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FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
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Ph.D. (History)

GRADE / DEGREE

Department of History

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

Canada and the Far East Crisis in 1941: Intelligence, Strategy and the Coming of the Pacific War

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**Canada and the Far East Crisis in 1941:
Intelligence, Strategy and the Coming of the Pacific War**

by

Timothy Wilford

Ph.D. Thesis submitted to:

The Department of History
University of Ottawa

by:

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Student No. 1675869
7 March 2005



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ISBN: 0-494-11036-8

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Abstract

Historians specializing in the Second World War have often characterized Canada as an Atlantic Power whilst tending to ignore its important role in the Pacific. Moreover, historians have often characterized Canada as a very minor component of the Anglo-American alliance that emerged in 1941. Canada's response to the Far East crisis may be better understood through a detailed study of the intelligence operations and strategic planning that preceded the outbreak of war in the Pacific. Several primary sources, including contemporaneous war records, internal histories, memoirs and post-war accounts from former participants in wartime intelligence operations, suggest that Canada was better prepared for the Pacific War than previously known. In 1941, Canadian intelligence staff and strategists worked closely with their Allied and American counterparts to prepare for war with Japan. Canada monitored Japan's preparations for war and participated in Allied-American conferences concerning the Far East crisis, using multiple intelligence sources to optimize strategic planning. Throughout the developing crisis in the Far East, Canada sought to avoid conflict with Japan until American participation was assured, but fully anticipated action in Southeast Asia and the North Pacific, making various preparations for national and imperial defence.

Dedicated to

My Parents

who offered us all the opportunities

In honour also of

all Canadians who served the Allied cause during

the Second World War

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Preface

In recent times, the Pacific War has sometimes been called ‘the forgotten war’. One military museum I visited not long ago used that very expression in its information card on the Pacific War. It is difficult to imagine that anyone could ever forget a conflict that claimed millions of lives, ended in nuclear attacks and gave rise to several new political regimes in the Far East. The Pacific War transformed the conflict that the Allies first faced in 1939. It created conditions that led to the formation of the Grand Alliance between America, the British Commonwealth, the Soviet Union and a host of other ‘United Nations’. It led to the destruction of the Japanese Empire. It was instrumental in America’s rise as a global power. Most certainly, the Pacific War and its origins are worthy of study.

If the Pacific War is fading from memory, then Canada’s participation in that conflict is likely altogether forgotten in some quarters. Canada is not usually seen as a Pacific Power. Yet on 7 December 1941, Canada was the first nation in the world to declare war on Japan. Canada also sacrificed many men at Hong Kong. Furthermore, Japanese Canadians were unjustly interned after war broke out in the Pacific. It seems that the Pacific War is an important part of Canadian history.

This study on Canada and the Far East crisis in 1941 originated with several questions that I had about Canadian intelligence operations in the Pacific, Canada’s role as Britain’s senior ally, Canada’s relations with Japan and its treatment of the Japanese-Canadian community. Having completed several studies on pre-Pearl Harbor intelligence, with a particular emphasis on the Anglo-American dimension, I wanted to know more about Canadian intelligence and strategy during the Far East crisis. This study seeks to understand how Canada became involved in the

Pacific War. It looks closely at how Canada formed its Far East policies with respect to domestic issues. It also examines Canada's role within the British Commonwealth and within the Anglo-American alliance that emerged in 1941.

In this study, I argue that Canada was better prepared for the Pacific War than previously known, owing to effective intelligence reporting, careful strategic assessments and full participation in the emerging Anglo-American alliance. During the Far East crisis in 1941, Canada sought to avoid conflict with Japan until American support was assured. Yet Canada fully anticipated action in Southeast Asia and the North Pacific, making several preparations for national and imperial defence. In support of its central thesis, this study draws upon a wide range of archival sources from Canada, Britain and America. Relevant testimony and accounts from former participants in wartime covert and intelligence operations have also been considered. Furthermore, this study examines other historians' views, offers suggestions for further research and comments on methodological problems facing historians of the Second World War. But the principal object of this study is to discover how Canada, as a minor Pacific Power, maintained a high degree of awareness and met its Allied commitments during a crisis that ultimately led to war in the Pacific.

