

20 Years Later . . .

THE TRUE STORY OF PEARL HARBOR—

As Japanese Tell It

To Americans, Dec. 7, 1941, was "a date which will live in infamy." But to the Japanese—

How do the Japanese explain their surprise attack, made without declaration of war? Why hit Pearl Harbor? Were they out to conquer U. S.? And how do they feel about Pearl Harbor today?

Here, for the first time, is the Japanese story of Pearl Harbor. It answers such questions, explains many things that Americans have never understood about that fateful day, 20 years ago.

"U. S. News & World Report" obtained the following exclusive interviews with two recognized authorities on the Japanese viewpoint.

First interview is with Dr. Gordon W. Prange, a professor of history at the University of Maryland, who got his story at first hand during six years in Japan. There he delved into official records, talked with Japanese involved in the attack.

Then follows an interview with Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, a planner of that attack.

Q Professor Prange, why did Japan attack Pearl Harbor?

A It was simply to do just one thing: It was to knock out the U. S. Pacific Fleet, immobilize it for six months.

Q Why for six months?

A To give Japan time to achieve its real goal—the conquest of Southeast Asia.

Q You mean Pearl Harbor was just a diversion?

A No, it was not a diversion. It was a secondary operation. It was an offensive defense—to get our fleet out of the way so it couldn't bother the Japanese while they took over Southeast Asia.

Q What did the Japanese expect the U. S. to do after being hit by surprise? Didn't they think this country would go to war and fight to a finish?

A Of course we would mobilize, and they anticipated this. But they hoped they could clean up Southeast Asia quickly. And what they hoped then was that there would be a long-drawn-out fight with the U. S., in which they could hold their own after they had exploited all those resources of Southeast Asia—and then we would sign a negotiated peace.

Q They really underestimated the U. S.—

A Of course, it is easy to realize now that the Japanese were engaging in much wishful thinking. But too many people make the mistake of looking at this war from the way it turned out. To understand why Japan acted as it did in 1941, you have to look at it from the Japanese viewpoint—see the world as it looked through Japanese eyes at that time.

Q How did the Japanese see the world then?

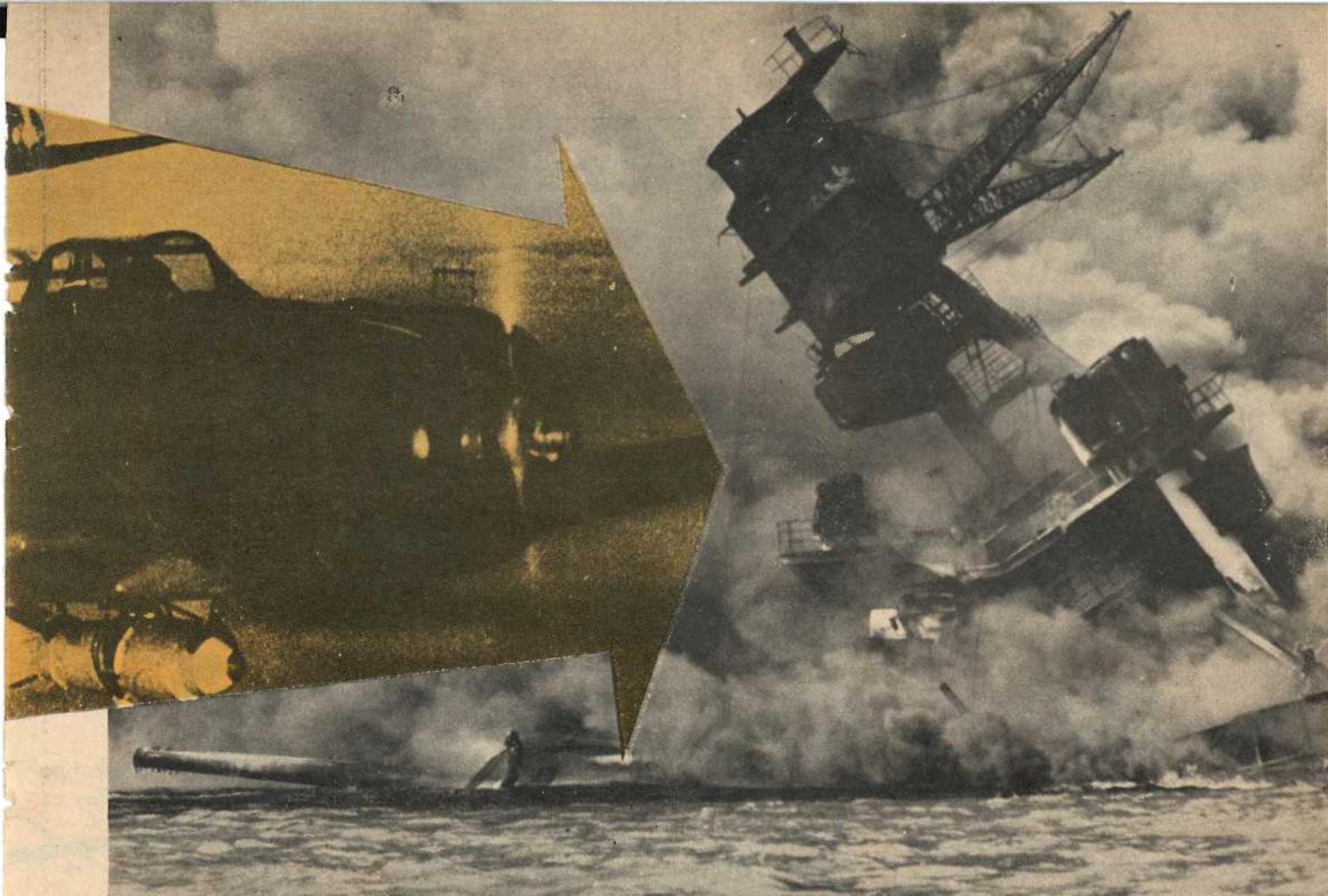
A Remember, in 1941, Hitler appeared to be winning his

war in Europe. He had beaten France, overrun Holland and Belgium, driven England off the Continent. Nazi troops were driving toward Moscow. And Japan, although not involved in the European war, was allied with Hitler and Mussolini in the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis.

To many Japanese, this looked like the chance of a lifetime to realize their ambitions for expansion. With Britain, France and Holland tied down in the European war, their colonies in Southeast Asia were up for grabs—and Japan was out to grab them.

That is where Japan was really aiming—at Southeast Asia. The Dutch East Indies, French Indo-China, British Malaya,





—Photos: National Archives and U.S. Navy

SURPRISE AT PEARL HARBOR—For 20 years, Americans have wondered how the Japanese did it—and why.

the Philippines and Thailand—Japan was going to conquer them all.

Those areas were rich in the things Japan needed: rice, oil, tin, rubber and other raw materials.

Q But why not just invade Southeast Asia? Why attack the U. S. and have another enemy to fight?

A For the simple reason that—in their pattern of thinking, at least—the Japanese couldn't go down there and take Southeast Asia without hitting the U. S. first.

You see, the U. S. was in a strategic position to block a Japanese drive into Southeast Asia. There was General MacArthur, sitting down there in the Philippines with troops and

Dr. Gordon W. Prange started studying Pearl Harbor as a historian on the staff of Gen. Douglas MacArthur in Tokyo from 1946 to 1951. He estimates he has spent 3,500 hours talking with Japanese involved in that attack, and is now preparing a history of it. Born July 16, 1910, in Pomeroy, Iowa, Dr. Prange studied at the universities of Iowa and Berlin. He began teaching at the University of Maryland in 1937, was a naval officer in World War II, returned to the University of Maryland as a professor of history upon leaving Tokyo in 1951.

planes. Just look at the map, and you see what a thorn that could be in the side of a Japanese offensive into Southeast Asia. Then, there was this powerful American fleet in the Pacific. In 1940, President Roosevelt had moved this fleet from its bases on the West Coast of the U. S. to Pearl Harbor—2,500 miles nearer Japan.

