in search of food, raw materials and living space, and security against the European powers stationed in China. For these reasons, Japan fought a war with China in 1894 and acquired Korea, Formosa, Pescadores Islands and parts of Southern Manchuria as well. After the war, the European powers forced Japan to return Manchuria to China, but Japan kept all its other acquisitions.

In these acquired territories, Japan proceeded to develop industry, mining and transportation as the other European powers had done. At this stage, the United States stood apart from these developments since it was preoccupied with struggles nearer home between the Cuban rebels and the Spaniards. There was fighting against the Spaniards in the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico and Hawaii as well. The American fleet stationed in China was able to intervene and defeat Spain in the Philippines, and by a treaty signed in 1898, the United States acquired Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii. These acquisitions provided the United States with a substantial interest in the preservation of the status quo in the Far East. Also, these acquisitions were considered to be a stepping stone for increased trade with the vast Chinese market. It was to protect these opportunities and interests that the then

Secretary of State, John Hay, enunciated the famous 'Open Door' policy in 1899. This policy attempted to protect and expand American interests without the use of force. This policy later came to be associated with 'the equality of commercial opportunity' and the 'maintainence of the administrative and territorial integrity of China.'

The Japanese government did not regard this policy of the United States as a threat to its own position in Korea. And it gained Britain's recognition for its special political, commercial and industrial interests in Korea by negotiating the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902. This alliance neutralized the strategic threat to Japan from the British Navy. Now Japan considered the principal threat to its security to emanate from the advance of Czarist Russia into Southern Manchuria. The projected construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway was seen as jeopardizing Japanese control of Korea. Military planners in Japan considered the 'independence' of Korea as the basic premise of Japan's security. It was therefore essential to establish Japan's authority in Korea in order to prevent Russia from acquiring "the dagger at the heart of Japan".

Japan fought a war with Russia in 1904-1905 in order to prevent it from expanding its influence in Korea and to protect what had already recognized as its 'special interest'. The United States played the role of mediator between the protagonists who signed the Portsmouth Treaty in 1905. Japan had agreed to participate in negotiations with Russia only after the United States recognized Japan's dominant position in Korea. In 1909, Japan gained Russian acceptance of its dominant position in Korea by negotiating an entente. Thus when Japan formally annexed Korea in

1910, there were no objections or reservations on the part of any of the Western powers. The status quo now established was reinforced by the Lansing-Ishii agreement between Japan and the United States in 1917, and Japan was recognized as a formidable Pacific Power.

It was the recognition of Japan's status as a major power that enabled it to participate in the Washington Conference of 1921-22. The signatories of the Nine Power Treaty including Japan and the United States, resolved among other things to (1) respect the sovereignty, the independence and the administrative integrity of China (2) provide the fullest and most unembarrassed opportunity for China to develop and maintain for herself an effective and stable government (3) use their influence for the purpose of effectually establishing and maintaining the principle of equal opportunity or the commerce and industry of friendly states throughout the territory of China and to (4) refrain from taking advantage of conditions in China in order to seek special rights and privileges which would abridge the rights of subjects or citizens of friendly states and form countenancing action inimical to the security of such states.[9]

At the strategic level, a Five Power Treaty was also signed at the same conference, which fixed a 5:5:3 ratio in capital ships (battleships and cruisers) and aircraft carriers between the United States, Britain and Japan respectively (France and Italy obtained a 1.75 limit each) and imposed a moratorium for 10 years on the building of new vessels. The signatories also agreed to impose a halt on further fortification of various potential bases in the Western Pacific.[10] The Japanese government had

signed the Washington Treaties because they implicitly recognized the status quo in the Far East - i.e., Japan's special interests in Korea and Manchuria. For defensive purposes, the five to three ratio plus the refrain from fortification agreement was considered an adequate guarantee of Japan's security in its home waters.

The desire to maintain the status quo prompted the major powers to sign the Kellog-Briand Pact (also known as the Pact of Paris) in 1928. The signatories agreed to renounce war as an instrument of national policy and to seek "the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them... by Pacific means."[12] The Japanese government became a signatory of this Pact as well because the other powers recognized Japan's claims in Manchuria - a region where, by reason of its close propinquity, more than anywhere else, Japan had a vital interest.

It was the growth of Chinese nationalism, however, that presented the main challenge to the status quo that had been formalized by the various agreements among the Powers involved in China. Chinese intellectuals and students, as well as peasants and workers rallied behind the nationalist leadership to demand the recovery of full jurisdiction and tariff powers on their own soil. The outburst against the treaty powers was encouraged by the Soviet Union in return for Nationalists' recognition of Soviet influence in Northern Manchuria. Japan felt particularly threatened by this joint assault on its special interests in Manchuria; the Nationalists demanded tariff autonomy, abolition of extraterritoriality and the revision of commercial treaties. The Great Depression, which affected

all the industrialized countries, was particularly severe on Japan and therefore it became all the more important for Japan to retain its control over Manchuria so as to cope with its economic difficulties. It is against this background, and in the light of the respective postions of both Japan and the United States in China that discussion turns now to an examination of the Manchurian crisis which marked the beginning of America's deterrent strategy.

Japanese interests, both economic and strategic, were overwhelmingly concentrated in China and above all in Manchuria. The Depression and intensified Chinese nationalism, assisted and encouraged by the Soviet Union, heightened Japanese concern. There was a renewed boycott of Japanese goods and a sharp fall in the revenues of the Japanese controlled South Manchurian Railway because the Chinese had established a parallel railway to it. While the gravity of the threat was recognized by all concerned in Japan, there were serious differences between the civilian and military factious of the government about how to deal with it.

The civilian leaders regarded economic development as the most effective means to secure Manchuria and advocated gradual development of the territory. They recognized the region as Chinese territory and were opposed to direct control of Manchuria. The Army, on the other hand, which was responsible for the security of the Lease territory and the Railway Zone, advocated a policy of rapid development of Manchuria, if necessary, by the use of force. Its officers were opposed to the civilian leaders' 'soft' China policy; they believed that growing Chinese nationalism threatened Japan's power and prestige on the mainland. Each

new act of defiance by the Chinese of Japanese hegemony in Manchuria was viewed as an affront to Japan's national pride. It was the Army's special obligation to maintain peace and order in Manchuria because of Japan's special interests and national defense needs.

On September 18, 1931, an explosion occured on the track of the South Manchurian Railway near Mukden and the Japanese railway guards saw Chinese soldiers fleeing from that area. They pursued the Chinese who fired at them and were fired at in return. This incident provided the dissatisfied Japanese Army with a pretext for beginning a skirmish with the Chinese troops and enlarging operations thereafter. Soon the Japanese troops had occupied Southern Manchuria and taken its administration in to their hands.

American Strategy - Phase I: Deterrence Through Moral Suasion

The swiftness with which the Army took action came as a surprise to the civilian authorities in Japan. They were deeply distressed because this action would discredit their laborious efforts of a decade at moderate diplomacy. The American government too was surprised; this was reflected in its caution reaction to the incident. Secretary of State Stimson noted,

> "Trouble has flared up in Manchuria. The Japanese, apparently their military elements, have suddenly made a coup. They have seized Mukden and a number of strategic towns centered along and through Southern Manchuria. The situation is confused and it is not clear whether the Army is acting under a plan of the government or on its own."[13]

And the Japanese government informed the State Department that the whole situation in Manchuria had arisen from "a desire to avenge Japan from the

indignities due to unsettled cases and in particular, the alleged execution of a Japanese military officer on active duty."[14] The United States was assured that Japan

> "harbors no territorial designs in Manchuria. What we desire is that the Japanese subjects shall be enabled safely to engage in various peaceful pursuits and be given an opportunity for participating in the development of that land by means of capital and labor."[15]

Given its initial diagnosis, reinforced by Japanese assurances, the reaction of the American government was to wait and see how the situation unfolded. The American response was determined by a calculation of its objectives and interests in the area. Its most important concern was domestic - i.e., dealing with the Depression. In the international arena, its interest was in the maintainence of the status quo established by the treaties of 1922 and 1928. In the crisis at hand, no American material interests were directly involved although there was sympathy for China, was embodied in the 'Open Door' policy and the Washington treaties. There was no question, therefore, of despatching American troops to preserve China's integrity. Moreover, the American government recognized that Japan had been a signatory to the treaties of 1922 and 1928, and had abided by its commitments in the past because of the efforts of its civilian leadership. Therefore, it decided not to take any action that might jeopardize the precarious position of the civilian government in Japan. As Secretary Stimson noted,

> "We knew he (Shidehara) had been laboring hard for moderation against the pressures of the army leaders in Manchuria. We reached the conclusion that those leaders had engineered this outbreak without his knowledge and certainly against his will. It seemed clear to us that no steps should be taken that would make his task more difficult because certainly our best chance of a successful solution lay in him."[16]

But the 'incident' eclipsed the control of the civilian authorities and led to the fall of the civilian government in Tokyo in December 1931 as army officers pushed for a 'positive' foreign policy in Manchuria. The Army set up the 'independent' regime of Manchukuo in the areas under Japanese control in 1931. Although American decision makers changed their perception of the situation, they did not diagnose a threat to American interests. President Hoover defined the situation as follows:

> "Neither our obligation to China, nor our own interest, nor our dignity require us to go to war over these questions. These acts do not imperil the freedom of American people, the economic or moral future of our people."[17]

Therefore, American stretegy toward the Manchurian crisis was embodied in the 'non-recognition doctrine'. It was designed to: (1) punish Japan for its actions in Manchuria and (2) deter Japan from violating the international treaties that guaranteed China's territorial and administrative integrity and denounced war as an instrument of national policy. Secretary Stimson explained the intent of America's strategy as follows: It was

> "a moral weapon, a moral sanction...designed originally less as a method of bringing the Japanese reason than as a method of reasserting the American conviction that no good whatever would come from the breach of treaties."[18]

Although the primary objective of America's strategy was to deter further violations, the moral pressure invoked was unlikely to be adequate to the task. Stronger measures, however, would run the risk of provocation and further escalation. Caught between the fear of escalation and the need to deter, the American strategy of moral suasion failed. Japan established its control over Manchuria and formalized it by the signing of the Tangku Truce in May 1933. Its subsequent policy in China was enunciated in what became known as the Amau declaration of 1934. By this declaration, Japan unilaterally took responsibility for keeping peace and order in East Asia. It announced that, "we must act even alone, on our own responsibility and it is our duty to perform it."[19] It reiterated that Japan would oppose "any joint action on the part of foreign powers that tends to militate against the maintainence of peace and order in Eastern Asia."[20] In pursuance of the policy outlined in the Amau declaration, the Japanese continued to police North China; this led to skirmishes with the Soviet Union which continued until 1939. More seriously, intensified Chinese resistance, albeit with the assistance of foreign powers, led to sporadic fighting culminating in the outbreak of the undeclared war with China in July 1937.

Even while Japan continued to violate China's administrative and territorial integrity, America's strategy of deterrence through moral

suasion remained unchanged. American decision makers recognized that their strategy was failing; but they were unable to prevent failure by enlarging the scope of the threat involved to ensure its success. There had been a resurgence of isolationism in the United States which made it difficult for the American government to threaten the use of force to make such a threat credible. Confronted with the dilemma of escalation, if stronger action was taken, or deterrence failure if stronger actions were not taken, American leaders avoided the conflict by ignoring the dilemma. Again, their strategy was to end in failure.

American Strategy - Phase II: Deterrence Through Methods Short of War

The outbreak of the undeclared war in China was precipitated by an incident on the Marco Polo Bridge on July 7, 1937. The fighting between the Chinese and the Japanese soon spread to Shanghai and the lives and property of American nationals was endangered. In response, America's strategy changed. First, its objectives changed: in addition to preserving the status quo, there was now an emphasis on preventing further harm to the lives and property of American nationals. Second, there was an indication that the American government was considering more serious action than protest and moral sanctions. This was evident in President Roosevelt's famous 'quarantine speech' in which he said,

> "....It seems to be unfortunately true that the epidemic of world lawlessness is spreading. When an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread, the community approves and joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease."[21]

A similar change in emphasis was indicated by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who explained this new strategy as putting,

> "as much pressure on aggressor states as we reasonably could ... make ourselves strong militarily so that our words and peaceful actions carried weight ... without involving the United States in war and ... urge upon all nations the true principle of right international conduct."[22]

Both these statements indicated that the American government had begun considering steps to reinforce its strategy toward Japan. But again, the contradiction between failure to fulfill commitments and deterrence was left unresolved. President Roosevelt referred to it in a speech in January, 1939. He said,

> "The mere fact that we rightly decline to intervene with arms to prevent acts of aggression does not mean that we must act as if there is no aggression at all. Words may be futile, but war is not the only means of commanding a decent respect for the opinions of mankind. There are many methods short of war, but stronger and more effective than mere words, of bringing home to the aggressor governments the aggregate sentiments of our own people."[23]

President Roosevelt's reference to "methods short of war" characterized the American government's interpretation of deterrence at this time. It adopted several measures to reinforce deterrence - viz., a request to Congress to revise the Neutrality Acts to allow for the export of arms and ammunition to the belligerent nations (principally Britain and France), an increased pace of rearmament and a notice to Japan indicating the termination of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the two countries.

These measures had a two fold effect: firstly, they strengthened deterrence by invoking more than moral sanctions and secondly, they strengthened American defense by increasing rearmament and aiding countries who were fighting America's enemy - Japan. While these measures were certainly stronger than the invocation of moral sanctions in the previous phase, they were inadequate to deter Japan. The use of such limited measures reflected the attempt to avoid provocation and escalation to a war that America wanted desparately to avoid.

Despite America's strategy, the Japanese government demanded that the Vichy government allow a military mission to operate in Indo-China and asked the Dutch East Indies government to guarantee the supply of raw materials to Japan. It also asked the British government to withdraw its troops from Shanghai, close the frontier between Hong Kong and China and to close the Burma Road. But most importantly, Japan concluded a Pact with Germany and Italy in September 1940.

All these actions were evidence that the America's strategy of deterrence had failed. 'The methods short of war' were inadequate to deter it from further violations of international treaties and America's interests. The methods were inadequate because of the overriding interest of the American government to avoid war with Japan. This constraint, more than any other, was responsible for the weakness and failure of America's strategy.

But the failure, once again, of America's strategy toward Japan did not result in its alteration. On the contrary, the scope of the strategy was expanded from deterrence to compellance. The objective of this strategy

was not only to prevent further violations of international treaties and harm to the life and property of American nationals, but also, to compel Japan to abandon its gains in China and plans of conquest in South East Asia. In the pursuit of this more complicated and ambitious objective, the American government adopted new measures of economic sanctions. Even the widening of the scope of America's strategy and the strengthening of its credibility were not sufficient, however, to prevent the failure of deterrence.

American Strategy - Phase III: Deterrence and Compellance Through Punishment

Japan's increasing pressure on the French, Dutch and British colonies and its formalizing of the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy marked the beginning of a new phase in America's strategy toward Japan. It began with the imposition of restrictions on the sale of scrap iron and steel. This measure was designed to indicate to Japan that the United States was strengthening its deterrence as well as punishing Japan for its past aggressive behavior. However, the restrictions were not as yet extended to Japan's supply of oil because Summer Welles (of the Far Eastern Division of the State Department) referred to the contradiction between America's deterrent and punishment strategy as follows:

> "If the United States did anything just then that bore vitally on Japan's power to carry on war with China, the result could not be predicted. A total ban on oil shipments would force it into a decision. Rather than desist, Japan, using our action as cause and reason, might move against the Indies."[24]

Again, the contradiction within American strategy was left unresolved.