Timothy Wilford

7 March 2005

University of Ottawa

Acknowledgements

Several people have greatly assisted me in my endeavours. I wish to thank the many archivists who offered their assistance during my pursuit of documents concerning Canada, the Far East crisis, wartime intelligence operations and Allied strategic planning. In particular, I wish to thank archivists at the National Archives of Canada (Ottawa), the Directorate of History and Heritage (Ottawa), the Queen's University Archives (Kingston), the St. Catharines Museum (St. Catharines), the Public Records Office (Kew), the Churchill Archives Centre (Cambridge), the Roosevelt Library (Hyde Park), and the National Archives and Records Administration (College Park and Seattle).

I have also benefited from conversations and correspondence with several scholars and veterans. In particular, I wish to thank historians Richard Aldrich, Antony Best, John Bryden, Douglas Ford, Sir Martin Gilbert, Stephen Harris, Akira Iriye, Warren Kimball, Gerhard Krebs, Ernest May, Tosh Minohara, Galen Perras, David Stafford and Neville Wylie. Furthermore, I wish to offer my gratitude to several Canadian, British and American veterans of wartime intelligence, who spoke to me about their experiences.

In terms of funding for this study, I wish to thank the University of Ottawa, which provided an Admissions Scholarship, and the Government of Ontario, which provided an Ontario Graduate Scholarship.

I wish to thank my Ph.D. thesis board, which was chaired by Brian Ray and included the following examiners: Antony Best from the London School of Economics, as well as Richard Connors, Jeffrey Keshen, Eda Kranakis and Brian Villa, all from the University of Ottawa. Their helpful comments and observations formed the basis of several revisions that I made to the

original manuscript. I am also grateful to Timothy Girard and Galen Perras, who attended my thesis defence and showed their support.

Special thanks are extended to my Ph.D. thesis advisor, Professor Brian Villa, who not only assisted in guiding this study to its successful completion, but also offered the benefit of his expertise and experience. On many occasions, he generously discussed his own research into pre-war intelligence and the origins of the Pacific War. In addition to offering many insights, he also shared several important archival documents, which are cited in this study.

I am indebted to Christopher Carr, who proofread the original manuscript and offered many important suggestions regarding its form and content. His comments were most helpful.

Finally, I wish to thank my wife Laura for her steadfast support during the completion of this study. Her support, and that of our children, William and Elizabeth, sustained me throughout the entire course of my research.

Introduction

On 7 December 1941, the Empire of Japan launched devastating attacks against Malaya, Pearl Harbor, the Philippines and Hong Kong. Canada was immediately drawn into the Pacific War, and its battalions in Hong Kong represented its commitment to the alliance with the British Commonwealth and Empire. The disaster in the Far East suggested that Canada and its allies were quite unprepared, although the United States' entry into the war represented one positive outcome. Yet, on the very first day of the Pacific War, Canada became the first nation in the world to declare war against Japan. Its declaration preceded any similar action from either Britain or America, both principal players in Far East affairs. Many observers regarded Canada as a minor Pacific Power, but noted that it had made some preparations for a conflict in the Pacific. It is possible that the Dominion received sufficient incoming intelligence to make bold strategic decisions with confidence. Perhaps Canada was not at all indifferent to Far East affairs, even though Britain had long ago passed over to the United States most responsibility for the delicate diplomatic negotiations with Japan. Canada's position within the emerging Anglo-American alliance would also have influenced its reaction to the mounting crisis with Japan.