Q Did the Japanese feel that the U. S. was hemming them in—threatening them?

A Oh, yes. The Japanese press was full of this idea—that Japan was being encircled, was going to be choked to death. And in many respects they were right. Of course, they had asked for it by their own moves, but the fact remains they were being encircled.

Remember, Japan was bogged down in this war in China that had been going on since 1937, and the U. S. was insisting that the Japanese get out of China. Japan also was trying to move into Indo-China, and the U. S. was opposing that move.

Since 1939, the U. S. had been tightening what the Japanese regarded as an economic blockade of Japan. The U. S. had stopped selling war materials to Japan, had cut off its supplies of iron and steel scrap.

To the Japanese, the moving of the U. S. Pacific Fleet to Pearl Harbor looked like a threatening move—pointed right at them.

Q When did the Japanese decide that war with the U. S. was becoming probable?

A That's a relative point. Of course, the possibility of war had been building up for a long time.

But it was in July of 1941 that the shoe really began to

pinch. You see, a year earlier, after Hitler's defeat of France, Japan had occupied the northern half of French Indo-China. Then on July 25, 1941, the Vichy Government in France agreed to a joint French-Japanese protectorate over all of Indo-China, and Japanese forces began moving south, within easy striking range of Malaya and Singapore.

President Roosevelt promptly froze Japanese assets in the United States and embargoed shipments of oil to Japan.

At that time, Japan had an oil supply for a year and a half—that's all. The Japanese would not have been able to carry on a war if they had waited another year.

After the oil embargo, the plot began to thicken.

Q If you were to characterize the decision to attack Pearl

Harbor, would you say it was based on arrogance or on desperation? Strength or weakness?

A I would say that it was the decision of an inferior opponent to strike a superior opponent first and whittle him down to size.

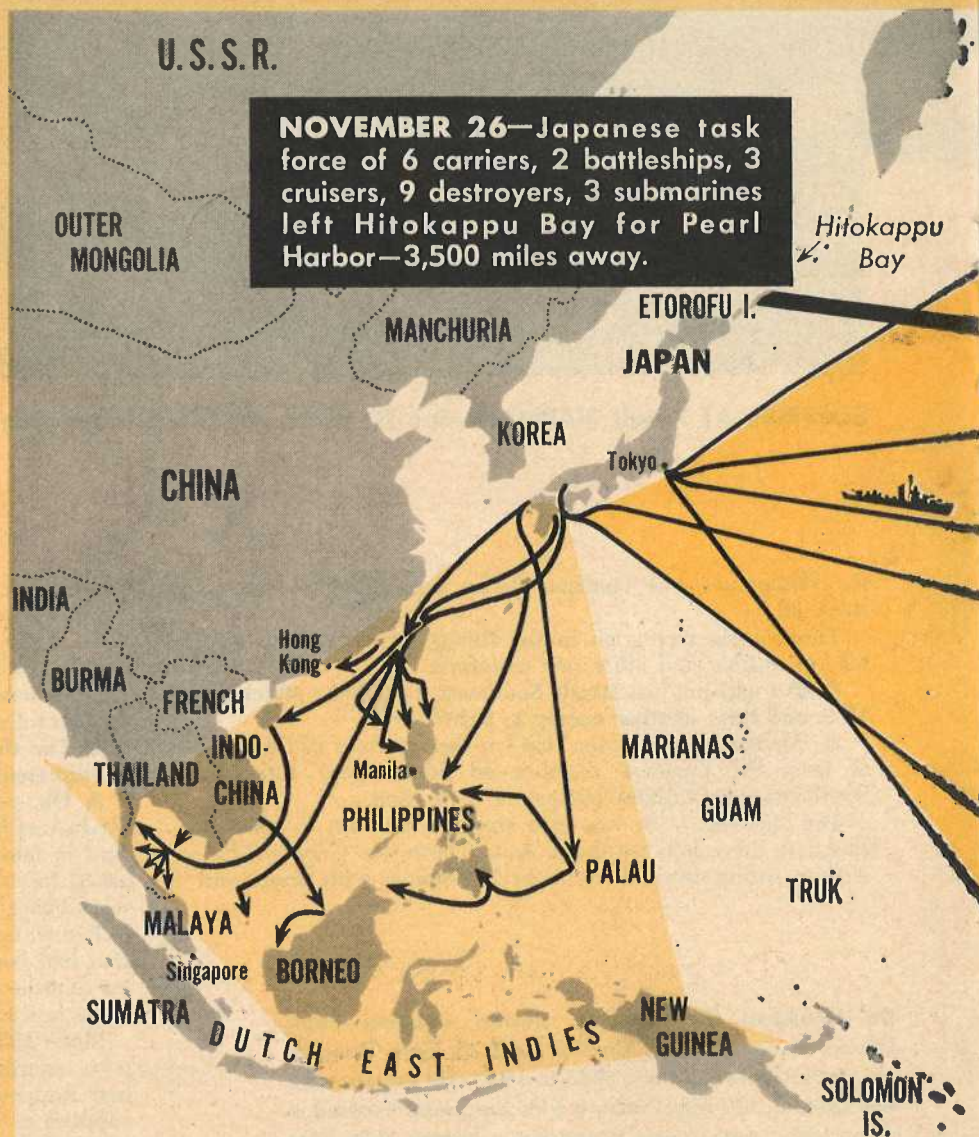
Q How about the idea, expressed by some people, that President Roosevelt invited the attack on Pearl Harbor to bring the U. S. into the war—that he baited the trap, as it were, by keeping the U. S. fleet at Pearl Harbor?

A The Japanese laugh at this and say it is utter nonsense. And so do I. If they had been in Roosevelt's boots, they would have done the same thing, because that was where the U. S. fleet belonged—right there at Pearl Harbor.

GRAND STRATEGY OF THE JAPANESE

MAIN OBJECTIVE: SOUTHEAST ASIA

Japan's 1941 attack was one of the biggest and most complex naval operations in history. This map shows how the surprise raid on Pearl Harbor was only a part of that vast operation. While one Japanese naval force raided Pearl Harbor, other forces attacked Southeast Asia, striking French Indo-China, Dutch East Indies, Malaya, Thailand and the Philippines. As Japanese tell the story, their main objective was Southeast Asia. They say their purpose in attacking Pearl Harbor was to immobilize the U. S. Pacific Fleet to prevent its interference with their main objective.



Source: based on maps and data prepared by Prof. Gordon W. Prange

I can show you in the record of the congressional hearings on Pearl Harbor that Admiral Kimmel said Pearl Harbor was where the fleet belonged. [Adm. Husband E. Kimmel commanded the Pacific Fleet at the time of the Japanese attack.]

Here, at Pearl Harbor, you had a naval base—shops, a great big drydock. And at Pearl Harbor the fleet was much nearer the militarily important places that the U. S. had to protect: the Philippines, Wake and Guam.