On the one hand, there was a gradual increase in economic pressure both to punish and deter Japan; on the other, the scope of economic pressure was limited so that Japan would not be provoked into attacking South East Asia in order to ensure its supplies of raw materials. Initially, this strategy combined with economic pressure appeared to be successful. Although Japan protested that the regulations establishing licensing restrictions were discriminatory, it postponed any movement toward the South, even when the British reopened the Burma Road. Secretary Hull noted with satisfaction that,

> "Having occupied a few bases in French Indo-China and dispatched troops into China through the French colony, she refrained from the full scale military occupation that the Nipponese Army had in mind. She tried to obtain sweeping economic concessions in the Netherlands East Indies, but postponed any project of occupying them militarily."[25]

In fact, Japan appeared to be interested in negotiating a peaceful settlement with the United States. The Japanese indicated that if the United States could ensure Japan's 'security', they would be willing to respect the status quo in the Far East.

The United States accepted Japan's proposal to open negotiations toward a peaceful settlement. The objectives of America's expanded strategy, however, were not only to punish Japan for its past aggressive behavior and to deter further violations of the international treaties and loss of American life and property, but also to compel Japan to abandon its gains in China and plans for expansion into South East Asia.

This became the cornerstone of America's negotiating position viz-a-viz Japan and was embodied in Hull's Four Points: (1) Respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of each and all nations (2) Support for the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries (3) Support for the principle of equality, including equality of commercial opportunity (4) Non-disturbance of the status quo in the Pacific except as the status quo may be altered by peaceful means.[26]

Japan, on the other hand, insisted that the United States should persuade Chiang-Kai-Shek to enter into negotiations with Japan in order to end the China Affair; resume the supply of those commodities that had been restricted by export licensing and resume normal trade relations under a new trade treaty. The United States, however, was adamant that Japan would have to withdraw from China completely and abandon its plans to acquire the resources of South East Asia. While the negotiations were becoming deadlocked, Hitler launched an attack on Russia on June 22, 1941.

Hitler's attack on Russia and the impasse in the negotiations between Japan and the United States led the Japanese government to reconsider its course of action. After long deliberations, it decided to concentrate on obtaining the resources of South East Asia, by negotiations if possible, if not, by force. The decision was partly implemented on July 24, 1941, when the Japanese government announced that it had reached an agreement with the Vichy government to station troops and occupy naval and air bases in French Indo-China. Subsequently, Japanese troops moved in.

This action of the Japanese government confronted American decision

makers with evidence that their expanded strategy of deterrence and compellance through punishment was proving inadequate. Japan was doing exactly what they wanted to prevent. They had to reconsider their strategy. The unresolved dilemma between strengthening their strategy of deterrence while not provoking Japan into attacking South East Asia reemerged. There was considerable disagreement among policy makers about the most effective way of preventing Japan from attacking South East Asia. Some - Secretaries Stimson and Morgenthau - emphasized the need to, through increased punishment, deter and compel Japan and advocated a total embargo of all trade with Japan. They believed that

> "Japan has historically shown that she can misinterpret a pacifist policy of the United States for weakness. She has historically shown that when the United States indicates by clear language and bold aims that she intends to carry out a clear and affirmative policy in the Far East, Japan will yield to that policy even though it conflicts with her own Asiatic policy and conceived interests."[27]

They reasoned that, confronted with the choice of abandoning its plans of attacking South East Asia and defying the American trade embargo, Japan would choose to abandon its plans rather than fight a war with the United States.

Other decision makers - Secretary Hull, General Marshall and Admiral Stark - were more concerned with not provoking Japan. They recommended that the United States freeze Japanese assets but refrain from imposing an immediate embargo on the export of oil which would push Japan to attack South East Asia. The American government decided

that its more important objective was to punish Japan for occupying French Indo-China and to deter further encroachments on South East Asia and froze Japanese assets on July 26, 1941. It had the effect of embargoing Japan's supply of oil. Even though their strategy had proved unsuccessful in the past, they did not consider a new strategy. They persisted with deterrence through punishment by imposing the embargo on oil and insisted that Japan abandon its gains in China and plans of expansion in South East Asia in their negotiations. Secretary Hull maintained,

> "It will be difficult for me to get this government to go a long way in removing the embargo unless we believe Japan has definitely started on a peaceful course and has renounced purposes of conquest."[28]

Faced with this expanded strategy of deterrence and compellance through punishment, the Japanese government had to decide whether it would obtain continued supplies of oil by reaching an agreement with the United States, or by forcibly acquiring oil from the Dutch East Indies. A complicating consideration in this decision was the estimate of the Navy that in the event of war with the United States, there was no certainty that Japan would win. The Japanese government decided on a two stage approach. In the first stage, it would try through negotiation to persuade the United States to lift the oil embargo. If, by the middle of October, negotiations had proved fruitless, it would make preparations to acquire supplies of oil by force. In order to facilitate the process of negotiations, the Japanese government proposed a direct meeting between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Konoye.

The United States, however, rejected this proposal because Japan had not agreed to abandon its gains in China and plans for expansion in South East Asia. Secretary Hull saw in this proposal a parallel with Munich and noted, "I was opposed to the first Munich and still more to a second Munich."[29]

Unable to persuade the United States to lift its oil embargo, the Konoye government resigned on October 15, 1941. The new government, headed by General Tojo decided to make one final attempt at reaching a settlement through negotiation. Its negotiating position was stated in two proposals - Proposal A and Proposal B. Proposal A was a restatement of Japan's general position with the aim of a complete restructuring of Japanese-American relations. Proposal B tried to establish a modus vivendi, which would serve as a stop gap arrangement till a comprehensive agreement could be reached. The United States, however, was intent on compelling Japan to reverse its policies of ten years before it reached any agreement. It therefore rejected both these proposals. As Secretary Hull pointed out,

> "...Agreeing to these proposals would mean condonement by the United States of Japan's past agressions, assent to future courses of conquest by Japan, abandonment of the most essential principles of our foreign policy, betrayal of China and Russia, and acceptance of the role of a silent partner aiding and abetting Japan in her effort to create a Japanese hegemony over the Western Pacific and Eastern Asia."[30]

It responded with a list of proposals of its own - i.e., the Ten

Point Note - which the Japanese found unacceptable. Having failed in persuading the United States to lift the oil embargo, Japan's leaders decided on war. Their war plan was premised on the certainty of American involvement. Therefore, the greatest benefit would come from neutralizing the United States first. In pursuance of their choice to secure the resources of South East Asia, they decided to launch simultaneous attacks on Malaya, Philippines, Dutch East Indies and above all, on Pearl Harbor on December 7-8, 1941, thus drawing the United States in the war it had tried so desparately to avoid.

The attack on Pearl Harbor signalled the unequivocal failure of America's strategy of deterrence and compellance. Even more striking than the failure was American surprise at the failure. They did not expect Japan to launch an attack on Pearl Harbor. This gives rise to two critical questions: (1) Why did the American strategy fail? (2) Why were American decision makers surprised at the failure? The discussion of America's deterrent strategy toward Japan has indicated that America was pursuing conflicting objectives. In its first phase, the emphasis was on deterrence through moral suasion, a measure too limited for the scope of the policy. Japan was undeterred by moral sanctions and not only consolidated its position in Manchuria but also extended its fighting to China. In other words, the American strategy failed because the punishment that had been invoked was too weak to deter Japan; the cost of moral approbium was outweighed by the benefit of further action.

In an effort to correct the weakness of the earlier strategy, the

United States began to put heavier emphasis on deterrence through punishment. However, the tension between the consequences of punishment and deterrence was left unresolved. Although the punishment invoked was stronger than moral sanctions, it was constrained nevertheless, to avoid provoking Japan into violations of the status quo in South East Asia. The emphasis was on 'methods short of war'; the measures invoked, however, in order to punish were too weak to deter. Therefore, once again, the strategy of deterrence through punishment failed because it was pursuing conflicting objectives which resulted in its weak application.

Rather than reconsider its strategy which had failed twice, the United States expanded it to include compellance as well. Not only did it want to deter Japan from further violations of the status quo in South East Asia, it also wanted to compel Japan to abandon its gains in China. These two objectives and the means chosen to pursue them, conflicted with the objective of controlling escalation, but the tension was left unresolved. The punishment invoked when Japan occupied French Indo-China - i.e., the oil embargo - was expected to be so severe that it would not only deter Japan from occupying South East Asia, but also compel it to abandon its gains in China. The probability that such a severe punishment might in fact provoke Japan into doing exactly what it intended to deter was not evaluated seriously. This time, Japan challenged America's expanded strategy because the issue at stake was so vital that Japan's leaders could see no alternative but the use of force.

In the first two phases then, American strategy failed, in part, not because Japan did not recognize America's commitment to the status quo, but

because the means chosen to signal that commitment were disproportionate to the values at stake. Japan noted American displeasure at its acquisition of Manchuria but disregarded the moral sanctions as harmless. Even the 'methods short of war' were not a sufficient deterrent. In the last phase, however, the commitment was very credible and the punishment invoked so severe, that Japan calculated that only the use of force would change the status quo and during this last phase, Japan felt itself under severe time pressure. In other words, the motivation to alter the status quo was so strong that Japan chose a challenge as the least costly among available options. Finally, American strategy did not attempt to offer Japan an incentive which could have changed its least-cost calculation. By then, American decision makers estimated that such an offer would only signal to Japan America's acceptance of its aggressive behavior. In short, deterrence failed at first, because the means used were inadequate and failed in the last phase because the punishment was too effective.

In the last weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor, it was obvious to American decision makers that their strategy was failing and they had a fairly accurate idea of Japan's intention to launch an attack on South East Asia. They knew war was coming and coming soon, but were surprised when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. They had concentrated on deterring an attack on South East Asia, not on Pearl Harbor. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, when it came, therefore, was a surprise to American decision makers.

The next chapter will examine in detail Japan's intentions and plans

and the information about these plans that was available to American decision makers in 1941.

CHAPTER II

FOOTNOTES

1. Deterrence is also used to prevent escalation once hostilities have broken out.

2. Patrick Morgan, "Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis", (Beverly Hills: California: Sage Publications, 1973), Chap. I.

3. ibid.

4. ibid.

5. Glenn Snyder, "Deterrence and Defense" (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p.3.

6. Alexander George and Richard Smoke, "Deterrence and American Foreign Policy", (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), Chap. XVII.

7. Robert Jervis, "Deterrence Theory Revisited", World Politics, XXXI, January 1979.

8. Snyder and Diesing, "Conflict Among Nations", op.cit., refer to the problems of making a credible commitment and threat in Chap. III.

9. Henry Stimson, "The Far Eastern Crisis", (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), p.267.

10. Christopher Thorne, "The Limits of Foreign Policy", (New York: Putnam, 1973), pp.27-28.

11. Akira Iriye, "After Imperialism", (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p.19.

12. Stimson, "The Far Eastern Crisis", op.cit., p.272.

13. ibid., p.32.

14. Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan, I, 1931-1941. Department of State Publication No. 2016 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), p.3. Hereafter cited as FRUS.

15. ibid., p.20.

16. Stimson, "The Far Eastern Crisis", op.cit., p.36.

17. Thorne, "The Limits of Foreign Policy", op.cit., p.162. See also Herbert Hoover, "The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover", II, (New York: MacMillan, 1951), p.369.

18. Henry Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, "On Active Service in Peace and War", (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p.234. See also Akira Iriye, "Across the Pacific", (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967), pp.181-183.

19. FRUS, op.cit., p.224.

20. ibid.

21. Franklin Roosevelt, "Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, 1933-41", (New York: W. Funk, 1942), p. ; see also, Cordell Hull, "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull", (New York: MacMillan, 1948), I, p.545.

22. Hull, "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull", op.cit., p.565.

23. Roosevelt, "Roosevelt's Foreign Policy", op.cit., p.156.

24. Cited in Herbert Feis, "The Road to Pearl Harbor", (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), p.91.

25. Hull, "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull", op.cit., pp.915-16.

26. ibid., II, pp.995, see also, FRUS, op.cit., p.407.

27. Stimson and Bundy, "On Active Service in Peace and War", op.cit., p.385.

28. Hull, "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull", op.cit., p.1067.

29. ibid., p.1025.

30. ibid., pp.1069-70.

JAPAN'S INTENTIONS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO AMERICAN DECISION MAKERS

CHAPTER III

The last chapter briefly examined Japanese-American relations prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor and analyzed America's deterrent strategy toward Japan. It also explained why that strategy failed and noted American surprise when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. This chapter will examine Japan's plans and intentions and what American decision makers knew about them. For this purpose, this discussion will be divided into two parts: (a) what were Japan's plans and intentions before its attack on Pearl Harbor? (b) how much did American decision makers know about them?

Japan's Intentions and Plans Prior to the Attack on Pearl Harbor

The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, and more particularly, the swift victories of Nazi forces over most of Western Europe created a situation of uncertainty in the Far East, where these European countries had colonial possessions. This uncertain situation provided Japan with an opportunity to reduce the pressure created by the economic sanctions imposed by the United States. It could strengthen its own supply of raw materials by taking control of the resources of these colonies. Soon after France and the Netherlands surrendered to Germany, the Japanese government outlined its intentions in a document known as "Gist of the Main Points in Regard to Dealing with the Situation to Meet the Change in World Conditions." This document was adopted on July 27, 1940. It stated that the Japanese government would (1) maintain a firm attitude toward America on the one hand; affect on the other hand, a sweeping

readjustment of Japanese relations with the USSR as well as a political combination with Germany and Italy, (2) Take stronger measures against French Indo-China, Hong Kong and foreign concessions in China looking to the prevention of aid to the Chiang regime, (3) Practice more vigorous diplomacy toward the Netherlands East Indies in order to acquire vital materials.[1]

In pursuit of the intentions outlined in the policy document of July 27, 1940, the Japanese government took steps to complete the political combination with Germany and Italy. There had been extensive discussions on the impact of any agreement on Japan's relations with other countries, notably the United States. At the Imperial Conference (the formal decision making body in Japan) that finally approved the decision to sign a pact with Germany and Italy, doubts and reservations about the utility of the pact for Japan were expressed. The principal objection was voiced by Yoshimichi Hara, the President of the Privy Council, who said:

> "When Japan's position becomes clear with the announcement of the Pact, she (the United States) will greatly increase her pressure on us, she will step up her aid to Chiang, and she will obstruct Japan's war effort. I assume that the United States, which has not declared war on Germany and Italy, will put pressure on Japan without declaring war on us. She will probably ban the export of oil and iron, and will refuse to purchase goods from us. She will attempt to weaken us over the long term so that we will not be able to endure the war. The Director of the Planning has said that all available steps will be taken to obtain iron and oil, but the results are uncertain. Also, the Foreign Minister's statement shows that we cannot obtain iron and oil right away, and that in any case the amount will be restricted. You cannot carry on a war without oil."[2]

Prime Minister Konoye and Foreign Minister Matsuoka, however, put a second interpretation on the consequences of the proposed pact. They saw the pact as 'defensive.' Konoye explained:

> "A German-Japanese treaty is to be concluded for peaceful purposes, that is the object. There is no other way."