Canada's response to the Far East crisis may be best understood through a detailed study of the intelligence operations and strategic planning that preceded the outbreak of war in the Pacific. Historians specializing in the Second World War have often characterized Canada as an Atlantic Power whilst tending to ignore its important role in the Pacific. Moreover, Canada has often been characterized as a very minor component of the Anglo-American alliance that emerged in 1941. In fact, however, a range of primary sources, including contemporaneous war records, internal histories, memoirs and post-war accounts from former participants in wartime

intelligence operations, suggest that Canada was better prepared for the Pacific War than was previously known. In 1941, Canadian intelligence staff and strategists worked closely with their Allied and American counterparts to prepare for war with Japan. Canada monitored Japan's preparations for war and participated in Allied-American conferences on the Far East crisis, using multiple intelligence sources to optimize strategic planning. Throughout the developing crisis in the Far East, Canada sought to avoid conflict with Japan until American participation was assured, but fully anticipated action in Southeast Asia and the North Pacific, making various preparations for national and imperial defence.

The Far East crisis that Canada and its allies faced in 1941 had originated in disagreement between Japan and the West over the destiny of China and the control of resources in the Far East. Japan began its conquest of Manchuria in 1931, and in 1937 began its lengthy war in China. Although Canada, along with other members of the League of Nations, failed to intervene in the Sino-Japanese War, diplomatic tensions increased as the conflict intensified. Moreover, the war in Europe created dangerous alliances: in September 1940, Japan joined the Axis Powers in the Tripartite Pact. Canada, along with its allies in the British Commonwealth, anticipated conflict between Japan and America. It was also known that such a conflict would be likely to involve Britain and the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), the two predominant colonial powers in Southeast Asia. In July 1941, following Japan's occupation of southern French Indochina, Canada supported an American-led asset-freeze against Japan as a supposedly deterrent measure. But Japan would not withdraw from China and saw the asset-freeze, which deprived it of American oil supplies, as provocation. Canada's preparations for a possible war in the Pacific included participating in Allied-American conferences throughout 1941, improving its coastal defences, registering Japanese Canadians, sending troops to Hong Kong, and

collecting intelligence on Pacific shipping for the Allied community. Despite these preparations, Canada and its allies found themselves at a great disadvantage when the failure of American-Japanese diplomacy led to Japan's attacks on Allied-American targets throughout Southeast Asia and the Pacific. It is still unclear how far these attacks might have been anticipated. Historians continue to discuss what Allied intelligence services knew before the Pacific War, how the Far East crisis developed and why it led to the Japanese onslaught of 7 December 1941.

Other Historian's Views

A survey of relevant historical works places the question of Canada's response to the Far East crisis in a wider context. This survey will begin by examining studies of Canadian, British and American intelligence. A sampling of Pearl Harbor historiography is included because that field is so closely related to the topic at hand. It should be noted that traditionalists believe that the Pearl Harbor attack surprised the United States and its allies, whereas revisionists believe that the attack did not surprise everyone, as accurate predictions or specific foreknowledge were available. This survey will then consider historical works concerning Canadian strategic planning, including works on Canadian alliances and diplomacy, defence strategy, the treatment of Japanese Canadians, and the reinforcement of Hong Kong.

Only a few historians have studied Canadian wartime intelligence, but their well-researched works provide an excellent foundation for further enquiry. In 1981, Marc Milner examined naval intelligence in *Canadian Naval Force Requirements in the Second World War*.¹ Milner did not discuss incoming intelligence, but explained the structure, staffing and responsibilities of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) intelligence network. In the same year,

¹ Marc Milner, *Canadian Naval Force Requirements in the Second World War* (Ottawa: DND, Operational Research and Analysis Establishment, 1981).

Major S.R. Elliot, author of *Scarlet to Green: A History of Intelligence in the Canadian Army, 1903–1963*, emphasized that the Hong Kong decision was political and that blame for the debacle could not be laid upon Canadian Intelligence.² In 1984, Peter St. John outlined the development of Canadian intelligence operations in his article, ‘Canada’s Accession to the Allied Intelligence Community 1940–45’.³ St. John maintained that Canada steadily integrated its intelligence resources into Allied networks as the war progressed. In 1987, Wesley Wark offered an account of Canadian code breaking in his article, ‘Cryptographic Innocence: The Origins of Signals Intelligence in Canada in the Second World War’.⁴ Wark had several files declassified under Canada’s ‘Access to Information Act’ and showed how Canadian officials began wartime signals intelligence, making particular reference to the Examination Unit, Canada’s first cryptanalysis centre. Wark argued that Canadian signals intelligence was in its formative phase during the early war years, but achieved some success in decrypting diplomatic traffic.