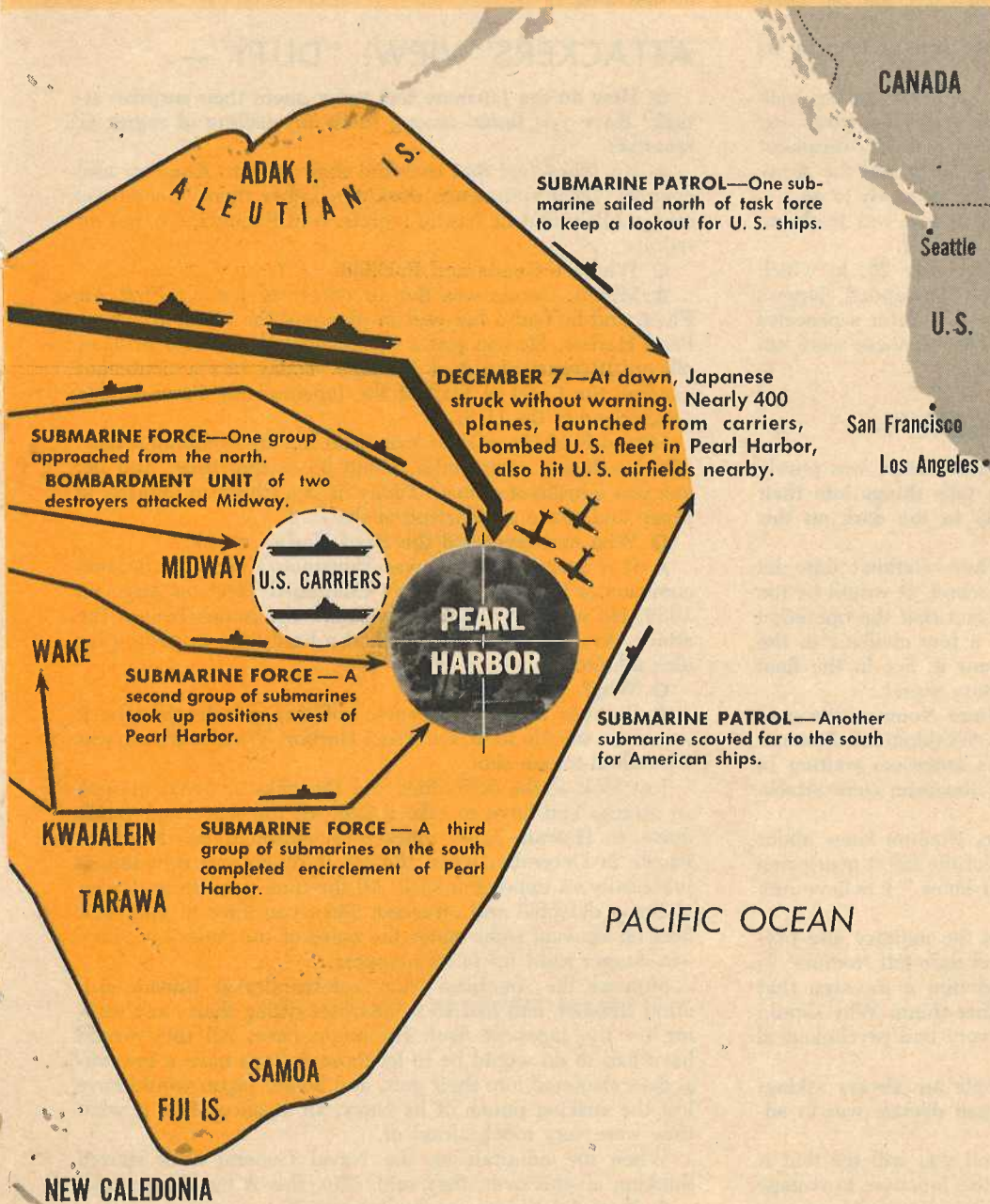
The idea that Roosevelt could maneuver the Japanese as though they were docile little pawns on his private chessboard out in the Pacific is not only fantastic nonsense, it's a gross oversimplification of a highly complicated problem.

No one was going to maneuver the Japanese into fighting the kind of war that somebody else wanted them to fight. They had made up their own minds how they were going to do it.

And that included a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. And one of the reasons why it was a surprise attack was because we did not anticipate it at that particular time—and this includes President Roosevelt, Navy Secretary Frank Knox, Gen. George C. Marshall, Adm. Husband E. Kimmel, and a whole host of others.

If Roosevelt and the high military command of the U. S. had really expected the Japanese to attack Pearl Harbor, they could have set up a trap for the Japanese that might very

ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR IN 1941



AT PEARL HARBOR: COMPLETE SURPRISE

Japanese caught U. S. fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbor, sank or damaged 19 ships, and inflicted about 3,800 casualties. To Japanese, it seemed a success far beyond their expectations.

AROUND PEARL HARBOR: A RING OF SUBMARINES

While planes raided Pearl Harbor, three groups of submarines ringed Pearl Harbor, ready to sink U. S. ships if they came out to escape attack.

U.S. CARRIERS ESCAPED TRAP

When Japanese struck Pearl Harbor, U. S. aircraft carriers *Enterprise* and *Lexington* were at sea.

... For Japan, "surprise was the essence of warfare"

well have lost the war for Japan in a single Sunday morning.

Q Could the U. S. have avoided war with Japan?

A Yes, by letting Japan do exactly as she wanted. But such was not U. S. policy at the time. Under the circumstances, we could have stood on our heads or danced the polka right up here on your desk—it wouldn't have made any difference. The Japanese were going into Southeast Asia came hell or high water, no matter what we did.

Q When did Japan decide to attack Pearl Harbor?

A At least one man—Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto—had this in mind as early as January, 1941, and actually even before that time. By July, they were already training pilots for the attack. Then, on Oct. 19, 1941, the Naval General Staff reluctantly gave Yamamoto permission to carry out the Pearl Harbor attack in case of war.

Q Then had Japan decided to go to war as long as six weeks before the actual attack?

A No. You see, the acceptance of the Pearl Harbor plan was purely a military decision, while the decision to go to war was a political decision. The point is that if the Government made up its mind to go to war, then the Navy and the Army had to have their plans all worked out and be ready to go.

The final, irrevocable decision to go to war was made on December 1 by the Japanese Imperial Council.

This was after the Hull note of November 26, in which U. S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull demanded Japan's evacuation of China and Indo-China as a basis for a peaceful agreement between U. S. and Japan. The Japanese were not about to do this under any circumstances.

"A FEW CIVILIANS KNEW"—

Q You say the decision to attack Pearl Harbor was purely a military decision. Did the militarists take things into their own hands and keep civilians entirely in the dark on this whole operation?

A Well, for the most part, yes. They wouldn't dare let civilians in on such a red-hot military secret. It would be too dangerous, particularly in view of the fact that the operation was to be a surprise. But, of course, a few civilians in the Government eventually found out about it. So, in the final analysis, it was not completely a military secret.

Q How about Ambassador Kichisaburo Nomura—the man who was handling the negotiations in Washington? Remember, he was sitting in Secretary Hull's anteroom waiting to see the Secretary at the very time the Japanese were attacking. Did he know what was going on?

A Some people have said, "Ah, sure, Nomura knew about it." But I know Nomura well. He's one of the finest gentlemen I've ever met. And he says, "I did not know." I believe him implicitly.

Don't you see? Let's look at it from the military and psychological points of view. They wouldn't dare tell Nomura. In the first place, would they dare send him a message that might be intercepted? And here's another thing: Why should they tell him and put him under that very bad psychological handicap of knowing the plan?

Q Here's another question that people are always asking: Why a surprise attack? Why didn't Japan declare war in advance, as most countries do?

A Look back in Japanese history and you will see that it was standard operating procedure for the Japanese to engage in surprise attacks. During Japan's medieval period, one war lord after the next engaged in surprise attacks against his enemies.

Of course, they got the idea from the Chinese military classicist, Sun-tzu, who said: If you're going to attack an enemy, attack him at 3 o'clock in the morning in a blinding snowstorm.

We have a modern instance of the Japanese strategy of surprise. When Japan started its war with Russia in 1904, the Japanese attacked Port Arthur and then declared war two days later.

Surprise was the essence of their warfare. And we should have understood this. We should not have expected the Japanese to think about things—in World War II, in particular—the way we thought about them. They thought about all these questions in the context of their own times, tradition, education—and, above all, from the standpoint of their own country at that time.

ATTACKERS' VIEW: "DUTY"—

Q How do the Japanese feel today about their surprise attack? Have you found among them any feeling of regret or remorse?