Matsuoka reasoned along similar lines when he said:

> "The object of the Pact is to prevent the United States from encircling us...The only thing that can prevent an encirclement policy is a firm stand on our part at this time...To be sure, the United States may adopt a stern attitude for a while, but I think she will dispassionately take her interests into consideration and arrive at a reasonable attitude. As to whether she will stiffen her attitude and bring about a critical situation, or will levelheadedly reconsider, I would say that the odds are fifty-fifty." [3]

While they recognized the possibility of a stiffening in the American attitude toward Japan and the harsh consequences for their supply of raw materials, the Japanese decided to sign the pact with Italy and Germany, because they calculated that this was the best possible solution to the problem of American encirclement.

The next important decision, which reflected Japan's intentions, in the light of the Russo-German War, was taken on July 2, 1941. It was embodied in a document entitled "Outline of National Policies in View of the Changing Situation." It said, (1) Our Empire is determined to follow a policy that will result in the establishment of the greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere and will thereby contribute to world peace, no matter

what changes might occur in the international situation, (2) Our Empire will continue in its efforts to effect a settlement of the China Incident, and will seek to establish a solid basis for the security and preservation of the nation. This will involve taking steps to advance south, and depending on changes in the situation, will involve a settlement of the Northern question as well, (3) Our Empire is determined to remove all obstacles in order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.[4] It was also stated that the Japanese government would enter into negotiations with French Indo-China to secure the right to station troops in that territory in order to "assure the integrity of French Indo-China." But if negotiations did not succeed, then Japan would not hesitate to occupy the territory even if Britain and the United States objected.

This decision indicated that Japan would try to achieve its aims through negotiations, but would be prepared to use force, if necessary. Therefore, the Japanese began to negotiate with the Vichy government and announced on July 24, 1941 that an agreement had been reached to station troops and occupy naval and air bases in French Indo-China. Subsequently, Japanese troops moved in.

A further indication of Japan's intentions was available in the decision of the Imperial Conference of September 6, 1941. The immediate reason for this decision was the growing stringency of the oil embargo imposed by the United States, Britain and the Netherlands. As Prime Minister Konoye explained:

> "The international situation in which we are involved has become increasingly strained, and in particular, the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands have come to oppose our Empire with all available means...If we allow this situation to continue, it is inevitable that our Empire will gradually lose the ability to maintain its national power and that our national power will lag behind that of the United States, Great Britain and others. Under these circumstances, our Empire, must, of course, quickly prepare to meet any situation that may occur, and at the same time, it must try to prevent the disaster of war by resorting to all possible diplomatic measures. If the diplomatic measures should fail to bring about favorable results within a certain period, I believe we cannot help but take the ultimate step in order to defend ourselves." 5

The Army Chief of Staff, Sujiyama observed:

> "If we remain idle and mark time in these pressing circumstances, and if we let ourselves be trapped by the intrigues of Great Britain and the United States, our national defense capability will decline as time goes on; by contrast, the military preparedness of Great Britain and United States, and other countries will be gradually strengthened. Then it will become more difficult to carry out our military operations, and it is likely that we might eventually be unable to overcome the obstacles posed by Great Britain and the United States." 6

The policy that the Japanese government adopted was referred to as "The Essentials for Carrying Out the Empire's Policies." This document stated:

> "In view of the current critical situation, in particular, the offensive attitudes of such countries as the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands are taking toward Japan, and in view of the situation in the Soviet Union and the condition of our Empire's national power, we will carry out our policy toward the

> South, which is contained in the Outline of National Policies in View of the Changing Situation as follows: (I) Our Empire, for the purposes of self-defense and self-preservation, will complete preparations for war with the last ten days of October as a tentative deadline, resolved to go to war with the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands if necessary; (II) Our Empire will concurrently take all possible diplomatic measures vis-à-vis the United States and Great Britain, and thereby endeavor to attain our objectives...; (III) In the event that there is no prospect of our demands being met by the first ten days of October through the diplomatic negotiations mentioned above, we will immediately decide to commence hostilities against the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands." [7]

When the deadline for the completion of negotiations passed and there was no sign of a favorable response to their demands, the Japanese government extended the deadline to November 5, 1941 to give negotiations additional time. But if they did not reach an agreement by December 1, Japan would go to war with the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands. Its plans and intentions were outlined in a document entitled "Essentials for Carrying out the Empire's Policies." It stated:

> I. Our Empire, in order to resolve the present critical situation, assure its self-preservation and self-defense, and establish a New Order in greater East Asia, decides on this occasion to go to war against the United States and Great Britain and takes the following measures: (1) the time for resorting to force is set at the beginning of December, and the Army and Navy will complete preparations for operations; (2) Negotiations with the United States will be carried out in accordance with the attached document; (3) Cooperation with Germany and Italy will be strengthened; (4) Close military relations with Thailand will be established just prior to the use of force.

> II. If negotiations with the United States are successful by midnight of December 1, the use of force will be suspended." [8]

The negotiating position of the Japanese government was outlined in the two Proposals - Proposal A and Proposal B.[9] The first proposal spelled out the outstanding issues between the two countries with the aim of a complete restructuring of bilateral relations. The second one was termed a modus vivendi and it sought to restore the conditions that existed before the Japanese advance into Southern Indo-China which had provoked the United States into imposing the oil embargo. The discussion that preceded the approval of this decision brought to the surface the calculations of the Japanese government. The new Prime Minister, Tojo, explained:

> "...While maintaining close coordination between political and military considerations, we have made a special effort to achieve success in our diplomatic negotiations with the United States. In this interval, we have endured what must be endured in our efforts to reach an agreement, but we have not been able to get the United States to reconsider. During the negotiations, there has been a change in the Cabinet... As a result, we have come to the conclusion that we must now decide to go to war, set the time for military action at the beginning of December, concentrate all our efforts on completing preparations of war, and at the same time to break the impasse by diplomacy." [10]

The operational considerations for this decision were made explicit by the Army Chief of Staff, Sujiyama. He explained:

> "From the standpoint of operations, if the time for commencing war is delayed, the ratio of armament between Japan and the United States will become more and more unfavorable to us as time passes and particularly, the gap in air armament will enlarge rapidly. Moreover, defensive operations in the Philippines, and other American war preparations will make rapid progress. Also, the common defense arrangements between the United States, Great Britain, the Netherlands and China will become all the more close, and their joint defensive capability will be rapidly increased. Finally, if we delay until after next spring, the weather will permit operational activities in the North, and also there will be a higher probability that our Empire will have to face simultaneous war in the South and in the North. Thus it would be very disadvantageous for us to delay, and it is feared that it might become impossible for us to undertake offensive operations. In addition, weather conditions in the area where important operations are going to take place, are such that no delay is possible. Accordingly, in order to resort to force as soon as preparations we contemplate are completed, we would like to set the target date in the early part of December." [11]

The Japanese government recognized that the failure to reach an agreement with the United States meant war and that it would be a long war. But it reasoned that the only alternative in the circumstances was the decline of the Empire. Therefore, when it received the American response to its final proposal - The Ten Point Note - it found it "clearly unacceptable." On December 1, 1941, the Imperial Conference formally decided to go to war with the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands. The Foreign Minister reviewed the course of the informal conversations with the United States and concluded:

> "In short, one must say that it was virtually impossible for us to accept their proposal; and if we were to continue negotiations on the basis of this proposal in order to get the United States to withdraw it, it would be almost impossible for us to obtain what we seek." [12]

The President of the Privy Council pointed out that:

> "the United States is being utterly conceited, obstinate and disrespectful. It is regrettable indeed. We simply cannot tolerate such an attitude. If we were to give in, we would give up in one stroke not only our gains in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, but also the benefits of the Manchurian Incident. This we cannot do. We are loath to compel our people to suffer even greater hardships, on top of what they have endured during the four years since the China Incident. But it is clear that the existence of our country is being threatened, that the great achievements of the Emperor Meiji would all serve to nought, and that there is nothing else we can do. Therefor, I believe that if negotiations with the United States were hopeless, then the commencement of war in accordance with the decision of the previous Imperial Conference is inevitable." [13]

Although the chances of success of the course the Japanese chose were at best uncertain, they chose it because they calculated that the cost of war was lesser than the cost of continued dependence and decline of national honor through attrition. While the formal decision to go to war was made by the Imperial Conference, the operational details of the war were planned by the Supreme Command of the Japanese Army and Navy. The Supreme Command had begun the planning of the operation just after Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June, 1941. It was given further impetus by the imposition of the oil embargo by the United States, Britain and the Netherlands. It was only toward the end of October, after long

deliberations, simulations and war games, that the final plan was put together. At this stage, there was no mention of the plan to attack Pearl Harbor. It was called the Basic Plan for the Greater East Asia War and it consisted of three phases:

I. The seizure of southern areas which are rich in resources; and the strategic areas and positions for the establishment of a perimeter for the defense of the Southern Resources Areas and the Japanese Mainland. The area to be seized was within the line which joins the Kurilles, Marshalls (including Wake), Bismarcks, Timor, Java, Sumatra, Malaya and Burma.

II. Consolidation and strengthening of the defensive perimeter.

III. The interception and destruction of any attacking strength which might threaten the defensive perimeter or the vital areas within the perimeter. Concurrently with intercept operations the activation of plans to destroy the United States will to fight.[14]

If the three phases of this plan were successful, the Japanese hoped to attain their goal of self sufficiency.

The plan to attack the American fleet at Pearl Harbor was conceived by Admiral Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet. He was the most vigorous advocate of neutralizing the American fleet because he reasoned that the whole plan of conquest in South East Asia would be endangered if the fleet at Pearl Harbor was not destroyed. He had been opposed to fighting a war with the United States, but if it had to be fought, this was the only way he would agree to it.

The possibility of destroying the American fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor had occurred to Yamamoto when he saw the manoeuvers of naval pilots operating from aircraft carriers. He thought that if this manoeuver were tried against an unsuspecting fleet, the success would be even greater. The feasability of this manoeuver was demonstrated when, in November, 1940, the British Navy attacked the unsuspecting Italian fleet anchored at its base in Taranto and successfully used aerial torpedoes in the shallow waters of Taranto.

Yamamoto carefully examined the reports of the successful attack at Taranto and began to study the feasability of such an attack on Pearl Harbor. He enlisted the help of Rear Admiral Ohnishi and Commander Genda who worked on the details of the Hawaiian operation. Both struggled with two problems: (1) the shallow waters of Pearl Harbor and (2) the imperative of surprise. They estimated that their plan had only a sixty percent chance of success. Despite these problems, however, Yamamoto decided to implement this plan and began extensive training for it. Emphasis was placed on shallow water torpedo drops, on horizontal and dive bombing and on refueling exercises. Inspite of intensified training and the carefully worked out plan that Yamamoto put before the Naval General Staff, there was vigorous opposition to it for two main reasons. Firstly, the Naval General Staff had completed a detailed plan for the deployment of the entire fleet in Southward operations. Besides, the chances of success were at least sixty percent. The Chief of Staff reasoned:

> "Why stir up America..Let us take the rich East Indian island of Java. Then when the U.S. Pacific fleet approaches Japan to counterattack it can be annihilated in home waters." [15]

But the most important objection was that the plan was too risky. It could only succeed if it took the American fleet by surprise. If it failed, the attack would be a major disaster.

But Yamamoto insisted that the only chance of success for Japan's operations in the South would be first to meutralize the American fleet at Pearl Harbor. When in late October he received another list of objections from the Naval General Staff, he sent them a message which stated:

> "The presence of the U.S. fleet in Hawaii is a dagger pointed at our throats. Should war be declared, the length and breadth of our southern operations would immediately be exposed to a serious threat on its flank. The Hawaii operation is absolutely indispensable. Unless it is carried out, Admiral Yamamoto has no confidence that he can fulfil his assigned responsibility. The numerous difficulties of this operation do not make it impossible. Weather conditions worry us most but as there are seven days in a month when refuelling at sea is possible, the chances of success are by no means small. If good fortune is bestowed upon us we will be assured of success. Should the Hawaii operation by chance end in failure, that would merely imply that fortune is not on our side. That should also be the time for definitely halting all operations."[16]

He threatened that if the Naval General Staff did not agree to his plan, he would resign his position and return to civilian life.

Faced with this threat, the Chief of Naval Staff reluctantly agreed to Yamamoto's plan on November 3, 1941. Yamamoto then issued a series of operational orders, putting the plan into effect.[17] The Pearl Harbor striking force was ordered to assemble at Hitokappu Bay for refuelling on November 22. The order read: "The Task Force, keeping its movements strictly secret, shall assemble in Hitokappu Bay by November 22 for refeulling."[18] The next important order was issued on November 25, which stated:

> "The Task Force, keeping its movements strictly secret and maintaining close guard against submarines and aircraft, shall advance to Hawaiian waters, and upon the very opening of hostilities shall attack the main force of the United States fleet in Hawaii and deal it a mortal blow. The first air raid is planned for the dawn of X-day (exact date to be given by later order). Upon completion of the air raid, the task force, keeping close coordination and guarding against the enemy's counterattack, shall speedily leave the enemy's waters and then return to Japan. Should the negotiations with the United States prove successful, the task force shall hold itself in readiness forthwith to return and reassemble." [19]

The final operational order was issued on December 2 which stated: "Execute Attack X 8 December designated as "X" day."[20]

Yamamoto's plan to attack Pearl Harbor was known only to the senior members of the Naval General Staff. Among the civilian leadership, only the Emperor and the Prime Minister were told that Japan would open hostilities agsinst the Anglo-Saxon countries by launching an attack on the American fleet at Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941 (Tokyo time). The details of the plan were withheld from them. This part of Japan's war plan was kept completely secret because its success depended so heavily on surprise.

The foregoing discussion analyzed the steps that the Japanese government took in deciding to initiate war against the United States and noted that the formal decision to go to war was taken only on December 1, 1941. But more importantly, the discussion emphasized the fact that the plan to attack Pearl Harbor was only finalized on November 3 and was withheld from the civilian leaders in order to maximize the effect of surprise. Only the Emperor and the Prime Minister were informed of it on December 3, 1941. Having analyzed Japan's plans and intentions before the attack on Pearl Harbor, it is now possible to review the sources and

content of information about them that was available to decision makers in Washington.

Sources and Content of Information Available to American Decision Makers

American decision makers received information of Japan's intentions and plans through several sources. These sources can be distinguished at three levels. The first level of information consisted of the formal diplomatic contact between the two countries - i.e., the assessment of Japan's intentions and plans provided by Ambassador Grew and the contact through the Japanese Ambassador, who represented the Japanese government's official position in Washington. This level also included other public sources such as official contacts with other diplomatic missions, notably of Britain, the Netherlands and China. The second level of information came from the interception of Japan's diplomatic and military messaages - Magic. The third level of information was provided by newspaper reports of Japan's intentions from Japan and all over Southeast Asia.