More recently, some historians have commented on intelligence relating to the Pacific War. In 1993, John Bryden drew upon a great number of newly declassified files in his exhaustive study *Best-Kept Secret: Canadian Secret Intelligence in the Second World War*.⁵ Bryden showed that Canadian wartime intelligence was more successful than previously known, and emphasized that cryptanalysis played an important part in its operations. He offered several supporting examples, including a Canadian decrypt of a German message that heralded the coming of the Pacific War. In 2001, Gil Murray, who had served in signals intelligence during the war, produced a volume of memoirs entitled *The Invisible War: The Untold Secret Story of*

² Major S.R. Elliot, *Scarlet to Green: A History of Intelligence in the Canadian Army, 1903–1963* (Ottawa: Canadian Intelligence and Security Association, 1981), 374.

³ Peter St. John, ‘Canada’s Accession to the Allied Intelligence Community 1940–45’, *Conflict Quarterly* 4.4 (Fall 1984): 5–21.

⁴ Wesley K. Wark, ‘Cryptographic Innocence: The Origins of Signals Intelligence in Canada in the Second World War’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 22 (1987): 639–65.

⁵ John Bryden, *Best-Kept Secret: Canadian Secret Intelligence in the Second World War* (Toronto: Lester, 1993), 93–4.

*Number One Canadian Special Wireless Group, Royal Canadian Signal Corps, 1944–1946.*⁶ In the introductory sections of his account, Murray discussed Pacific Coast intelligence operations and lent some credence to post-war accounts that suggest the Allies may have monitored Japanese transmissions in the North Pacific on the eve of the Pacific War.

Historians have also studied the wartime role of British Security Coordination (BSC), which had conducted intelligence operations in both Canada and the United States under the leadership of William Stephenson. In 1986, David Stafford offered one of the first accounts of BSC's Canadian intelligence operations in *Camp X*.⁷ Stafford explained that BSC had ties with various Ottawa officials and that Camp X, situated in Whitby, Ontario, assisted with Allied communications in 1941 and with Special Operations Executive (SOE) training thereafter. In 1998, Thomas Mahl drew upon several new sources in his account of BSC operations entitled *Desperate Deception: British Covert Operations in the United States, 1939–44*.⁸ He demonstrated how extensive were BSC operations across North America and also argued that BSC was instrumental in undermining pre-war American isolationism as well as in creating support for Britain's cause. Also in 1998, Bill Macdonald examined Canada's links with BSC in *The True Intrepid: Sir William Stephenson and the Unknown Agents*.⁹ Macdonald interviewed Grace Garner, Stephenson's wartime secretary, who claimed that in late November 1941 BSC warned the Allies and the Americans of a massive Japanese strike on Pearl Harbor. William Stephenson's end-of-war account of BSC operations finally appeared in print in 1999, under the title *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas*,

⁶ Gil Murray, *The Invisible War: The Untold Secret Story of Number One Canadian Special Wireless Group, Royal Canadian Signal Corps, 1944–1946* (Toronto, Oxford: Dundurn Press, 2001), 24–5, 44–5.

⁷ David Stafford, *Camp X* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1986).

⁸ Thomas E. Mahl, *Desperate Deception: British Covert Operations in the United States, 1939–44* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 1998).

⁹ Bill Macdonald, *The True Intrepid: Sir William Stephenson and the Unknown Agents* (Surrey, BC: Timberholme Books, 1998), 288–9.

1940–1945.¹⁰ After years of security classification, Stephenson's account became a welcome resource for historians of Allied Intelligence. In terms of pre-Pacific War operations, Stephenson showed that BSC participated in covert operations against Japan with support from the Roosevelt administration and in late November 1941 penetrated the Kurusu Mission, Japan's diplomatic delegation to Washington, predicting that war with Japan would occur in early December.