A No. They feel that they did their duty to Emperor and country. Their conscience does not bother them. Genda has said publicly that he has no regrets. And Fuchida, too, has no regrets.

Q Who are Genda and Fuchida?

A Minoru Genda was the air officer of Japan's First Air Fleet, and he had a big part in planning the aerial attack on Pearl Harbor. He was just a commander then but a brilliant officer, 10 years ahead of his time. Today he's a lieutenant general, the Chief of Staff of the Japanese Air Force—and a good friend of the U. S.

Mitsuo Fuchida was the man who led the bombing attack. He was then a commander, about 35 at that time. And he, too, was a brilliant airman. Today he is a Christian minister in Japan and also a good friend of the U. S.

Q Who masterminded the Pearl Harbor attack?

A It is accepted that it was Yamamoto's idea. He became commander in chief of Japan's Combined Fleet on Aug. 30, 1939. He was the driving power and the brains behind the attack. As a matter of fact, he had a hard fight in getting his idea adopted.

Q Why?

A Because a lot of Japanese military people thought it would be suicide to attack Pearl Harbor. Why, really, it was a hundred-to-one shot.

Just look at the difficulties and the risks involved in such an attack. You have to take a fleet all the way from Japan down to Hawaii—3,500 miles away—through the Northern Pacific in December when the sea is rough and refueling is practically an impossible task. All the time you are in danger of being detected and attacked. Then you have to park that fleet off Hawaii, right under the noses of the American Navy—in danger right up to its scuppers.

Suppose the American Navy commander in Hawaii, Admiral Kimmel, had had 15 submarines sitting there, just waiting for the Japanese fleet. He might have. All they would have had to do would be to let those flattops have a few torpedoes slammed into their guts, and boom! Japan would have lost the striking punch of its Navy, all at once. This is what they were very much afraid of.

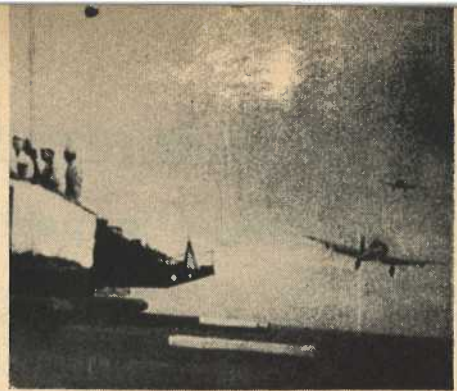
When the admirals on the Naval General Staff started thinking all this over, they said: "No, this is too dangerous."

Q How did Yamamoto finally prevail?

A Yamamoto prevailed because he was a leviathan among
(continued on page 62)

PLAN OF ATTACK AT PEARL HARBOR

This detailed picture was obtained by Prof. Gordon Prange from the Japanese who planned and carried out the assault.

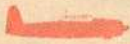


Task force halted 200 miles north of Pearl Harbor and launched nearly 400 planes toward the target in 2 waves.

LEGEND



HORIZONTAL BOMBERS
dropped their bombs from high altitudes.



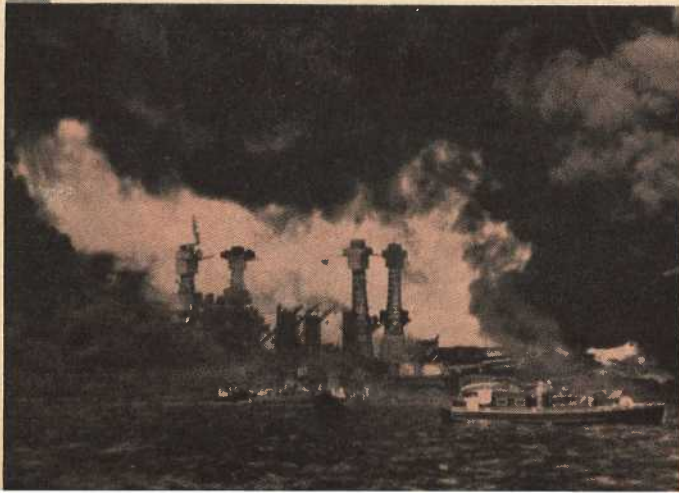
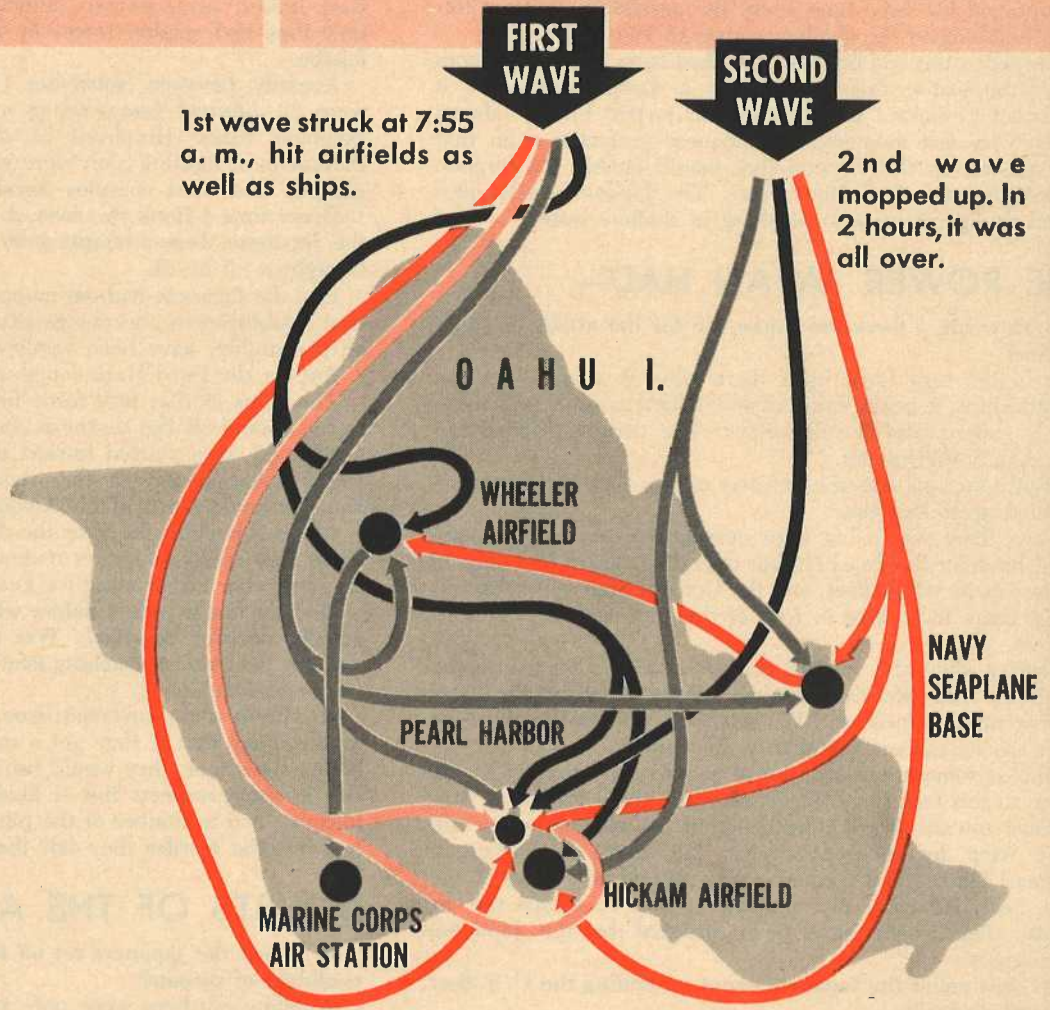
TORPEDO BOMBERS
sent torpedoes into ships through water.



DIVE BOMBERS
swooped low to bomb from close range.



FIGHTER PLANES
protected bombers, did ground strafing.