The United States had been sensitive to Japan's wish to alter the status quo in the Far East ever since the Manchurian Crisis in 1931, but the outbreak of war in Europe, and particularly the defeat of France and the Netherlands, had created an opportunity for Japan to make itself self-sufficient if it seized the resources of the French and Dutch colonies in the Far East. American decision makers were informed of Japan's intentions in this regard when it made a formal announcement to that effect. A statement was issued by the Japanese government on August 1, 1940 which stated:

> "...Japan's foreign policy, which aims ultimately at the construction of a new order in greater East Asia, will be directed, first of all, toward a complete settlement of the China Affair, and the advancement of the national fortune by taking a far sighted view of the drastic changes in the international situation and formulating both constructive and flexible measures."[21]

Further evidence of Japan's intention to exploit the situation in Europe was provided by the announcement of the Tripartite Pact signed between Germany, Japan and Italy. The signatories decided "to stand by and cooperate with one another in regard to their efforts in greater East Asia and the regions of Europe respectively wherein it is their prime purpose to establish and maintain a new order of things calculated to promote mutual prosperity and welfare of the peoples concerned."[22]

The next piece of evidence that American decision makers got was the signing of the Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union in April 1941. The Prime Minister announced the Pact on April 14, 1941 and explained its intent as follows:

> "...It is my belief that this Pact has epoch-making significance in the relations between Japan and the Soviet Union and that it will greatly contribute toward the promotion of world peace."[23]

It indicated that Japan was abandoning, for the time being, its intention of attacking the Soviet Union. At the same time however, the Japanese and American governments became involved in informal conversations with the aim of maintaining peace in the Far East and resolving their differences.

With the outbreak of the Russo-German War in June 1941, American decision makers became aware of a duplicity in Japan's intentions. At the official diplomatic level, Japan appeared to be desirous of maintaining

peace in the Far East and this was evident from the series of proposals that were presented to American decision makers by the Japanese Ambassador. But from reading the intercepts of Japan's secret diplomatic messages, they learnt that Germany was pressuring Japan to honor its obligation to the Tripartite Pact and attack the Soviet Union, and that Japan was insisting that Germany make France and the Netherlands accept Japan's demand to be allowed to station troops in French Indo China and to obtain an assured supply of oil from the Dutch East Indies. A message intercepted on July 8, 1941 stated:

> "1) Imperial Japan shall adhere to the policy of contributing to world peace by establishing the greater East Asia Sphere of Coprosperity, regardless of how the world situation may change; 2) The Imperial government will continue to effect a settlement of the China Incident and seek to establish a solid basis for the security and the preservation of the nation."[24]

Another message from Tokyo to Washington intercepted on the same day read:

> "Preparations for southward advance shall be reinforced and the policy already decided upon with reference to French-Indo China and Thailand shall be executed. As regards the Russo-German War, although the spirit of the Three-Power Axis shall be maintained, every preparation shall be made at present and the situation shall be dealt with in our own way."[25]

An intercept from Canton to Tokyo dated July 14, 1941 stated:

> "The immediate object of our occupation of French Indo-China will be to achieve our purpose there. Secondly, its purpose is, when the international situation is suitable, to launch therefrom a rapid attack. This venture we will carry out inspite of

> any difficulties which may arise. We will endeavor to the last to occupy French Indo-China peacefully, but if resistance is offered, we will crush it by force, occupy the country and set up martial law. After the occupation of French Indo-China, next on our schedule is the sending of an ultimatum to the Netherland Indies." [26]

The intercepts of Japan's diplomatic messages were regarded by American decision makers as evidence of Japan's determination to proceed with its intention of invading Southeast Asia and they imposed an oil embargo on Japan on July 26, 1941. This move strengthened Japan's determination to attack Southeast Asia and American decision makers learned of this renewed determination from an intercept from Tokyo to Washington dated July 31 which stated:

> "Commerical and economic relations between Japan and third countries, led by England and the United States, are gradually becoming so horribly strained that we cannot endure it much longer. Consequently, our Empire, to save its very life, must take measures to secure the raw materials of the South Seas. Our Empire must immediately take steps to break asunder the ever-strengthening chain of encirclement which is being woven under the guidance and participation of England and the United States...That is why we decided to obtain military bases in French Indo-China and to have our troops occupy that territory." [27]

At the official diplomatic lebel, however, the Japanese government maintained a conciliatory attitude and offered to "neutralize French Indo-China and Thailand," [28] but more importantly, proposed a meeting between Roosevelt and Konoye.[29] A similar attitude was maintained in subsequent proposals as well. Ambassador Grew also informed the American government

of Japan's desire to continue negotiations and wrote in support of the proposed Roosevelt-Konoye meeting, stating that if the meeting did not take place:

> "...the alternative would be a reconstitution of the present government or a formation of the new government for the purpose of confiding Japan's future destiny for a do-or-die all-out attempt to establish the hegemony of Japan over all greater East Asia, which would carry with it the inevitability of war with the United States." 30

Later he reported his conversations with the Foreign Minister and noted again that if the Konoye government did not succeed in obtaining an agreement, "the logical outcome of this will be the downfall of the Konoye government and the formation of a military dictatorship which will lack either the disposition or the temperament to avoid colliding head-on with the United States." 31

But the American government discounted Grew's assessment because it learnt from the intercept of August 20, 1941 of Janap's 'real' intentions. The intercept stated:

> "due to the Russo-German War, there is the possibility of a third power being implanted in the Far Eastern Soviet Russia...and consequently the security of both Japan and Manchukuo being threatened, we need to prevent such a thing from happening. The Japanese government has decided to increase the Japanese forces in Manchukuo to the minimum number necessary to cope with such a possibility." 32

When the Konoye government was unable to reach an agreement with the United States, it was replaced by General Tojo's government. Once again, Grew reported that the new government was desirous of avoiding war with

the United States by reaching a settlement, but decision makers in Washington learnt from an intercepted message that Japan had decided to make no further concessions and engage in no further negotiations. The intercept dated October 23 stated:

> "Our country has said practically all she can say in the way of expressing of opinions and setting forth our stand. We feel that we have now reached a point where no further positive action can be taken by us except to urge the United States to reconsider her views...we urge, therefore, that choosing an opportune moment, either you (Nomura) or Wakasugi (Counselor of the Embassy) let it be known to the United States by indirection that our country is not in a position to spend much more time discussing this matter." 33

In the month of November, the Japanese government put forward its last offer to the United States. This offer was outlined in two proposals - Proposal A and Proposal B - which was presented to Secretary Hull on November 7 and 20. At the same time, American decision makers learnt of Japan's desperation and anxiety from frequent intercepts which stated that these proposals were Japan's final effort to reach a settlement with the United States. The intercept dated November 2 read:

> "I am very sorry that Japanese-American relations have lately been growing worse and worse. If this continues, I fear that unfortunate results will ensue. For six months, negoatiations have been dragging along, and our people are growing impatient. Therefore, I hope a speedy settlement will be reached." 34

The intercept of November 4 stated:

> "Conditions both within and without our empire are so tense that no longer is procrastination

possible. Yet in our sincerity to maintain pacific relationships between the Empire of Japan and the United States of America, we have decided, as a result of these deliberations, to gamble once more on the continuance of the parleys, but this is our last effort. Both in name and in spirit, this counter-proposal of ours, is indeed the last. I want you to know that. If through it we do not reach a quick accord, I am sorry to say the talks will certainly be ruptured. Then, indeed, will relations between our two nations be on the brink of chaos." 35

From November 5, there were repeated mentions of a "deadline." A message intercepted on November 5 stated:

"Because of various circumstances, it is absolutely necessary that all arrangements of the signing of this agreement be completed by the 25th of this month. I realize that this is a difficult order, but under the circumstances, it is an unavoidable one. Please understand this thoroughly and tackel the problem of saving the Japanese-U.S. relations from falling into a chaotic condition." 36

Another message intercepted on November 11 read:

"The Imperial government has made the maximum concessions she can in drawing up its final proposal...Our domestic political situation will permit no delays...The fact remains that the deadline set forth is my message #736 is absolutely immovable under present conditions. It is a definite deadline and therefore it is essential that a settlement be reached by about that time." 37

An intercepted message from Tokyo to Hong Kong dated November 14 read:

> "The empire's foreign policy as it has been decided by the Cabinet, insofar as it pertains to China is: (a) We will completely destroy British and American power in China, (b) We will take over all enemy concessions and enemy important rights and interests (customs and minerals, etc.) in China, (c) We will take over all rights and interests owned by enemy powers, even though they might have connections with the new Chinese government, should it become necessary. In realizing these steps in China, we will avoid as far as possible, exhausting our veteran troops. Then we will cope with a world war on a long-time scale. Should our reserves for total war and our future military strength wane, we have decided to reinforce them from the whole Far Eastern area. This has the whole fundamental policy of the empire." [38]

The phrases "crisis is fast approaching," and "time is short" were abundant in the intercepted messages. An intercept of November 15 stated: "In view of the fact that the crisis is fast approaching no subsidiary complications can be countenanced even when considering the element of time alone. Such an eventuality would make impossible the surmounting of the crisis." [39] Another intercept of the same date read: "The fact remains that the date set forth in my message #736 (message of November 5) is an absolutely immovable one. Please, therefore, make the United States see the light, so as to make possible the signing of the agreement by that date." [40] A message intercepted on November 16 said:

> "In your opinion we ought to wait and see what turn the war takes and remain patient. However, I am awfully sorry to say that the situation renders it out of the question. I set the deadline for the solution of these negotiations in my #736, and there will be no change...You see how short time, therefore, do not allow the United States to side-track

> us and delay negotiations any further. Press them for a solution on the basis of proposals, and do your best to bring about an immediate solution." 41

The intercept of November 19 stated:

> "we think the only way to reach a full solution is to conclude an agreement now on a few absolutely essential items in order to prevent matters from going from bad to worse by long-view political adjustments, thus first of all avoiding the danger of an outbreak of war... the transfer of troops from Southern French Indo-China to the northern part, is an important concession we would venture to make for the sake of speeding the agreement..." 42

The situation referred to in the intercept of November 22 was indeed very tense. The Japanese government was very anxious to reach a settlement with the United States and therefore extended the deadline of November 25 to November 29. It informed the negotiators in Washington that:

> "It is awfully hard for us to consider changing the date set in my #736. You should know this, however, I know you are working hard. Stick to our fixed policy and do your very best. Spare no efforts and try to bring about the solution we desire. There are reasons beyond your ability to guess why we wanted to settle Japanese- American relations by the 25th, but if within the next three or four days you can finish your conversations with the Americans; if the signing can be completed by the 29th (let me write it out for you - the twenty-ninth); if the pertinent notes can be exchanged; if we can get an understanding with Great Britain and the Netherlands; and in short if everything can be finished, we have decided to wait until that date. This time we mean it, that the deadline absolutely cannot be changed. After that things are automatically going to happen." 43

Having read these deadline messages, American decision makers were aware of Japan's desperation and desire to reach an understanding with the United States as soon as possible. But they responded to the modus vivendi proposal of November 20 with a counter-proposal[44] - The Ten Point Plan - which was delivered to the Japanese on November 26. This response was considered to be completely unsatisfactory and the Japanese government advised its Ambassadors in Washington accordingly. The message was intercepted on November 29 and it stated:

> "Well! you two Ambassadors (Nomura and Kurusu) have exerted superhuman efforts, but, inspite of this, the United States has gone ahead and presented this humiliating proposal. This was quite unexpected and extremely regrettable. The Imperial government can by no means use it as a basis for negotiations. Therefore, with a report of the views of the Imperial government on this American proposal which I will send you in two or three days, the negotiations will be defacto reptured. This is unevitable. However, I do not wish you to give the impression that negotiations are broken off. Merely say to them that you are waiting for instructions..." [45]

American decision makers also learned that Tokyo had informed Berlin that negotiations with the United States were ruptured. An intercept from Tokyo to Berlin dated November 30 stated:

> "The conversations begun between Tokyo and Washington last April during the administration of the former Cabinet...now stand ruptured. In the face of this, our Empire faces a grave situation and must act with determination. Will Your Honor, therefore, immediately interview Chancellor Hitler and Foreign Minister Ribbentrop and confidentially communicate to them a summary

> of the developments...say very secretly to them that there is an extreme danger that war may break out between the Anglo-Saxon nations and Japan through some clash of arms and add that the time of the breaking out of war may come quicker than any one dreams." 46

Another intercept from Hanoi to Tokyo dated November 25 indicated that Japan's preparations for war had been completed. It read:

> "If the U.S.-Japanese negotiations are brought to a successful termination, the various enterprises shall be launched in accordance with the plans which have been laid down in advance. Should however, the negotiations not end in success, since practically all preparations for the campaigns have been completed, our forces shall be able to move within the day." 47

Another intercept from Canton to Tokyo, dated December 2 stated: "If hostilities are to begin we here are all prepared. The army has completed all preparations to move immediately upon Thai. Should the British resist to the bitter end, it is understood that the army is prepared to go as far as to militarily occupy the country." 48

The next important piece of evidence was provided by a series of last minute intercepts which indicated that a break in Japanese-American relations was imminent. These intercepts are referred to as "the pilot message," "the fourteen part message," "the one o'clock or time delivery message," and the final "code destruction message." The pilot message stated:

> "This separate message is a very long one. I will send it in fourteen parts and I imagine you will receive it tomorrow. However, I am not sure. The situation is extremely delicate, and when you receive

> it I want you to keep it secret for the time being. Concerning the time of presenting this memorandum to the United States, I will wire you in a separate message. However, I want you in the meantime to put it in nicely drafted form and make every preparation to present it to the Americans just as soon as you receive instructions." [49]

The fourteen part message was a restatement of Japan's views on how the United States and Britain had obstructed Japan's efforts for peace in the Far East. The fourteenth part formally informed the United States of the termination of negotiations. It stated: "The earnest hope of the Japanese government to adjust Japanese-American relations and to preserve and promote the peace of the Pacific through cooperation with the American government has been finally lost. The Japanese government regrets to have to notify hereby the American government that in view of the attitude of the American government, it cannot but consider that it is impossible to reach an agreement through further negotiations." [50] The one o'clock message read: "Will the Ambassador please submit to the United States government (if possible to the Secretary of State) our reply to the United States at 1:00 p.m. on the 7th, your time." [51] The final code destruction message stated: "After deciphering part fourteen of my #902 and also #907, #908 and #909, please destroy at once the remaining cipher machine and all machine codes. Dispose in like manner also secret documents." [52]

The last source of information available to American decision makers was intelligence and espionage reports. These reports were interspersed among the diplomatic intercepts cited earlier. They indicated that Japan

had started preparing for war with the United States as early as August 1941. The espionage intercepts from then on showed that the Japanese were gathering information about ship movements from ports both in the Far East and the United States. The most important of these messages with regard to Pearl Harbor was intercepted on September 24. It asked the Japanese agent in Honolulu to divide the waters of Pearl Harbor into five sub-areas: "Area A: waters between Ford Island and the Arsenal. Area B: waters adjacent to the Island south and west of Ford Island. Area C: East Loch. Area D: Middle Loch. Area E: West Loch and the communicating water routes. With regard to warships and aircraft carriers, we would like to have you report those at anchor (these are not so important), tied up at wharves, buoys, and in docks. (Designate types and classes briefly. If possible, we would like to have you make mention of the fact when there are two or more vessels alongside the same wharf.)" [53]

The next important message relating to ship movements at Pearl Harbor was intercepted on November 15. It stated: "As relations between Japan and the United States are most critical, make your "ships in harbor report" irregular, but at the rate of twice a week. Although you already are no doubt aware, please take extra care to maintain secrecy." [54] Another request intercepted on November 29 read: "We have been receiving reports from you on ship movements, but in future will you also report even when there are no movements." [55] In the last two days before the attack on Pearl Harbor, additional espionage messages from Honolulu to Tokyo, on the location of ships in Hawaii and the level of preparedness at the base, were intercepted, but they were not translated until after the attack

on Pearl Harbor.[56]

An additional piece of evidence about Japan's intentions was provided by espionage intercepts that indicated the arrangements Japan had made in case of an emergency. A message intercepted on November 19 stated:

> "In case of emergency (danger of cutting off our diplomatic relations), and the cutting off of international communications, the following warning will be added in the middle of the daily Japanese language short wave news broadcast. (1) In case of Japan-U.S. relations in danger: Higashi No Kaseame (east wind rain). (2) Japan-USSR relations: Hitanokaze Kumori (north wind cloudy). (3) Japan-British relations: Nishi No Kaze Hare (west wind clear). This signal will be given in the middle and at the end as a weather forecast and each sentence will be repeated twice. When this is heard please destroy all code papers etc. This is as yet to be a completely secret arrangement." [57]

A second intercept slightly modified the winds-code arrangement. It read:

> "When our diplomatic relations are becoming dangerous, we will add the following at the beginning and end of our general intelligence broadcasts: (1) If it is Japan-U.S. relations, "Higashi." (2) Japan-Russia relations, "Kita." (3) Japan-British relations (including Thai, Malaya and N.E.I.), "Nishi." The above will be repeated five times and included at the beginning and end." [58]

The preceding discussion was a detailed examination of Japan's intentions and plans before the attack on Pearl Harbor and the sources and information that decision makers in Washington had at their disposal. It shows that none of the pieces of information that was available to them indicated clearly Japan's intention to attack Pearl Harbor. As Michael

Handel has pointed out: "One reason, that we rarely obtain clear signals from the enemy is simply that few such signals exist." [59] He refers to several reasons for the absence of clear signals of Japan's intention to attack Pearl Harbor, two reasons are relevant. Firstly, the plan to attack Pearl Harbor was not finalized till the beginning of November. And secondly, the Japanese kept the plan completely secret because it was necessary for its success. In other words, there were no clear signals of Japan's intentions and the information that was available, was subject to several interpretations. The next two chapters will examine how the information available was interpreted by American decision makers, and what estimates of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor were made.

CHAPTER III

FOOTNOTES

1. Cited in Feis, "The Road to Pearl Harbor", op.cit., p.84.
2. Nabutaka Ike, "Japan's Decision for War", (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), pp.9-10.
3. ibid., p.12.
4. ibid., p.78.
5. ibid., p.138.
6. ibid., p.141.
7. ibid., p.135. Japan's negotiating position was stated in an attached document.
8. ibid., p.209.
9. The text of those two proposals is reproduced in Foreign Relations of the United States, II, op.cit., pp.709-10 and pp.755-6.
10. Ike, "Japan's Decision for War", op.cit., p.211.
11. ibid., pp.225-6.
12. ibid., p.271.
13. ibid., p.282.
14. A translation of the Army and Navy plans is reproduced in the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, "Campaigns in the Pacific", (Washington, 1946), app.12-13, pp.43-48. Hereafter stated as USSBS.
15. John Deane Potter, "Yamamoto: the man who menaced America", (New York: Paperback Library, 1967), p.75.
16. ibid., p.84.
17. The text of the operational orders is reproduced in Hearings before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, 79th Congress, (United States Government Pringing Office, Washington, 1946), Part 12, Exhibit 6, p.432-69. Hereafter cited as "Hearings". See also USSBS, op.cit., app.14.
18. USSBS, op.cit., p.49.

19. ibid., p.50.

20. ibid., p.51.

21. FRUS, op.cit., p.109.

22. ibid., p.165.

23. ibid., p.186. The Pact is not mentioned in the section on Japan's intentions because the decision to sign the Pact was not taken at an Imperial Conference.

24. Hearings, op.cit., Part 12, pp.1-2.

25. Hull, "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull", II, op.cit., p.1013.

26. Hearings, op.cit., Part 12, p.2.

27. ibid., p.9.

28. This offer was made in the proposal presented on September 6, 1941. See FRUS, op.cit., pp.549-50.

29. ibid., p.573.

30. Joseph Grew, "Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1945", edited by Walter Johnson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), II p.1285. Hereafter cited as "Turbulent Era".

31. Grew's memorandum is reproduced in FRUS, op.cit., pp.645-50.

32. Hearings, op.cit., part 12, p.19.

33. Hull, "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull", op.cit., p.1056.

34. Hearings, op.cit., p.91.

35. ibid., p.42f.

36. ibid, p.100.

37. ibid, p.116.

38. ibid., pp.126-127.

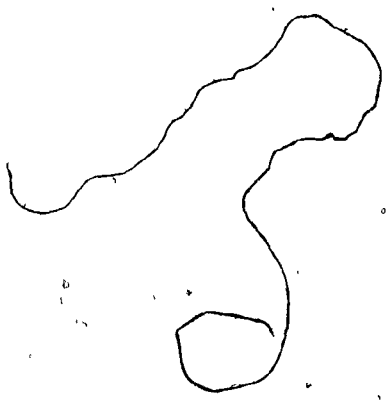
39. ibid., p.129.

40. ibid., p.130.

41. ibid, p.137f.

42. ibid, p.156.
43. ibid, p.165.
44. The text of the proposal is reproduced in FRUS, op.cit., pp.768-70.
45. Hearings, op.cit., p.195.
46. ibid., p.204.
47. ibid., p.174.
48. ibid., p.224.
49. ibid., p.238.
50. ibid., p.245.
51. ibid., p.248.
52. ibid., p.249.
53. ibid., p.261.
54. ibid., p.262.
55. ibid., p.263.
56. These messages are available in Hearings, ibid., pp.268-70.
57. ibid., p.154.
58. ibid.
59. Michael Handel, "The Yom Kippur War and the Inevitability of Surprise", International Studies Quarterly, XXI, 1977 (September), p.464.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION



CHAPTER IV

The last chapter examined in some detail Japan's intentions and plans before the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the information about these intentions that was available to American decision makers. This chapter will examine one of the principal hypotheses - i.e., a psychological explanation of the failure of American decision makers to anticipate an attack on Pearl Harbor. In other words, why were they surprised? For this purpose, this discussion will be divided into four parts - (1) a restatement of the explanation (2) an analysis of the changing image of Japan in the minds of American decision makers (3) an analysis of the impact of these images on their estimates of Japanese intentions just prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor and (4) an analysis of the congruence between the hypothesis and the evidence.

The Logic of the Explanation

This explanation states that faulty beliefs and images lead to poor information processing which results in low estimates of the probability of an attack. Beliefs are composed of 'images' of the past, present and future and include "all the accumulated, organized knowledge that the organism has about itself and the world."[1] They serve as "a prism that influences the actor's perception and the diagnosis of the flow of political events, his definitions and the estimates of the particular situation."[2] These beliefs may hold conflicting and even contradictory elements which remain as long as they are not questioned by incoming information. They constantly interact with new information and there is a tendency among individuals to maintain cognitive consistency when challenged by discrepant

information. Robert Jervis has suggested some of the techniques by which beliefs interact with discrepant information. When such information is received, (i) it is either ignored, dismissed or denied; (ii) it is reinterpreted to conform to preexisting beliefs and images; (iii) the source is discredited; (iv) if the source is trustworthy, the information is accepted as such, but beliefs and images are not updated; (v) there is search for more information that supports preexisting beliefs and images; (vi) if however, discrepant information becomes to uncomfortable, only marginal adjustments are made in beliefs and images.[3]

The scope of adjustment in the beliefs and images is a function of whether their structure is 'open' or 'closed'. If their structure is open, a moderate amount of discrepant information will lead to at least a reconsideration, if not change in their content. If however, their structure is closed, it will take inordinately large amounts of discrepant information to affect even a marginal adjustment in content.

The Changing Image of Japan

Before analyzing the changing image of Japan as perceived by American decision makers, it is necessary to construct a framework for its analysis. The framework for analysis is derived from Holsti's variables drawn from his essay "Evaluative Assertions Analysis."[4] These variables are applicable to any dimension defined as a continuum of polar opposites. Although numerous polar opposites can be identified, this analysis will use only four of these variables. They are positive-negative; friendly-hostile; strong-weak and active-passive. These dimensions pertain to the image of the intentions and capabilities of an opponent. The positive-negative and

friendly-hostile dimensions of the image refer to assessment of intentions and the strong-weak and active-passive dimensions refer to the capabilities of the adversary. The positive-negative dimension refers to the changing image in terms of values - i.e., the similarity or dissimilarity of beliefs and goals. The friendly-hostile dimension applies to the compatibility or incompatibility of interests. The strong-weak dimension applies to the potency or effectiveness of the adversary and the active-passive dimension applies to the strength or weakness of the adversary. These categories of the image interact with new information about the adversary and may change uniformly or unevenly in relation to each other. The subsequent discussion will analyze the impact of new information on each of these categories for each of the principal decision makers.

Before the eruption of the Manchurian crisis in 1931, American decision makers had a positive image of Japan and perceived it as a friend. This perception was based on the perceived similarity of beliefs and goals and a compatibility of interests which was evident from Japan's adherence to the international commitments it had entered during the 1920's. This friendly and positive image of Japan was challenged first when American decision makers were confronted with information that Japan had initiated fighting against the Chinese in Manchuria. Although they did not deny the information, it did not change their image of Japan. They were sympathetic toward Japan's problems in Manchuria and accepted Japan's explanation of the initiation of hostilities. President Hoover justified this sympathetic attitude toward Japan as follows: "There is something on the side of Japan. Ours has been a long and deepseated friendship with her, and we should in friendship consider her side also."[5] The Secretary of State, Henry Stimson, too,

expressed his perception of Japan's friendliness in his observation that,

> "The Japanese government has thus for ten years given an exceptional record of good citizenship in the life of the international world. Shidehard was still in office. We know he had been laboring hard for moderation against the pressure of the army leaders in Manchuria. We reached the conclusion that those leaders have engineered this outbreak without his knowledge and certainly against his will." [6]

Despite some disconfirming information, the image of Japan as perceived by American decision makers still was friendly and positive. This image of Japan was challenged however, by information that indicated that Japan had occupied large areas of North China and established the independent regime of Manchukuo. The positive and friendly image of Japan began to decline. Japan was identified as a violator of international treaties and there was perception of an incompability of interest between Japan and the United States. In fact, Stimson saw the possibility of incompatibility becoming active hostility and noted,

> "At present it seems to me that if Japan keeps up this attitude in which she is now, we are shaping up an issue between two great theories of civilization and economic methods. It looks a little as if Japan has made up her mind that industrialization and foreign trade will not be enough for her if she cannot hold it, and is yielding to her temptation and thinking that she can make markets for herself in China by force, which means that she must permanently exploit China and impose the suzerainty of a dominant race upon another race..." [7]

Clearly then, Stimson and other decision makers too, had begun to perceive Japan as antagonistic (though not hostile as yet) and negative, though passive and weak and they did not see any danger to the United States.

In other words, they were uneasy about Japan's intentions but did not anticipate any direct threat to American security. The change in their perception had occured only after they had been confronted with a large amount of disconfirming evidence of Japan's intentions. The magnitude of change was small; it only changed from positive to negative. The negative, antagonistic and passive image of Japan was shared by President Roosevelt, who succeeded President Hoover, in 1933. This is evident from his repeated warnings of the danger inherent in the violation of international treaties, which omitted, however, any direct reference to Japan because Japan's violation of international treaties was not viewed as endangering American security. In one address then, he stated,

> "... We are deeply concerned about the tendencies of recent years among many of the nations of other continents. It is a bitter experience to us when the spirit of agreements to which we are party is not lived up to. It is an even more bitter experience for the whole company of nations to witness not only the spirit but the letter of the international agreements is violated with impunity and without regard to the simple principles of honor. Permanent friendships between nations and between men can be sustained only by scrupulous respect for the pledged word ..."[8]

This image of a negative, antagonistic and passive Japan persisted when war broke out between China and Japan in 1937. Roosevelt did not perceive any direct danger to American security. He focused on the danger inherent in war, but did not refer to Japan directly. He noted,

> "... The present reign of terror and international lawlessness began a few years ago. It began through the unjustified interference in the internal affairs of other nations or the invasion of alien territory in violation of treaties, and now has reached a stage

> where the very foundations of civilization are seriously threatened. The landmarks and traditions which have marked the progress of civilization toward a condition of law, order and justice are being wiped away."[9]

His statement suggests that Roosevelt continued to perceive Japan as negative and antagonistic but passive since Japan's intentions were not seen as directly endangering American security.

Roosevelt's image of Japan underwent a small change when he learnt that Japan had signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy. Now Roosevelt perceived Japan's intentions as negative and hostile and there was some change in the dimension referring to Japan's capabilities as well. In other words, Japan's intentions were clearly perceived as negative and hostile because it had aligned itself with Germany and Italy and thereby also increased its capabilities slightly. However, this slight increase in Japan's capabilities was not perceived as a direct and immediate threat to American security.

Roosevelt's negative and hostile image of Japan's intentions, but a relatively passive image of Japan's capabilities was contrasted by his negative, hostile, active and strong image of Germany's intentions and capabilities. This is evident from his reference to an immediate danger from Germany. In an address he noted,

> "It is now clear that Hitler has begun his campaign to control the seas by ruthless force and by wiping out every vestige of international law and humanity. His intention has been made clear ..., This attack on the Greer was no localized military operation in the North Altantic. This is no mere episode in a struggle between two nations. This was one determined step toward creating a permanent world system based on force, terror and murder ... The Nazi danger to our

> western world has long ceased to be a mere possibility. The danger is here now - not only from a military enemy but from an enemy of all law, all liberty, all morality, all religion."[10]

As is evident from Roosevelt's statements, his image of Japan as negative and hostile was relatively passive because he did not perceive an immediate threat from Japan to American security, but perceived German capabilities and intentions as posing an immediate danger. This relatively passive image of Japan's hostility persisted until before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Over a period of time, Roosevelt's image of Japan had changed when it was confronted with discrepant information about Japan's intentions, but the amount and scope of change was small. Besides, there was change along the dimensions referring to Japan's intentions, but the change in the capabilities dimensions was negligible. In other words, prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt's image of Japan was negative and hostile but relatively passive.