... Japanese "expected to lose one third of their task force"

men. He told those admirals in Tokyo he would resign unless they adopted his plan. And they gave in, finally, on October 19. But, by then, Yamamoto was far along with his plans.

He had people working on the pilots—and Japan had many good pilots, with lots of experience in the war against China. They had made numerous tests with torpedo bombing and—

Now here was a big problem for the Japanese. They were anxious to use torpedo bombs because they are the bombs that can really knock out a big ship, because they hit the ship under water, right in its bowels. But the Japanese were quite discouraged for some time about the possibility of using torpedo bombing in the shallow waters of Pearl Harbor.

You see, a torpedo bomb is launched from the air, but goes under the water, then must make a sharp turn before it levels out to make a flat glide into its target. Finally, almost at the very last moment, the Japanese perfected a fin that they placed on the torpedo that would enable the torpedo to do this even in shallow water. The Japanese really perfected the art of torpedo bombing in shallow water.

THE POWER JAPAN HAD—

Q How big a force did Japan use for the attack on Pearl Harbor?

A In the task force itself there were 6 aircraft carriers, 2 battleships, 2 heavy cruisers and 1 light cruiser, 9 destroyers, 8 tankers and 3 submarines. The carriers carried approximately 425 planes.

Mind you, this was the greatest carrier task force ever assembled up to that time.

Now, there was a big fight over how many carriers they could have for the Pearl Harbor operation. Japan had only 10 carriers in its whole fleet, and the General Staff was reluctant to risk more than three or four of them on such a dangerous mission.

Besides, they also wanted carriers available for use in the Southeast Asia offensive. But the officers planning the Pearl Harbor mission insisted: "We might as well call it off if we don't use six carriers." And they got them.

Here is something that a lot of people don't realize: In addition to this task force, Japan also sent three groups of submarines toward Pearl Harbor—about 30 submarines in all. They went by different routes, but they all converged on Pearl Harbor and formed a ring around it, so that if the U. S. fleet had come out of Pearl Harbor to escape the air attack, they would have been attacked by the Japanese submarines.

Q How could the Japanese count on finding the U. S. fleet in Pearl Harbor?

A That was simple. In the first place, we had been bringing that fleet into Pearl Harbor every week end, almost without exception, for a period of many months. Why, up until March of 1941, the Honolulu newspapers printed the reports of the ships' movements and when they would return.

After that, all the Japanese had to do was to use their eyes. They had a spy there, and, of course, he's tried to make out that he was a tremendous spy. But actually, all he had to do was to get up on a hill and look out over the harbor and report what he saw. Then he simply filed his reports at the commercial telegraph office in Honolulu and sent them to Japan in code.

We were breaking that code and following his reports. Why, the Japanese not only knew the ships were there, but they knew the exact location of every ship in the harbor.

Q Once the Japanese had decided on the Pearl Harbor operation, how did they go about it?

A Again, you must keep in mind that Pearl Harbor was only one part of the whole Japanese operation. At the same time they were preparing to hit Pearl Harbor, they were also preparing to hit a lot of other places. It was really a massive attack in many directions at once—actually a tremendous military operation—in retrospect, no mean achievement.

Please bear in mind that the Japanese had invasion forces on the way to attack the Philippines and Malaya, Hong Kong, Guam and Wake Island, and that they were prepared to follow this up with extensive invasions in the Netherlands East Indies, Java, Borneo, Sumatra, etc. And at the same time they had smaller forces in other areas of the Western Pacific.

Actually, between November 11 and December 18, there were 22 different forces set in motion from Japan or from Japanese bases. Hundreds of ships and thousands upon thousands of fighting men were engaged in one of the most gigantic and most complex naval operations in all history.

Every time I think this over, I am surprised at how much the Japanese were attempting to do and amazed that they brought it off at all.

Had the Japanese had our manpower, our Allies, our industrial establishment and our wealth, the Pacific war would, in all probability, have been vastly different.

But for the Pearl Harbor operation itself—

The ships of that task force first held training maneuvers in the waters off the southern coast of Japan. Then, on November 17, they started toward their assembly point, which was Hitokappu Bay in the island of Etorofu, one of the Kurile Islands north of Hokkaido.

It was November 22 when the ships finally assembled there. Then they spent four days reviewing their plans, and sailed on November 26, heading for Pearl Harbor.

Q That was five days before what you call the "final irrevocable" decision to attack. Was there some arrangement to stop the fleet before reaching Pearl Harbor in case the idea of war was abandoned?

A This is a controversial issue. Some Japanese who were involved say that if they got a message, even up to the day before the attack, they would turn around and go back home. But in some respects this is hindsight. Genda and Fuchida told me, and a number of the pilots also told me: Once they had left the Kuriles they felt that—boom! it's war.

DOUBTS OF THE ADMIRALS—

Q When the Japanese set off for Pearl Harbor, were they confident of success?

A Many of them were not. Admiral Sadatoshi Tomioka, who was chief of the operations section of the Naval General Staff, was highly dubious. So was the commander of the task force itself, Admiral Nagumo. His chief of staff, Kusaka, also opposed it and tried to talk Yamamoto out of his risky venture.

Even Yamamoto expected there would be heavy losses. They expected to lose one third of their task force. When the fleet took off from Japan, Yamamoto told them: "You will probably have to fight your way into the target."

Q And instead—

A The surprise was complete. The Japanese task force was never attacked, either before or after the raid on Pearl Harbor. The Americans never even knew where it was.

Q Why was it such a surprise? Do the Japanese think the Americans were careless, or stupid, or unprepared? How do they explain our being caught so flat-footed?

A I have had Japanese admirals tell me that, under the

... "Attack was most daring. Therein lay much of the surprise"

same circumstances, practically anyone else might have been caught the same way.

For one thing, the American military experts didn't expect the Japanese to hit Pearl Harbor, especially at that time of year. They thought the Japanese would strike south, into Southeast Asia. The big push to the south actually was a natural camouflage for the whole Pearl Harbor operation—the eyes of the U. S. high command were virtually glued in that direction.

Then, too, a number of the commanders on Oahu had cried wolf for so long that they could scarcely believe it when the wolf finally arrived.

Q Didn't the U. S. have any plans for meeting a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor?

A One can find in the Pearl Harbor documents a number of staff studies for 1941 based on the assumption that Japan would attack Pearl Harbor. Some of those were even based on the assumption that Japan would attack from the north.

But the point is this: Here it was December, with the waters of the North Pacific rough and angry, and no one expected them to make this trip under such adverse conditions. At that time of year, too, American military leaders fully expected the Japanese to strike in Southeast Asia.

Q So the Japanese pulled the unexpected?

A Yes, indeed, they did. They came down from the north. They sailed from this bay up in the Kurile Islands and headed east for seven days before they turned south—actually, south-east—toward Pearl Harbor. For four more days they sailed through American-controlled waters, right into the teeth of the world's strongest naval power.

By every stretch of the imagination, it was a most daring operation, and therein, too, lay much of the surprise. But the Japanese, in many respects, are a daring people.

Q About the attack itself—

A On Sunday morning, December 7, the Japanese task force parked about 200 miles north of Pearl Harbor.

Just before dawn, the Japanese sent their planes roaring off the decks of their carriers toward their target.

They attacked in two waves. The first wave was composed of four types of planes: torpedo planes, dive bombers, high-level bombers and fighters.

But a torpedo plane has to fly low and get in close before releasing its bombs. So torpedo planes were used only in the first wave, when they would have the advantage of surprise.

Simultaneously, the high-level bombers were dropping bombs from high altitude, and the dive bombers were swooping down to drop bombs from close range. Meanwhile, the fighters were protecting the bomber planes and establishing control of the air over the target. They also strafed ground installations.

The planes hit almost everything. They caught the U. S. fleet sitting right there in the harbor. They caught the U. S. planes at nearby airfields sitting on the ground, and hit them. They just plastered the whole area.