Unlike Roosevelt, Secretary of State Cordell Hull perceived Japan as negative and hostile even as he came to office in 1933. He had long been suspicious of Japan's intentions and noted his perception of Japan as follows: "Japan's diplomatic record was that of a highway robber ... When Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 and set up a puppet regime called Manchukus ...(it) thereby created a world danger extending beyond the confined of a conflict between Japan and China."[11] Given this initially hostile and negative image of Japan, Hull interpreted subsequent information of Japan's violation of international treaties in such a manner that his image of Japan's hostility became more active. Even before war broke out in Europe in 1939, Hull perceived Japan as the enemy along with Germany and Italy, who

posed a threat to international peace which was guaranteed by the treaties. He explained his negative, hostile and active image of Japan in an observation about the growing violation of international treaties as follows,

> "Japan had won a war in China; Italy in Ethiopia; Spain, the mother country of most of the Latin American Republics, was in civil war with Italy, Russia and Germany intervening; Germany and Japan linked in a virtual alliance. Hitler was violating one treaty after another..."[12]

Hull's image of Japan as negative, hostile and active led him to perceive a close correlation between the treaty violations in Europe and Asia, with Japan taking advantage of the war situation in Europe. He noted,

> "The other manifestation of Japan's menacing came (when) ... Japan laid claim to sovereignty over a huge sea area within which were the Spratly Islands, about seven hundred miles southwest of Manila, and a vast number of other islands and reefs. The Spratly Islands were likewise claimed by France. The outlines of Japan's expansionist ideas were becoming clearer. This was the time of Europe's preoccupation over Hitler's swallowing of Czechoslovakia, and Japan, as she always did, took advantage of Europe's troubles to advance her own fortune." [13]

This, and other actions of Japan resulting in the consolidation of its control over China were perceived by Hull as evidence which confirmed his negative, hostile and active image of Japan's intentions and capabilities.

Hull's perception of a close correlation between events in Europe and Asia led him to expect close cooperation between Japan and Germany long before there was a formal alliance between them. Therefore, when the Tripartite Pace was signed by Japan, Germany and Italy, it only confirmed his perception of a negative, hostile and active Japan who was now a full

partner in Hitler's plans to dominate the world. He observed,

> "The relations among Germany, Italy and Japan, each country having a common objective in conquering certain areas of the world and each pursuing identical policies of force, devastation and seizure, have been on a basis of complete understanding and of mutual cooperation during recent years. The recent announcement was simply part and parcel of a chain of related events."[14]

Hull's negative, hostile and active image of Japan persisted until just prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Over a period of time, Hull's image of Japan underwent only a slight change in the dimension referring to Japan's capabilities after it announced its treaty with Germany and Italy. His perception of Japan's intentions, however, remained negative and hostile since he interpreted new information in such a manner that it confirmed his initial image. Despite his negative, hostile and active image of Japan, there is little evidence of Hull's perception of direct danger to the United States.

As the perception of danger from treaty violations grew, decision makers in Washington began to adopt measures to increase American security. The decision making circle was enlarged to include Henry Stimson as Secretary of War and Frank Knox as Secretary of Navy. Although both men viewed the danger arising from the violation of international treaties with alarm and advocated strong measures to deal with the violators, Stimson was the more outspoken of the two. His image of Japan in 1940 had changed considerably since his involvement in the Manchurian crisis, when he had hoped that Japan would realize that it could not violate international law without hurting itself militarily and economically. He had noted then that,

> "There is rational ground to hope that much sooner than now seems likely that Japan will again realize that her own interest is more dependent upon friendly commercial and political relations with China than with any other nation; that such relations cannot be cultivated by forcible exploitation of China; and that in the equitable settlement which may then be attained, the opinion and judgment of the world as expressed unanimously in 1933 will be, whether publicly admitted or not, a potent factor."[15]

This optimism had been based on Stimson's positive and friendly image of Japan. He perceived Japan to be sensitive to the good opinion of the world and hoped that, "the judgment at Geneva may be a strong influence tending to bring Japan into her normal position in international life."[16] In other words, he dismissed Japan's occuption of Manchuria as an aberration and believed that Japan would certainly become a good citizen of the world again. Stimson's image of Japan continued to be positive and friendly.

The continuation of the fighting in China, however, challenged Stimson's positive and friendly image of Japan. But instead of changing his image in response to this evidence, he merely acknowledged the possibility of a conflict of interest developing between Japan and the United States. He noted, "At present it seems to me that if Japan keeps up this attitude in which she is now, we are shaping up an issue between two great theories of civilization and economic methods."[17] In other words, despite discrepant information, Stimson made only a marginal adjustment in his friendly and positive image of Japan.

Stimson's friendly and positive image of Japan was challenged again by information that Japan had become involved in full-scale warfare with China. This piece of information brought about a drastic change in his

perception of Japan. Now he perceived Japan's intentions as negative and hostile because it had joined Germany and Italy in the violation of treaties and indiscriminate aggression. He expressed his perception of a negative and hostile Japan in a letter to The New York Times as follows:

> "Simultaneously, events have been occuring in the outside world which might well make Japan think that her opportunity has arrived for a new attack on China. The fascist dictators of Italy and Germany have boldly and successfully carried through coups involving Ethiopia, the Rhineland and Spain, acts of treaty violation and indefensible aggression."[18]

Stimson's perception of Japan's negative and hostile intentions was superceded by his perception of greater and more immediate danger to American security from fascism in Europe. This perception was expressed in a forceful letter to The New York Times in which he outlined the magnitude of the perceived danger as follows:

> "Fascism ... is a radical attempt to reverse entirely the long evolution out of which our democracies of Europe and America have grown, and ... it constitutes probably the most serious attack on their underlying principles which these principles have ever met ... Furthermore, fascism has evolved a serious moral deterioration, an increasing and callous disregard of the most formal and explicit international obligations and pledges; extreme brutality toward helpless groups of people; the complete destruction within their jurisdiction of that freedom of speech, of thought, and of the person which has been the priceless goal of many centuries of struggle and the most distinctive crown of our modern civilization."[19]

Stimson's observation of the magnitude of danger arising from European fascism is in direct contract to his reference to Japan's intentions, which

though they were negative and hostile, were not seen as an immediate threat to American security.

Stimson's negative and hostile image of Japan persisted until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Over a period of time, his image of Japan changed from positive and friendly to negative and hostile. There was however, no evaluation of Japan's capabilities. The amount and scope of change in his perception of Japan's intentions was abrupt and uneven. In the first instance, information of Japan's occupation of Manchuria did not bring about a change in his positive and friendly image. There was merely an acknowledgement of Japan's aggressive behavior, but the image remained unaltered. But information of Japan's involvement in the undeclared war in China, in conjunction with the treaty violations and aggression in Europe, changed his image of Japan completely. Now Stimson perceived Japan's intentions as negative and hostile. As mentioned before, there was no consideration of Japan's capabilities.

The foregoing discussion analyzed the changing image of Japan as perceived by American decision makers just prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor. It also examined the differences in the amount and scope of change in their images. Now this discussion will analyze the impact of these different images on processing of information about Japan's last minute intentions and on their estimates of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

Information Processing and Estimates of the Probability of an Attack on Pearl Harbor

As the preceding discussion has indicated, by 1940, principal decision makers in Washington perceived Japan's intentions as negative and hostile;

the potency of their image however, differed from one decision maker to another. Both Roosevelt's and Stimson's images of Japan were negative and hostile and relatively passive compared to their perception of Germany because they expected greater danger to American security from Germany. When they were confronted with information that Japan was eager to resolve their differences by negotiations, Roosevelt accepted that information and instructed the State Department to enter into negotiations with Japan. Given his negative and hostile though relatively passive image of Japan, Roosevelt accepted this piece of information, but did not change his image. Stimson, on the other hand, whose image of Japan was similar to that of Roosevelt, dismissed this information as an attempt by Japan to deceive the United States and actively searched for information which would confirm his negative and hostile image of Japan.

When however, Roosevelt and Stimson were confronted with information that Japan was preparing to attack Southeast Asia in order to obtain the resources that had been embargoed by the United States, both estimated a very high probability of an attack on Southeast Asia. Roosevelt noted this estimate in a letter to Wendell Wilkie on December 5, 1941, in which he wrote,

> "The situation is definitely serious and there might be an armed clash at any moment if the Japanese continue their forward progress against the Phillipines, Dutch Indies or Malaya or Burma. Perhaps the next four or five days will decide the matter."[20]

Stimson too, estimated a very high probability of the Japanese initiating hostilities in Southeast Asia and noted,

> "Inspite of the risk involved, however, in letting the Japanese fire the first shot ... it was desirable to make sure that the Japanese be the ones to do this and that there remain no doubt in anyone's mind as to who were the aggressors."[21]

Given both Roosevelt's and Stimson's perception of Japan as hostile, negative and relatively passive, they estimated a high probability of a Japanese attack on Southeast Asia, but considered the probability of a direct Japanese attack on the United States to be so low that the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor was not considered at all.

Cordell Hull's image of Japan was negative, hostile and active. When he received information that Japan was eager to settle its differences with the United States through negotiations - information that was contrary to his perception of Japan's intentions - he accepted the information as such, but did not change his image of Japan. He became involved in conversations with Japan but did not consider that a negotiated settlement was likely. He noted that "there was not one change in twenty, or one in fifty, or even one in a hundred (of an agreement with Japan)."[22]

However, when Hull was confronted with information that Japan was preparing to attack Southeast Asia, it confirmed his negative, hostile and active image of Japan and led him to estimate a very high probability of an attack in Southeast Asia. He noted his estimate of the probability of an attack in a meeting of the War Council on November 25, 1941, as follows,

> "The Japanese are likely to break out at any time with new acts of conquest by force ... any plan for our military defense should include the assumption that the Japanese might make the element of surprise a central point in their strategy. They might attack

> at various points simultaneously with a view of demoralizing efforts of defense and coordination of defense."[23]

Despite his negative, hostile and active image of Japan, Hull estimated a very high probability of an attack on Southeast Asia, but a very low probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. In fact, his estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor was so low that he did not consider it at all.

The foregoing analysis noted that different decision makers had different images of Japan, different ways of processing information about Japan's intentions, but made identical high estimates of the probability of an attack on Southeast Asia. The important question is - why did American decision makers, despite differences in their images and procedures for information processing, make identical high estimates of the probability of an attack on Southeast Asia, but a very low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor? The most plausible answer to this question is that American decision makers had an overwhelming amount of information which pointed in the direction of Southeast Asia and none in the direction of Pearl Harbor. In other words, it was the overwhelming weight of information that led them to make a high estimate of the probability of an attack on Southeast Asia and a very low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. This argument will be explored further in the next chapter.

Another plausible answer is that American decision makers over-emphasized the intentions dimension of their image of Japan, but paid insufficient attention to the evaluation of Japan's capabilities. In

fact, an examination of their memoirs and public papers indicates that none of them systematically evaluated Japan's intentions relative to its capabilities. In other words, it was not distortion of information, but inadequate attention to the capabilities dimension which accounts for the low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

If all American decision makers made identical high probability estimates of an attack on Southeast Asia, but a very low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor, regardless of the differences in their images and procedures for information processing, then this explanation which states that faulty beliefs and images lead to poor information processing which results in low estimates of the probability of an attack is inadequate. In other words, empirical evidence does not validate this explanation. Since the psychological explanation does not adequately explain the failure of American decision makers to anticipate an attack on Pearl Harbor, the next chapter will explain the organizational procedures, bureaucratic politics and deception explanations in order to provide a more satisfactory explanation of American surprise when Japan attack Pearl Harbor.

CHAPTER IV

FOOTNOTES

1. Ole Holsti, "Cognitive Dynamics and the Image of the Enemy", in J.C. Farrell and A.P. Smith (eds.), "Image and Reality in World Politics", (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p.18.
2. Alexander George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision Makers", International Studies Quarterly, XIII (June), 1969, p.166
3. Robert Jervis' findings are summarized in Snyder and Diesing, "Conflict Among Nations", op.cit., Chap.IV.
4. Ole Holsti, "Evaluative Assertions Analysis", in Robert North, Dina Zinnes, Ole Holsti and George Zaninovich, "Content Analysis" (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1963), Chapter VI.
5. Herbert Hoover, "The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover", op.cit., p.369-70.
6. Henry Stimson, "The Far Eastern Crisis", op.cit., p.36.
7. Stimson and Bundy, "On Active Service in Peace and War", op.cit., p.255.
8. Roosevelt, "Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, 1933-1941", op.cit., p.102.
9. ibid., p.130.
10. ibid., p.473.
11. Cordell Hull, "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull", op.cit., Vol.1, p.271.
12. ibid.,
13. ibid., p.628.
14. ibid., p.909.
15. Stimson, "The Far Eastern Crisis", op.cit., p.240.
16. ibid.,
17. See footnote 7.
18. The New York Times, October 7, 1937.
19. The New York Times, March 7, 1939.
20. Elliott Roosevelt and Joseph Lash, "F.D.R.: His Personal Letters", Vol.III, 1928-1945, (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), pp.403-4.

21. Hearings, op.cit., Part 15, p.5421.

22. Hull, "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull", Vol.II, op.cit., p.985.

23. ibid., p.1080.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

CHAPTER V

The previous chapter examined cognitive explanations of the failure of American decision makers to anticipate the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. It analyzed their changing perceptions of Japan, the impact of these perceptions on the processing of information about Japan's intentions, and on their estimates of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. This chapter will examine three alternative explanations of the failure of American decision makers to anticipate the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. These explanations are (1) organizational procedures, (2) bureaucratic politics and (3) deception. For the purpose of analysis, the discussion of each of the explanations will be divided into two parts: (a) a restatement of the logic of each of the explanations and (b) an examination of the impact of each of the explanations on the processing of information about Japanese intentions and the estimates of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

Organizational Procedures: The Logic of the Explanation

An explanation of organizational procedures states that standard operating procedures in organizations lead to routine information processing. These routines permit the loss of important information and the 'burial' of potentially vital information which becomes less urgent; consequently decision makers develop low estimates of the probability of an attack. In the context of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, this explanation suggests that the standard operating procedures within the intelligence gathering organizations were responsible for the routine processing of information about Japanese intentions which resulted in a delay in the transmission of potentially vital information to central decision makers in Washington. The result of this delay was that they made a low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. In

order to validate this explanation, this discussion will reconstruct the standard operating procedures within the intelligence organizations dealing with the processing of information about Japan's intentions and analyze their impact on the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor made by American decision makers.

Before reconstructing the relevant operating procedures however, it is important to define precisely these standard operations. Standard operating procedures are rules of thumb devised in large organizational that permit concerted action by a large number of individuals, each responding to basic cues. They contain rehearsed sets of actions or 'programs' for situations as they arise. Because they are developed over a long period of time they cannot change very easily when new and uncertain situations develop. In fact, they are designed to reduce uncertainty and deal with such situations in an orderly fashion.[1] Therefore, when situations of uncertainty do arise, standard operating procedures are inadequate and inappropriate and cause unnecessary delays. This analysis will focus on reconstructing those routine procedures that were developed by American intelligence agencies in order to process information about Japanese intentions gathered prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the task of gathering secret information about Japan's intentions was performed by the intelligence units of the Army and the Navy. An Army intelligence officer had succeeded in breaking the Japanese government's top-priority diplomatic code - Purple - in August 1940. The information obtained from the deciphering of the diplomatic code enabled American decision makers to learn of Japan's 'true' intentions. Diplomatic messages were intercepted at stations in several parts of the United States, Hawaii and the Philippines. The intercepts were then forwarded

to the Signal Corps of the War Department and the Communications Security of the Navy Department for processing because only they had all the keys for the translation of the intercepts. The intercepts were then evaluated by the Far Eastern sections of the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department and the Office of Naval Intelligence of the Navy Department. Although each unit evaluated the intercepts forwarded by its own intercepting stations, there was close cooperation between the two departments and they regularly exchanged files of their evaluated messages. The evaluated intercepts were finally shown to central decision makers in Washington.

The intelligence processing units in Washington had devised a routine with regard to the processing and evaluation of the intercepted messages which closely corresponded to the priority established by the Japanese government. Since the diplomatic code - Purple - was regarded by the Japanese as their most important code, the intelligence units followed the same priority in processing those intercepts. Messages transmitted in other codes were considered to be less important and were therefore given lower priority. This routine resulted in a backlog of messages that were transmitted in less important codes. As the crisis between Japan and the United States deepened, the volume of unprocessed messages grew. The backlog resulted in a delay in the processing of those intercepts, a delay which varied from several hours to several weeks. This is evident from the record of the decoded espionage intercepts, the most important example of the delay in information processing being the intercept of September 21, 1941 (referred to as the 'bomb plot' message) which was processed on October 9, 1941.

Despite the delay caused by the established routine of processing the diplomatic intercepts first, the testimony of the principal intelligence officers

in Washington indicates that only the intercepts transmitted in the espionage code between December 5 and 6, 1941 were not processed before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. These messages were -

December 5, 1941 - Honolulu to Tokyo: 1) During Friday morning, the 5th, the three battleships mentioned in my message #239 arrived here. They have been at sea for eight days. 2) The Lexington and five heavy cruisers left port on the same day. 3) The following ships were in port on the afternoon of the 5th: 8 battleships, 3 light cruisers, 16 destroyers. Four ships of the Honolulu class and (unreadable) were in dock.

December 6 - Tokyo to Honolulu: Please wire immediately re the latter part of my #123 the movements of the fleet subsequent to the fourth.

December 6 - Honolulu to Tokyo: Re the last part of your #123: On the American continent in October the Army began training barrage balloons troops at Camp Davis, North Carolina. Not only have they ordered four or five hundred balloons, but it is understood that they are considering the use of these balloons in the defense of Hawaii and Panama. Insofar as Hawaii is concerned, though, investigations have been made in the neighborhood of Pearl Harbor, they have not set up mooring equipment, nor have they selected the troops to man them. Furthermore, there is no indication that any training for the maintenance of balloons is being undertaken. In addition, it is difficult to imagine that they have actually any. However, even though they have actually

made preparations, because they must control the air over the water and land runways of the airports in the vicinity of Pearl Harbor, Hickam, Ford, and Ewa, there are limits to the balloon defense of Pearl Harbor. I imagine that in all probability there is considerable opportunity left to take advantage of a surprise attack against Pearl Harbor. 2) In my opinion the battleships do not have torpedo nets. The details are not known.

December 6 - Honolulu to Tokyo: 1) On the evening of the 5th, among the battleships which entered port were (unreadable) and one submarine tender. The following ships were observed at anchor on the 6th: 9 battleships, 3 light cruisers, 3 submarine tenders, 17 destroyers, and in addition there were 4 light cruisers, 2 destroyers lying at docks (the heavy cruisers and airplane carriers have all left). 2) It appears that no air reconnaissance is being conducted by the fleet air arm.[2]

Since these were the only intercepts that central decision makers did not receive, it is very little evidence to validate an explanation of organizational procedures. In other words, there is insufficient evidence to validate the argument that American decision makers made a low probability estimate of an attack on Pearl Harbor because potentially vital information was delayed in the information processing routines of the intelligence units. On the contrary, it is reasonable to assume that even if this information had been available to the decision makers, they might not have altered their low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor; similar intercepts requesting information about the movements of the Pearl Harbor fleet had been

received in the past and had not led to an increase in the probability of an attack. During the months from September through November 1941, intelligence units had processed several messages requesting information on the movements of the Pacific fleet, but most of the decision makers did not even remember having seen them. General Marshall noted in his testimony before the Pearl Harbor investigations that

> "this information (about ship movements) was coming in regarding many points in the world. It is very significant in the light of the knowledge of what the Japs actually did, it is very significant as to that, but at that time, there were a great many messages about a great many places and .,. it did not appear vital at that time ... I did not have a definite recollection of these particular messages. I must assume I saw them. They did not register on my mind according to your reaction stated by you (i.e., the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor)." [3]

Admiral Stark similarly testified that "I can only say it went through our people, it went through the Army, who were likewise interested in the defense of Pearl Harbor and I do not recollect anyone having pointed it out. There was literally a mass of material coming in. We knew the Japanese appetite was almost insatiable for detail in all respects. The dispatch might have been put down as just another example of their great attention to detail."[4] Commander Kramer, the Chief Translator in the Office of Naval Intelligence, testified that, "I do not believe it was interpreted by any of those persons (who saw the intercepts) as being materially different than other messages concerning ship movements being reported by the Japanese diplomatic service ... (rather it was seen as) an attempt on the part of the Japanese diplomatic service to simplify communications."[5]

Given the fact that American decision makers had reviewed many Japanese

requests for information concerning the movements of the Pacific fleet in and out of Pearl Harbor and did not consider these messages as indicators of intent to attack, it is unlikely that the last minute espionage messages, if they had been available, would have altered their low probability estimate of an attack on Pearl Harbor. These messages, moreover, did not indicate that Japan intended attacking Pearl Harbor. Therefore, an explanation of organizational routines does not adequately explain why American decision makers made very low probability estimates of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

This study now turns to the analysis of an explanation of bureaucratic politics to explain why American decision makers made a low estimate of the probability of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Bureaucratic Politics: The Logic of the Explanation

An explanation involving bureaucratic politics states that the low estimate of the probability of an attack is a result of bargaining among central players who suppress information about an adversary's intentions in order to support their respective estimates and enhance their relative influence within the government.[6] In the context of the low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor made by the central decision makers, this explanation argues that the central players were influenced by their individual preferences and organizational stakes in the bureaucratic game in making their probability estimates of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and that they suppressed information about Japanese intentions in order to support their respective estimates of the probability of an attack. In order to validate this explanation, this discussion will identify the central players in the bureaucratic game, their personal preferences and stakes and the effect of their positions on their estimates of probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

The central players in the bureaucratic game prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor were President Roosevelt; Secretary of State, Cordell Hull; Secretary of War, Henry Stimson; Secretary of Navy, Frank Knox; the Chief of Army Staff, General Marshall; and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Stark.[7] A few ad hoc players - e.g., Secretary of Treasury, Henry Morgenthau; and Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes - were occasionally involved in decision making regarding Japan, but they had no role in estimating Japan's intentions. Each of the central players had both individual preconceptions about Japan and interest which flowed from their respective organizations. Frequently the interests of the different organizations were in conflict with each other and led to bitter disagreements among the central players.[8] Stimson noted that, "the lines of delimitation between those agencies themselves (which Roosevelt created to assist with the war effort) and between them and the Departments (are) very nebulous. The inevitable result is that the Washington atmosphere is full of acrimonious disputes over matters of jurisdiction."[9]

President Roosevelt, because of his constitutional position, represented the government as a whole and acted as an arbiter among the competing departmental interests and his preferences affected the outcomes of the bureaucratic games. Since the war had begun in Europe, Roosevelt had perceived the Nazis as the greatest danger to American security, a perception reflected in his frequent public statements. In one address, he warned that, "We know that although Prussian autocracy was bad enough, Nazism is far worse. Nazi forces are not seeking minor modifications in colonial maps or in minor European boundaries. They openly seek the destruction of all elective systems of government on every continent - including our own."[10] In another address, he stated that, "The Nazi danger to our Western world has long ceased to be

a mere possibility. The danger is here now - not only from a military enemy but from an enemy of all law, all liberty, all morality, all religion."[11]

Although the perceived Nazism as the principal enemy just prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt estimated a high probability of an initiation of hostilities by Japan in Southeast Asia, but a very low probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor, In a letter to Wendell Wilkie on December 5, 1941, he noted, "The situation is definitely serious and there might be an armed clash at any moment if the Japanese continue their forward progress against the Philippines, Dutch Indies, or Malaya or Burma. ~~Perhaps the next four~~ or five days will decide the matter."[12] This estimate of Japan's intentions was based on his interpretation of information indicating large scale troop and ship movements toward Southeast Asia. Roosevelt's estimate of Japan's intentions and his perception of Germany as the primary danger indicates that he was alarmed by events on both fronts, but he expected war to break out in the Far East.

Unlike Roosevelt, Secretary of State, Cordell Hull had long been convinced of Japan's expansionist intentions. He considered Japan a "highway robber" and believed that Japan had always taken advantage of Europe's troubles to advance its own fortunes. He noted his suspicions of Japan's intentions in his testimony before a Congressional Committee, as follows, "Previous experience and current developments indicate that the proposed 'new order' in the Pacific area means, politically, domination by one country. It means economically, employment of the resources of the area concerned for the benefit of that country and to the ultimate impoverishment of other parts of that area and the exclusion of the interest of other countries. It means socially, the destruction of personal liberty and the reduction of all conquered peoples to

the role of inferiors."[13]

Despite his misgivings about Japan's intentions and his fears that "there was not one chance in twenty, or one in fifty, or even one in a hundred (of reaching an agreement with Japan),"[14] he was involved in protracted conversations with the Japanese from April to November, 1941. He justified involvement in discussions with Japan as follows, "Not only was such an effort in accordance with the traditional attitude of the United States, but it was also imperative for our overall concept of defense against Hitlerism."[15] But more importantly, it was in his bureaucratic interest to prolong the conversations.

It is evident, therefore, that there was a conflict between Hull's perception of Japan and his bureaucratic interest. He perceived Japan to be aggressive and did not expect a favorable outcome from these conversations with the Japanese. But his bureaucratic interest in prolonging the conversations required that he discount the probability of a Japanese attack anywhere in the Far East. Yet, Hull made a high estimate of the probability of an attack by the Japanese at several points in Southeast Asia, but a very low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.[16] On prima facie evidence, there appears a fit between Hull's low probability estimate of an attack on Pearl Harbor and the bureaucratic politics explanation. But this fit cannot account for his high estimate of the probability of an attack in Southeast Asia. In other words, his image of Japan was at variance with his bureaucratic interest, but his image, rather than his bureaucratic interest best explain Hull's estimate of Japan's intentions.

Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, like Roosevelt, perceived Nazi Germany to be the principal threat to American security. In a statement in The New York Times, he said, "Fascism ... is a radical attempt to reverse entirely the

long evolution out of which our democracies of Europe and America have grown, and ... it constitutes probably the most serious attack on their underlying principles which those principles have ever met."[17] Stimson's perception of Germany, rather than Japan, as the principal danger was complemented by strategic thinking in the professional Army which was based on the principle of defensive warfare in the Pacific. Also, just prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Army was unprepared even to engage in a defensive war and needed time in order to strengthen the defenses of the Pacific areas. Therefore, it was in favor of gaining time and adopting a low profile toward Japan.

Both Stimson's perception of Japan and his bureaucratic interest in gaining time, required that Stimson make a very low estimate of the probability of an attack anywhere in the Far East. In other words, his perception and his bureaucratic interest coincided and he interpreted information about Japan's intentions to estimate a very low probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. But this coincidence of Stimson's bureaucratic interest with his image of Japan makes it difficult to evaluate which of the two resulted in his low estimate of the probability of an attack. And since this estimate was identical to the estimate made by Cordell Hull, there could not have been competition between them. In other words, bureaucratic politics may not be a necessary component of Stimson's low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

Secretary of Navy, Frank Knox, was the other central player in the game of bureaucratic politics, but there is little evidence of either his perceptions or even his estimate of the probability of an attack, probably because he was overshadowed by the more outspoken Henry Stimson and the more influential Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Stark. Stark represented the strategic thinking of the Navy (thinking which was similar to that of the Army) in the meetings

of the War Council. The Navy too, accepted the principal of defensive warfare in the Pacific because it needed time to train the fleet to engage in defensive warfare. Stark concurred with the Army's strategy of gaining time and its estimate of Japan's intentions. He prepared an estimate of the probability of a Japanese attack along with General Marshall, the Chief of the Army Staff. The estimate stated that,

> "If the current negotiations end without agreement, Japan may attack: the Burma Road, Thailand, Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies, the Philippines, the Russian Maritime Provinces. There is little probability of an immediate Japanese attack on the Maritime Provinces because of the strength of the Russian forces. Recent Japanese troop movements all seem to have been southward. The magnitude of the effort required will militate against a direct attack against Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies until the threat exercized by the United States forces in Luzon is removed. Attack on the Burma Road or Thailand offer Japanese objectives involving less risk of a major conflict than the others named, and clearly within the means available, if unopposed by major powers. Attack on the Burma Road would, however, be difficult and might fail. If successful the Chinese Nationalist government might collapse. Occupation of Thailand gives a limited strategic advantage as a preliminary to operations against Malaya or the Netherlands East Indies, might relieve internal political pressure, and to a lesser extent, external economic pressure. Whether the offensive will be made against the Burma Road, Thailand or the Philippines cannot now be forecast..." [18]

In other words, the probability of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was considered to be so low that it was not considered at all.

The very low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor, made both by the Army and Navy Chiefs, coincided with their bureaucratic interest of attempting to postpone the outbreak of the war anywhere in the Far East. But the coincidence of their estimate of Japan's intentions with their 'image' of Japan's intentions makes it difficult to assess the importance

of the two components which could equally explain the low estimate of the probability of an attack. Also, this estimate was identical to the estimates made by Hull and Stimson. Bureaucratic politics cannot explain, therefore, convergent low estimates of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

It is evident from the preceding analysis that on prima facie evidence, bureaucratic politics does explain the very low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. It was in Hull's bureaucratic interest to make a low estimate because he needed time to negotiate with the Japanese. The bureaucratic interest of both Stimson and Knox also was to gain time in order to prepare the defenses of the Far Eastern bases of the United States; therefore, they made a very low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

Frequently, however, the image of the bureaucratic players provides the same estimate as does their bureaucratic interest. It was true for both the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy. Their image of Japan as well as their bureaucratic interest led them to make a low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. This is then, an instance of an overdetermined explanation since it is difficult to assess the importance of either the image or the bureaucratic interest. In instances where the image of the bureaucratic player and his bureaucratic interest diverge, as it did in the case of Cordell Hull, then the image provides a better explanation because it accounts for a part of the estimate at least. Hull's image of Japan was negative, hostile, active and strong, which would lead him to estimate a high probability of a Japanese attack anywhere in the Far East. His bureaucratic interest in prolonging negotiations with Japan required that he make a low estimate of a Japanese attack anywhere in the Far East. If bureaucratic politics can explain the low estimate of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, it cannot explain his high probability

estimate of an attack at several points in Southeast Asia.

Equally important, there is little evidence of bureaucratic competition among the decision makers. Although there was considerable disagreement among the decision makers about how to implement the oil embargo that the United States had imposed upon Japan,[19] more intense competition among leaders may have been unnecessary in view of their convergent interests. In his memoirs, Hull noted the careful policy coordination:

> "The War Council consisted of the President, the Secretaries of State, War and Navy, the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations. Convening once a week or at the call of the President, who presided over it in his Oval office, it was a sort of clearing house for all the information and views we had under discussion with our respective contacts and in our respective circles. It was one further step in solidifying the top-level officials in these three Departments with the White House ... We were quickly exchanging every item of pertinent information that came to any of our respective Departments either individually or officially."[20]

The Secretary refers to shared interpretation of information and the solidarity among senior officials. When estimates and interests converge, bureaucratic competition is not likely.