HOW MUCH U. S. LOST—

Q Was the attack as successful as the Japanese had expected?

A It was much more successful than they ever expected. They sank or damaged 19 American ships, including 8 battleships. They knocked out almost 200 American planes. And they killed about 2,400 Americans, wounded almost 1,400 others.

This was success beyond their wildest dreams.

In addition, the Japanese never expected so little opposition. They expected almost everything: counterattacks by air,

submarine operations against them, a running surface fight perhaps half the way back home. They never expected to get back to Japan with their task force intact.

Yet, they didn't lose a single ship, except for one large submarine and five midget subs, and they lost only about 30 planes. They were able to sail away, back to Japan, without any further trouble.

Oh, were they jubilant! When they got back to Japan they were greeted like heroes and congratulated on a wonderful job.

Yet, actually, the Japanese didn't do half as good a job at Pearl Harbor as they could have.

WHERE JAPANESE FAILED—

Q What could they have done that they didn't do?

A Well, in the first place, they didn't get the big U. S. carriers that were based at Pearl Harbor. They were not there when the Japanese struck. The *Enterprise* was 200 miles west, coming back from Wake Island. And the *Lexington* was about 1,000 miles away, on its way to Midway Island to deliver some planes to the Marine garrison there. So they escaped, and we can thank our lucky stars for that.

Then, the Japanese submarines failed in their mission. They had three submarine groups ringing Pearl Harbor. And they had five midget submarines that were to ride on the backs of five big submarines, and these midgets were supposed to go into Pearl Harbor and send their torpedoes into those ships there. Well, this thing failed. And the Japanese submarines didn't sink the *Enterprise*, which wasn't far away, and they didn't sink two small American task forces that were in the vicinity.

What happened? Well, for my money, those Japanese submariners were not trained well enough. Another thing is that our destroyers went to work and took care of the submarines. Our Navy was prepared for submarines and did an excellent job on them.

But there was one big thing the Japanese could have done that they didn't.

Q What was that?

A I'll tell you what they could have done: They could really have finished their job on Pearl Harbor—knocked out the whole base. When they saw how well they had done in their first strike, Genda and Fuchida wanted to stick around and go back again and whack the daylights out of Pearl Harbor—I mean, really whack it. And they could have done it, too. The American officers there expected them to do it.

But, instead, the Japanese just cashed in their chips and left.

Q Why?

A Well, they had already done better than they expected, and they thought they had accomplished their mission.

Q Then Pearl Harbor was not as bad as it might have been—not a complete disaster?

A That's one of the popular misconceptions of the war—that Pearl Harbor was an utter disaster.

Actually, from the point of view of some former Japanese Navy officers, like my friends Genda and Fuchida, Pearl Harbor was a tactical success but a strategical failure.

Q And from the American point of view?

A Well, in retrospect, it was not the worst thing that could have happened to us. Actually, the attack made the supreme decision for us. It plunged us into the war with stunning impact, and in a way that united a badly divided America.

That's important. Why, one of the Japanese admirals—Adm. Chuichi Hara—told me: "The American Government should

... U.S. came back "much faster than Japanese expected"

decorate us with medals for doing this thing for them, for exploding the American emotions and arousing them to fight. We did you a psychological favor." And, in many respects, that's true.

Another thing: By the tactics they used so successfully at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese pushed the U. S. into the kind of warfare that won the war for us—three-dimensional warfare. Up till then, there was a dispute in the U. S. Navy over the battleship vs. the carrier. Why, Admiral Leahy, the military adviser to the President, had proclaimed sonorously that the battleship was the backbone of the fleet. Well, not after Pearl Harbor. That hit the military thinking in the U. S. with the impact of a giant sledge hammer.

You see, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was in many respects revolutionary. An operation of that magnitude had never been carried out before. When the fire and smoke had cleared over Pearl Harbor, naval aviation had come into its own.

Q And the Japanese discovered this first?

A No, not exactly. But they were the first to use it on a grand scale.

But this attack on Pearl Harbor was also revolutionary thinking for the Japanese. You see, the traditional naval strategy of Japan was quite different. You hear it said that Japan had been thinking for years about attacking Pearl Harbor. This is bunk. Oh, they had exercises and staff studies and all that, but no one ever seriously considered attacking Pearl Harbor—until Yamamoto.

The traditional concept of Japanese naval strategists was one of fighting a great all-out battle against the U. S. Navy in waters near the Japanese homeland, where the Japanese would have the advantage of proximity to their own bases. The idea was to fight near home, set up a naval defense around the periphery of Japan—say, 750 to 1,000 miles offshore—and dare the other fellow to come in.

A part of this all-out battle was known as "Zengen Sakusen"—or "Operation Attrition."

Suppose the U. S. fleet sets out toward Japan. Now, when this fleet starts out, the Japanese submarines start to work and pick off ships, one by one. That is "Zengen"—attrition. By the time the U. S. fleet got near Japan it would be whittled down. When the Japanese figured it was near enough to Japan, and far enough from its base of supply, then the Japanese would hit it and destroy it.

Let me emphasize this: After Pearl Harbor the American admirals didn't fall for this type of Japanese strategy. They didn't go sailing recklessly out into the Western Pacific as some armchair strategists—and even some U. S. Army commanders—thought they should. They examined the whole problem carefully and, once they were ready, they went out to the Western Pacific with good plans in their hip pockets and enough strength to win.

When they went into the Marshalls and the Marianas, they had the strength and the know-how to defeat any navy. And bear in mind the Japanese still had a powerful Navy—one of the best that history has ever seen.

ROLE OF MacARTHUR—

Q While Japan was attacking Pearl Harbor, what was happening in the Philippines?

A Japan attacked the Philippines, too, of course. But that attack didn't come until about 10 hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Q This brings up a question that is often asked: Why did General MacArthur sit there in the Philippines with his planes on the ground? Why didn't he sock Tokyo?

A Hit Tokyo? From Manila? Impossible. Look here at the distances: Manila is 1,800 miles from Tokyo. MacArthur's planes could never reach there—never get back.

As to how his planes happened to be caught on the ground—well, of course, this is one of the classical controversies of the war. There are many things in history that we never get the answers to.

Q What did the Japanese expect to do in the Philippines?

A Well, they expected to get us out of there, for one thing. They expected to get us out of there in about 90 days.

Q MacArthur held out a lot longer than that, didn't he?

A Yes, his forces certainly did. It was not until May 6 that they finally surrendered at Corregidor. That was five months after Pearl Harbor.

Q What did General MacArthur accomplish by his long delaying action?

A One of the myths of the Pacific war is that MacArthur's stand in the Philippines upset the Japanese timetable of conquest. This is not true. It did hold them up in the Philippines. But it didn't hold them up in Southeast Asia. They had separate schedules for conquest for Malaya and the Netherlands Indies, and they beat both schedules by a considerable margin.

What MacArthur did accomplish was to give this country a tremendous psychological lift at a time we so sorely needed one. We needed a leader. We needed a symbol of resistance. We needed a man who would say, "I will return." And this is what he gave us. And it will redound to his eternal credit that he did.

Q The U. S. came back pretty fast after Pearl Harbor—

A Oh, much faster than the Japanese expected. They underestimated this country.

SOME FALSE IMPRESSIONS—

Q Professor Prange, as an American with a close acquaintance with the Japanese, you are a sort of bridge between the Japanese view and the American view. Do Americans have misconceptions about Pearl Harbor?

A Oh, all kinds of them.

Q Can you name some?

A I have already named two: one, that Roosevelt induced the Japanese to strike; second, that Pearl Harbor was an utter disaster.

Another misconception popular among Americans is that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was conceived in arrogance. It was never conceived in arrogance. That's a misconception. There was a great element of desperation in that attack.