Finally, there is no evidence of any player deliberately suppressing evidence to support his own estimate. On the contrary, Hull referred to the frequent meetings among the decision makers to exchange pertinent information. The bureaucratic interest of each of the players would have led them to estimate a low probability of an attack anywhere in the Far East. Yet, based on the information they shared, each considered an attack on Southeast Asia highly likely.

The hypothesis that competition and bargaining among the central players was responsible for the low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl

Harbor finds little supporting evidence. This discussion now turns to the third argument, that of deception, in order to explain the failure of American decision makers to anticipate a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Deception: The Logic of the Explanation

Deception as an explanation of surprise argues that the incorrect estimates of the probability of an attack are a result of a calculated attempt by the adversary to transmit disinformation about its intentions which leads recipient decision makers, using optimal information processing procedures to be certain about their estimates and wrong.[21] In other words, surprise is the result of a deliberate stratagem by the adversary to reduce the uncertainty of the recipient decision makers. In the context of the surprise achieved when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, this explanation argues that the Japanese deliberately transmitted disinformation about their intentions in order to make American decision makers certain and wrong. In order to validate this explanation, this discussion will analyze the stratagem adopted by the Japanese in order to deceive American decision makers and assess the optimality of their information processing.

The Japanese employed the stratagem of deception at two levels. The first level of the stratagem was active deception which involved a calculated ploy by the Japanese to deceive decision makers in Washington. They did this firstly, by trying to create the impression that they were interested in prolonging their conversations in order to reach an agreement regarding their differences in the Far East, even while they were making preparations to attack several parts of Southeast Asia. This was evident in their instructions to their negotiating team in Washington which read, "...the situation continues to be increasingly critical. However, to prevent the United States from

becoming unduly suspicious, we have been advising the press and others that though there are wide differences between Japan and the United States, the negotiations are continuing."[22] This ploy of deception did not succeed because, unknown to the Japanese however, American decision makers learnt from the intercepts of Japan's secret diplomatic messages between November 27 and 30, 1941 that Japan had terminated its conversations with Washington.[23]

A more successful ploy of active deception was aimed at diverting the attention of American decision makers toward their highly visible war preparations in Southeast Asia. They made no attempt to disguise the massive troop movements through French Indo China, southward toward Malaya, Singapore, Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines. These preparations were accompanied by belligerent statements by Japanese leaders indicating that Japan intended to implement its plans to create a co-prosperity sphere in Southeast Asia and would not tolerate any interference with their intentions. Shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Prime Minister Tojo was reported as saying,

> "Chiang Kai Shek is dancing to the tune of American and British communism because the United States and Britain desire to fish in troubled waters, throwing Asiatic peoples against each other. This is the stock in trade of Britain and the United States and therefore we must purge this sort of action with vengeance. There are many countries engaged in action hostile toward our co-prosperity sphere and exploit Asia at the expense of the Asiatic peoples and thereby satisfy their greed for possessions ... Nothing can be permitted to interfere with the sphere because the sphere is decreed by providence." 24

By making explicit references to the co-prosperity sphere, the Japanese attempted to lead American decision makers to estimate with certainty the outbreak of war in Southeast Asia and ignore the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

In another ploy calculated to deceive American decision makers, large

numbers of sailors were granted shore leave and were seen in Tokyo and in other ports.[25] Also, the entire Imperial Navy was instructed to maintain absolute radio silence. Both these ploys were designed to lead decision makers in Washington to estimate that the fleet was maneuvering in home waters in preparation for engagement of enemy ships nearer home when war broke out. They succeeded in deceiving American decision makers who did not regard the fleet's radio silence as anything unusual since the Japanese fleet had observed complete radio silence a few months ago and had in fact been in home waters. Lt. Comdr. Edwin Layton, a Naval Intelligence officer noted that,

> "...when carriers and other types of ships go into home waters, home exercise areas, they use low power radio direct with shore stations. This is handled normally, on telegraphic land lines to prevent our direction finder stations from hearing their traffic. During such periods as that we have always carried those units as 'home waters' ... (Information of the fleet's radio silence was interpreted as) the carriers were remaining in home waters preparing for operations so that they would be in a covering position in case we moved against Japan after she attacked, if she did in Southeast Asia."[26]

Another ploy of 'active' deception was the despatching of the flagship 'Tatuta Maru' on December 2, 1941 to vacate Japanese nationals from the United States. It was designed to make the decision makers believe that war would not break out as long as a Japanese ship was on high seas.

The most successful ploy in the stratagem of deception is "passive" deception which involves withholding information regarding one's intentions. Japan used this ploy most effectively by maintaining complete secrecy about its plan to attack Pearl Harbor. Admiral Yamamoto, the architect of the plan, had emphasized the necessity of secrecy as the prerequisite of success of the

plan. Therefore, the operational details of the plan to attack Pearl Harbor were known only to the planners of the Naval General Staff. Even the Emperor, who made the formal decision to initiate hostilities, and the Prime Minister, were told only on December 3, 1941 that hostilities against the Anglo-Saxon countries would be initiated on December 8 (Toyko time) by an attack on Pearl Harbor. And the sailors and pilots participating in the Pearl Harbor attack were only told of their destination once the task force was on its way to Pearl Harbor. The secrecy of the plan to attack Pearl Harbor was protected by camouflaging the requests for information about the movements of the fleet at Pearl Harbor among similar requests from other Pacific ports as well.

Both these ploys of 'passive' deception were successful because American decision makers did not consider the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. All the information they had was an admixture of authentic information, disinformation and misinformation. It was possible to formulate several plausible hypotheses of Japanese intentions based on that information. They were:

I. "Direct attack" hypothesis which argued that the Japanese intended attacking Pearl Harbor directly in order to prevent the United States from interfering effectively with their plans to acquire the resources of Southeast Asia. This was indeed Japan's intention.

II. "Bluff" hypothesis which argued that the Japanese did not intend attacking the United States at all and were making aggressive pronouncements in order to make America accede to their demands regarding the resumption of oil supplies and a settlement in China on their terms. This hypothesis was accepted principally by Stanley Hornbeck, the Political Adviser on Far Eastern Affairs to the

Secretary of State, who believed that Japan had no intention of fighting a war with the United States.

III. "Indirect attack" hypothesis which argued that Japan intended to attack the British and the Dutch and thereby creating a dilemma for American decision makers as to whether or not to be involved in war with Japan. This hypothesis of Japan's intentions was accepted by American decision makers because it accounted for all the available information.

IV. "Contingency" hypothesis which argued that Japan intended to attack the Russian Maritime Provinces in order to honor their commitment to Germany. This hypothesis was accepted by the Army intelligence and they estimated that there was a greater probability of a Japanese attack northward, rather than southward.

While these four hypotheses were logical possibilities and each was consistent with parts of the evidence, only one hypothesis was fully consistent with almost all the evidence. In other words, only this hypothesis explained all the available information, both genuine and false of Japanese intentions. Consequently, American decision makers, considering the range and variety of available information chose the hypothesis which was supported by the largest volume of evidence. The probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor, a competing hypothesis, was dismissed in large part because the Japanese succeeded in withholding information about their plan to attack Pearl Harbor. American leaders, reviewing available information, became increasingly certain and wrong. Clearly then, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the Japanese deliberately withheld information about their plan to attack Pearl Harbor and succeeded in reducing the uncertainty of American decision makers. Therefore, active and passive deception provide the strongest explanation of the American

failure to anticipate a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

The foregoing analysis examined three plausible hypotheses of the failure of American decision makers to anticipate an attack on Pearl Harbor, and concluded that deception explained American surprise best. The critical question now is - Is deception a necessary and sufficient explanation of surprise? The next chapter addresses this concluding issue.

CHAPTER V

FOOTNOTES

1. Graham Allison, "The Essence of Decision", op.cit., p.83.
2. Hearings, op.cit., Part 12, pp.268-270.
3. ibid., Part 3, pp.1514-15.
4. ibid., Part 5, p.2174.
5. ibid., Part 9, p.4177.
6. This argument is based on Allison's discussion of bureaucratic politics in "The Essence of Decision", op.cit., p.164.
7. Hull has referred to the central players collectively as the War Council. See Hull, "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull", op.cit., p.1079.
8. Some of the bitterest disagreements took place between Secretaries Hull and Morgenthau regarding the enforcement of the oil embargo against Japan. See John Blum, "From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of Urgency, 1938-41", (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959-67), pp.344-62.
9. Stimson and Bundy, "On Active Service in Peace and War", op.cit., p.494.
10. Roosevelt, "Roosevelt's Foreign Policy", op.cit., p.343.
11. ibid., p.473.
12. Elliott Roosevelt and Joseph Lash, "FDR: His Personal Letters", III, 1928-45, (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), pp.403-4.
13. Hull, "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull", op.cit., p.982.
14. ibid., p.985.
15. ibid., p.1101.
16. ibid., p.1080.
17. The New York Times, March 7, 1939.
18. Hearings, op.cit., Part 14, p.1083.
19. See footnote 9.
20. Hull, "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull", op.cit., p.1079.

21. Barton Whaley, "Codeword Barbarossa", op.cit., p.242.

22. Hearings, op.cit., Part 12, p.208.

23. ibid., p.204-5.

24. Robert Butow, "Tojo and the Coming of the War", (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p.349.

25. Barton Whaley, "Strategem, Deception and Surprise in War", (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for International Studies, 1969), App. A30.

26. Hearings, op.cit., Part 10, pp.4839-40.

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER VI

The two previous chapters examined four competing explanations of the failure of American decision makers to anticipate a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor - viz. faulty beliefs and images, organizational routines, bureaucratic politics and deception. This discussion will briefly review all the explanations and suggest the most plausible explanation of why American decision makers were surprised when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

The first explanation referred to faulty beliefs and images of decision makers which led to poor information processing and resulted in a low estimate of the probability of an attack. In testing this explanation of surprise, the discussion traced the changing images of different decision makers, their different procedures for information processing and examined their last minute estimates of Japan's intentions. It noted that different decision makers had differing images of Japan and different procedures for information processing, and that despite these differences, they made identical high estimates of the probability of an attack on South East Asia and very low estimates of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. These estimates were based on an overwhelming amount of information about Japan's intentions just prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor which pointed in the direction of an attack of South East Asia and none in the direction of Pearl Harbor. In analyzing the images of the decision makers, it was also noted that all the decision makers were greatly concerned with information regarding Japan's intentions and that the dimension referring to Japan's capabilities received much

less attention. Therefore, the faulty beliefs and images were only partly responsible for their low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

The second explanation referred to organizational routines as being responsible for the routine processing of the information about the adversary's intentions which resulted in the low estimate of the probability of an attack. In testing this explanation, the discussion reconstructed the standard operating procedures that the intelligence agencies of the American government had devised for processing information about Japan's intentions and analyzed their impact on processing that information. It was noted that despite the delays caused due to the standard operating procedures, only the intercepts of December 5 and 6, 1941, were not processed by the intelligence agencies before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. It was also pointed out that similar intercepts had been processed in the past and that they had not altered the estimates of Japan's intentions. It was unlikely that the intercepts of December 5 and 6, 1941 requesting information concerning the movement of the Pacific fleet in and out of Pearl Harbor would have altered the estimates at all. The discussion concluded, therefore, that despite evidence of delays in the processing of information about Japan's intentions, there was insufficient evidence to prove that organizational routines had been responsible for the low estimates of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

The third explanation referred to bureaucratic bargaining and

deliberate suppression of information by central decision makers as being responsible for the low estimate of the probability of an attack. In testing that explanation, the discussion analyzed the different bureaucratic interests of the central players and examined how they processed information about Japan's intentions. It noted that in evaluating information about Japan's intentions, their bureaucratic interests converged and that there was no suppression of information in order to enhance their respective bureaucratic interests. It was noted also that when there was a divergence between the personal preference and bureaucratic interest of a central player, the image provided a better explanation of the estimate made. In the discussion referring to beliefs and images however, it was pointed out that the image was only partly responsible for the low estimates of the probability of an attack that were made. When there was a convergence between the personal preference and the bureaucratic interest of central players, it was difficult to estimate the relative weight of the two factors involved. Since the bureaucratic interests of the central players converged and there was no evidence of deliberate suppression of information in order to support their respective bureaucratic interests, it was noted that bureaucratic politics alone could not account for the low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

The fourth explanation referred to deception being responsible for the low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. The discussion analyzed the two levels of Japan's calculated strategy aimed

at deceiving American decision makers. It pointed out both, the active attempts to divert the attention of decision makers in Washington in the direction of South East Asia, and the passive attempt of withholding any information pertaining to its intentions and capabilities with regard to an attack on Pearl Harbor. It also noted that given this strategy of deception, American decision makers, using optimal information processing procedures, made a low estimate of the probability of an attack on Pearl Harbor. The discussion concluded that deception was consistent with most of the information about Japan's intentions and was therefore the most plausible explanation of why American decision makers failed to anticipate an attack on Pearl Harbor.

Having reviewed the four competing explanations, this discussion turns to evaluating the explanatory power of deception as an explanation of the Pearl Harbor surprise. In discussing the importance of beliefs and images, it was pointed out that American decision makers over-emphasized the intentions dimension of their image of Japan but paid insufficient attention to the evaluation of Japan's capabilities. This is a particularly glaring omission on their part considering their reliance on the strategy of deterrence, which uses both categories - intentions and relative capabilities. There was only an indirect reference to Japan's capabilities in the joint Army-Navy estimates of Japan's intentions and even there, the relationship between intentions and capabilities was left unspecified. The over-emphasis on the intentions dimension and an inattention to the capabilities dimension was a result of the lack of incentive to do so. In not considering Japan's capabilities

as part of their image of Japan, it was not distorted information processing so much as it was inadequate attention to that dimension of the image. This complemented Japan's deception strategy of systematically withholding information about both its intentions and capabilities concerning an attack on Pearl Harbor.

It is evident from the preceding discussion that American decision makers failed to anticipate a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor not because of the signal-noise problem as Wohlstetter has suggested, or because of a deliberate attempt to provoke Japan as the revisionist historians argue, nor is it because of bureaucratic politics and information mismanagement as Ben-Zvi has it; rather, it was a result of two factors: (1) Japan's deception strategy of completely withholding information about its intentions and capabilities with regard to an attack on Pearl Harbor and (2) the insufficient attention paid by American decision makers to the capabilities dimension of their image of Japan. In other words, deception, complemented by inadequate attention to Japan's capabilities as part of their image was responsible for the failure of American decision makers to anticipate an attack on Pearl Harbor. These two factors together provide the most satisfactory explanation of the Pearl Harbor surprise.

The final question to be addressed in this discussion is - what are the implications of this study of the Pearl Harbor surprise for the general understanding of strategic surprise. In other words, what are the 'lessons' to be drawn from this study? Although the arguments emphasizing perceptual

difficulties and intrinsic uncertainty are not ruled out, this study reemphasizes Whaley's conclusion that often the explanations of surprise are flawed because of insufficient attention to the possibility of deception. This study has, in effect, rejected the two major explanations of surprise and shown that the Pearl Harbor surprise was not so much the result of "the conditions of human perception....(that) stem(s) from uncertainties so basic that they are not likely to be eliminated", but because Japan deliberately disseminated disinformation in order to deceive American decision makers. The lesson, for all decision makers, of this study are to be conscious at all times of the possibility of deception which will reduce the chances of surprise, though not eliminate it.

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