And, of course, it's a popular misconception that Pearl Harbor was the main objective of Japan's attack. There was never any intention in 1941 of seizing Hawaii or invading the U. S. As I have said, the Japanese just wanted to make it impossible for the U. S. to interfere with their major war plans in Southeast Asia.

Q What was the fundamental mistake that Japan made in attacking Pearl Harbor?

A That's a question Japanese admirals have asked me time and again. They ask: "What went wrong?"

I tell them their big mistake was in attacking us at all. They should have let us alone. They took on an impossible task. In the first place, they had been fighting China for over four years. In the second place, they up and not only smacked us but the British and Dutch as well—all at one fell swoop.

In addition, they ran the risk of having the Soviets on their back at some time in the future. They had no business playing around in that kind of league; that's what went

wrong. They simply lacked the capability and the manpower to take on so many powerful enemies. They were fighting over their weight.

Q What mistakes did the U. S. make at Pearl Harbor? What lessons can we learn from that?

A In the first place, we should learn preparedness. And not just material preparedness, but psychological and spiritual preparedness as well.

In the second place, we should learn not to be complacent and so cocksure as we were in 1941. We should learn, it seems to me, one of history's bitter lessons: that the unexpected can happen—and very often does. The more I study history, the more I realize that this is true.

Another lesson we should have learned: Never underestimate your enemy. It was not only the Japanese that underestimated us. We underestimated them far more, in fact, than they did us. The truth is that our newspapers and magazines then were full of it, all during 1940 and 1941—in fact, right to the very eve of the attack.

Those who remember the year 1941 will recall how many

Americans thought: "We can go over there and knock off that little country in a week end." Such rot! This underestimation of the Japanese was one of the big keys to Pearl Harbor.

Q Summing it all up, where would you say that the responsibility for Pearl Harbor lies?

A Well, that's the \$64,000 question. And it is altogether too complicated to settle it in one easy answer. But as long as you have brought it up, let me say that I personally feel that it was a divided responsibility. It cannot just be hung on the U. S. commanders in Hawaii—Admiral Kimmel and General Short—and let it go at that. There was much more involved.

The U. S. military and civilian leaders in Washington must also bear a share of the responsibility. So must the American people and our newspapers and magazines, as well. For we, as a people, were patently ignorant of the Japanese, and so smug and complacent about it.

Personally, I think that we have all tended to oversimplify the whole Pearl Harbor problem, and it simply cannot be handled that way. It is far too vast and complicated for easy analysis.

INTERVIEW

With a Japanese Admiral Who Helped Attack Pearl Harbor "WE WERE REALLY LUCKY"

Here the story of Pearl Harbor is told by a Japanese admiral who helped plan that daring naval operation.

Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome was chief of plans and operations of the Naval General Staff in 1941. At 70, he is the last survivor of the high-ranking officers who took part in the preparations for the Pearl Harbor attack. The Admiral was interviewed in Tokyo by a member of the International Staff of "U. S. News & World Report."



At TOKYO

Q Admiral Fukudome, when in 1941 did Japan decide that war with the United States was probable?

A No one can set a specific date. But the general mood—or fear—that war was probable became more or less fixed in July. The Japanese Army had advanced into Southern Indo-China, and this stimulated anti-Japanese feelings in America. The United States strengthened its economic blockade of Japan by freezing assets, embargoing oil exports and taking other economic measures. The U. S., of course, could claim that Japanese actions forced the U. S. to take counter-measures.

Q Was the Japanese move into Southern Indo-China a step toward war?

A It wasn't planned that way. We had two objectives, one military and the other diplomatic: We wanted to expand our bases into Southern Indo-China to choke off completely the flow of supplies from outside to Chiang Kai-shek. The second objective was to use this military lever to back up a tougher diplomatic attitude toward the United States.

Both the Army and the Navy had hoped for a compromise with America. But the embargo and the freezing of assets made us feel certain that the United States was simply applying pressure against us while waiting for an opportune time to destroy Japan as a nation.

On September 6, at a conference in the presence of the Emperor, Japan's leaders agreed on the basic policy of continuing negotiations with the United States while being fully prepared for any eventuality. Putting it more simply, it was decided that Japan preferred war to sitting idly by awaiting national destruction.

Q When did you first hear discussions in the Navy about an attack on Pearl Harbor?

A The Japanese Navy had been making operational plans for a possible war with the United States ever since 1909.

An attack on Pearl Harbor was always being studied, but was always considered extraordinarily difficult. Japan could not outbuild the United States, so we compromised by putting more and heavier guns on our ships, which meant sacrificing their cruising range. It was considered nearly im-

... "Roosevelt was using fleet to exert pressure on Japan"

possible to reach Hawaii and fight successfully with our short-range Navy.

In 1939, when the U. S. fleet was concentrated at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese Navy believed the U. S. must be making positive preparations for armed intervention against Japan. So we started restudying the idea of a Pearl Harbor attack.

The following year I was serving as chief of staff of the Combined Fleet commanded by Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto. We had just completed our annual training program in which carrier-mounted air attacks had been remarkably successful. Admiral Yamamoto and I were pacing the deck of the flagship *Nagato*. He turned to me and said: "I think an attack on Hawaii may be possible now that our air training has turned out so successfully."

Many former Navy officers now claim they had often thought of an air attack on Pearl Harbor. If so, they kept the idea to themselves at the time. Admiral Yamamoto was the first person to discuss the possibility openly.

WHY JAPAN ATTACKED—

Q What did Japan hope to accomplish by attacking Pearl Harbor?

A We had two major strategic objectives: The first was to redress the balance between the Japanese and American fleets. Even if it was impossible to destroy the entire U. S. fleet, enough ships might be sunk to put the U. S. fleet in an inferior position.

The second objective was to insure the safety of the southern [Southeast Asia] areas to be occupied by Japanese forces. If the U. S. fleet at Pearl Harbor was left untouched, our vast defense line would always be vulnerable to an American attack. To establish the safety of this defense line, we had to knock out the U. S. fleet at Pearl Harbor.

Q Would Japan have attacked Pearl Harbor if the Pacific Fleet had been based on the West Coast of the United States?

A Of course not. No attack on Pearl Harbor would have been contemplated or carried out. Without the fleet, Pearl Harbor was not a logical military target. We would never have considered attacking bases on the West Coast. Hawaii was far enough for Japan; the West Coast was out of our reach.

It would have been technically impossible to attack any American mainland bases. If the fleet had remained on the West Coast, Japan would have reverted to its traditional strategy of fighting the United States in waters fairly close to Japan's defense line.

Q Do you think President Roosevelt left the U. S. fleet at Pearl Harbor as bait, to make certain that Japan would attack?

A I believe this is speculation that was concocted after the end of the war. It is easy to make this sort of charge after everything is over. Roosevelt undoubtedly was using the fleet at Pearl Harbor to exert political and psychological pressure on Japan. Don't forget, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor only because it had finally developed the technical means to do so.

Q Aside from political considerations, was it good naval doctrine to leave the Pacific Fleet in a relatively exposed, advance base like Pearl Harbor?

A No, I would not consider it good naval doctrine. It would have been a much sounder strategy for the Pacific Fleet to be based on the West Coast.

Q Who was the author of the Pearl Harbor attack?

A Admiral Yamamoto had the idea first. In January, 1941, he ordered Rear Adm. Takijiro Onishi, chief of staff of the Eleventh Air Fleet, who was expert on air war, to make a

thorough study of the attack plan. This was turned over to Admiral Yamamoto's staff, which drew up the operational plan. After that, it was presented to the Naval General Staff for approval.

Q Was there any opposition to the plan within the Navy?

A Yes, there was a great deal of opposition. Admiral Onishi himself opposed it at first. Most of the opposition centered around two points: the difficulty of maintaining secrecy, and the problem of weather.

The attack would not be effective if it was not kept a complete secret from the United States. Not only would the attack fail, but the Japanese fleet would be hit in a counter surprise attack. There was a great deal of danger the secret would leak out. There were many spies in Japan at that time.

There was a great deal of worry about the winter storms in the North Pacific. Japanese warships, as I said before, had a short cruising range and would have to be refueled on their way to Hawaii. Bad weather would make it very difficult to refuel at sea, particularly the smaller vessels such as destroyers.

The argument was made that Japan should revert to its traditional plan of fighting only in home waters. Admiral Yamamoto, however, insisted that the attack be made. If planning was kept to a very few individuals, it could be kept secret. He also pointed to meteorological records which showed that weather is relatively good at least seven days a month in the North Pacific. This would be ample time for refueling at sea.

Q Was Admiral Yamamoto completely confident the attack would be a success?

A He had studied the attack plan strenuously and thoroughly. His confidence was so great that he once told me: "If this plan should fail, it would mean defeat in the war." He would not have taken such a risk if he had not been fully confident of success.

Q Did the Japanese pilots know when they were training that they were going to attack Pearl Harbor?

A No, not then. They were told only the night before the fleet left Hitokappu Bay in the Kuriles, bound for Hawaii.

WHEN EMPEROR WAS TOLD—

Q Did any Japanese civilians know about the planned attack?

A I think Foreign Minister Togo was the first civilian to know about it. He was told sometime between November 27, when Japan received the stern note from [Secretary of State] Hull, and December 2, when Adm. Osami Nagano and Gen. Hajime Sugiyama explained the complete operational plan to the Emperor and other top-ranking officials.

Q Did anyone oppose war at that meeting?

A No—no one.

Q Did many of Japan's military leaders know about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

A Oh, no! Absolute secrecy was of the utmost importance. In the Navy, only seven high-ranking officers, including myself, and a few staff officers knew about it. Premier Tojo and five top Army officers also knew about it.

Q When did the fleet get the final message to attack?

A The message, "Climb Mt. Niitaka," was sent the day before the actual attack, when the fleet was about 600 miles off Pearl Harbor.

Q Why was Sunday chosen as the day for the attack?

A A number of Japanese spies were working in Hawaii at the time. Their information was that the American fleet usually spent most of the week training at sea and returned to Pearl Harbor on Saturdays, and the crews rested on Sunday.

... "In a sense, Japan helped to educate the American mind"

To make our attack most effective, we chose Sunday when the fleet would normally be at anchor.

Q Did luck or chance play a great part in the attack?

A Yes, we use the term, "God's help," to describe the luck we had at the time. Yes, we were really lucky. The plan was kept secret until the very last moment. We were able to refuel our ships on schedule. All of the American battleships were at anchor. We had anticipated heavy losses of our aircraft, but we lost only 30 planes. So, the whole attack plan could be described as just about 100 per cent successful.

Admiral Pratt [former U. S. Chief of Naval Operations] later confided to Adm. Kichisaburo Nomura [Japan's Ambassador to U. S. in 1941] that three factors were responsible for the Japanese success: the attack was well planned; it was executed boldly and bravely; and we were lucky. I think luck was really one of the biggest elements.

Q Were you surprised at the failure of American aircraft to intercept either the fleet or the attacking planes?

A Not necessarily surprised. I would say that we were just lucky. One reason the task fleet withdrew so quickly after the attack was that we expected a quick counterattack by the American forces.

Q Do you agree with Gen. Minoru Genda [now chief of Japan's Air Defense Force] when he says Japan should have followed up the attack again and again?

A Well, that is a comment that is easy to make after the war is over. Anyone can say that. Right now I also think one more attack should have been made, quickly following up the first one. But Genda at the time was the youngest member of Admiral Nagumo's air staff, and I have never heard that Genda at any time suggested repeating the attacks to the commander of the task fleet.

FEARED: U. S. CARRIERS—

Q What would have been the targets in a follow-up attack?

A The oil tanks and ship-repair facilities. A good attack could have completely destroyed Pearl Harbor as a base. But I wouldn't have gone beyond two attacks. After all, there was great danger the U. S. carriers at sea would find us.

Q Was the Navy worried when it discovered the American carriers were not at Pearl Harbor?

A Yes, we were certainly worried. That was the reason we went ahead with operations against Midway later. We wanted a chance to sink those carriers.

Q Why didn't the fleet go hunting for the American carriers right after the Pearl Harbor attack?

A The orders were for the fleet to withdraw to Japan proper immediately after the attack. We wanted to keep damages to the minimum once our first objective, sinking the battleships, had been reached. We knew the war would last a long time, and we wanted to keep the fleet intact as long as possible. However, I feel regret that Admiral Nagumo did not carry out more-prudent reconnaissance. He might have found and attacked the carrier *Enterprise*, which was only 200 miles from Hawaii at the time.

Q Did the Navy consider the attack on Pearl Harbor the most important part of the entire war plan?

A Yes, in a sense. It had top priority because it was to be the first act of war, or at least simultaneous with the start of operations in other areas. If operations in the south had preceded the Pearl Harbor attack, the United States would have had a prior warning and would have been alerted to the possibility of an attack on Pearl Harbor.

Also, the attack on Pearl Harbor was needed to give us time to complete our military moves in the south. We failed

to sink the U. S. carriers at Midway, but still it wasn't until February, 1944, that the U. S. fleet began its real advance across the Pacific. The attack on Pearl Harbor gave us two years and two months to prepare for the American assault.

Q What sort of reaction did you expect from Americans following Pearl Harbor? Did you think they would be discouraged? Or that they would fight back?

A Never at any time did we believe the Americans would be so discouraged as to lose their fighting morale and yearn for an early peace. We knew their morale would be enhanced by the attack, and we expected heavy retaliatory action. But strategic requirements made it necessary for us to attack the Pacific Fleet.

Q Did the advantages of the attack outweigh the disadvantages?

A Yes. Let us assume we had attacked the Philippines without hitting Pearl Harbor. The degree of reaction from Americans in general then would probably have been less. But eventually the United States would have gone to war with Japan. So it was essentially strategic necessity that made us attack Pearl Harbor.

"WE FACED ATTACK"—

Q Didn't any Japanese, after the war started, believe peace could be negotiated later that would give Japan some of her conquests?

A Perhaps a few entertained this easygoing idea. But most of us considered this to be our position: We faced the menace of an attack by the United States. Japan had two alternatives: It could surrender completely and avoid war, or it could rise up in self-defense. So we did plunge into this desperate war, disregarding the issue of whether we would win or lose. Admiral Yamamoto used to say: "We can keep on fighting for one to one and a half years." Admiral Nagano said: "We can fight for the first three years, but we are not confident of the prospect after that."

Q But if Japan did not believe in final victory, how did you expect to escape total defeat?

A We did not necessarily expect complete defeat. We thought there was a 90 per cent possibility of national death. But there was also a 10 per cent possibility of life.

This was our basic way of thinking: Even though Japan should be defeated, our national pride will live forever, because we had fought against the threat to our nation. But if we had surrendered without fighting, the national spirit of the Japanese people would have been destroyed.

Our sole hope was that the general, world military situation would turn in our favor, and we might have a chance to conclude peace. Some Japanese now argue that we should have stopped the war immediately once Singapore had been captured. After all, Britain was in grave difficulties at the time. But even though we might have tried to make peace then, there wasn't the slightest chance the United States would accept the offer.

Q What was the greatest weakness of the United States at the time of Pearl Harbor?

A Lack of care, and inattention. The Americans simply felt that the Japanese would never dare to attack Pearl Harbor.

Q Are Americans still guilty of the same complacency?

A No, I don't think so. They remember Pearl Harbor. They are now fully prepared for any eventuality.

In this sense, it might be said that Japan, through its attack on Pearl Harbor, helped to educate the American mind, put it on guard against inattention and negligence.

[END]