Several historians have examined British intelligence estimates produced before the Pacific War. In 1979, F.H. Hinsley commented briefly upon diplomatic intelligence in *British Intelligence in the Second World War*. According to Hinsley, decrypted diplomatic messages showed that as early as March 1941 Germany urged Japan to strike Singapore, and that in August that year Germany offered to declare war against the United States in the event of a Japanese-American war in the Pacific; Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt were both aware of this intelligence.¹¹ Hinsley's other references all related to the imminence of war in Southeast Asia. Because of a decision not to extend the British official history to the Far East, a decision that remains hard to explain, there is no extensive official commentary on this issue. In 1992, James Rusbridger and Eric Nave offered a revisionist interpretation in *Betrayal at Pearl Harbor*.¹² Rusbridger and Nave claimed that British Intelligence revealed Japan's plan to attack Pearl Harbor, but Churchill withheld relevant intelligence from Roosevelt as a means of ensuring American participation in the Second World War. The authors focused mainly upon British success in decrypting JN-25, the principal Japanese naval code. However, Nave, a former

¹⁰ Sir William S. Stephenson (ed.), *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940–1945*, Introduction by Nigel West (New York: Fromm International: 1999), 88–94, 98–100.

¹¹ F.H. Hinsley, with E.E. Thomas, C.F.G. Ransom and R.C. Knight, *British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence on Strategy*, 3 vols. (London: HMSO 1979–83), vol. 1, 454 and vol. 2, 75–7.

¹² James Rusbridger and Eric Nave, *Betrayal at Pearl Harbor: How Churchill Lured Roosevelt into World War II* (Old Tappan, NJ: Simon & Schuster 1992).

cryptanalyst who had served in 1941 with British Intelligence in Singapore, later withdrew his support for some of the book's conclusions, thereby casting doubt on Rusbridger's thesis.

Recent archival releases have created further debate. In 1995, Antony Best, author of *Britain, Japan and Pearl Harbor*, argued that the Pearl Harbor attack surprised the British. Although Best uncovered documents in Australia showing British interest in Japanese activities within the Hawaii area in November 1941, he explained that there was no advance warning. Moreover, he uncovered an important retrospective Admiralty history which states categorically that 'We had not penetrated the Japanese plan to attack Pearl Harbor' and strongly suggests that the British Admiralty never located any carriers further east than Saipan prior to the attack.¹³ In 2000, Richard Aldrich, author of *Intelligence and the War against Japan: Britain, America and the Politics of Secret Service*, discussed several post-war sources indicating that British authorities produced an estimate of the possibility of a Pearl Harbor attack, one that was probably shared with Washington.¹⁴ Aldrich emphasized, however, that this was only an educated guess and the prospect was not seriously considered, given that overwhelming intelligence pointed to Japanese interest in targets throughout Southeast Asia. In 2002, Antony Best questioned these new sources and defended his earlier views on pre-Pearl Harbor intelligence in *British Intelligence and the Japanese Challenge in Asia, 1914–1941*.¹⁵

Studies specializing in American intelligence concerning Pearl Harbor are prolific to say the least, but a few representative works require mention here. In 1948, the renowned American historian Charles Beard provided the first important revisionist study of the United States' entry into the Pacific War in *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941: A Study in*

¹³ Antony Best, *Britain, Japan and Pearl Harbor* (London: Routledge 1995), 190–2.

¹⁴ Richard J. Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War against Japan: Britain, America and the Politics of Secret Service* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 2000), 86–8.

¹⁵ Antony Best, *British Intelligence and the Japanese Challenge in Asia, 1914–1941* (London: Palgrave 2002).

Appearances and Realities. Beard's central thesis was that in November 1941 Roosevelt manoeuvred Japan into firing the first shot when he rejected Japan's proposal for a *modus vivendi*, in which Japan offered to abstain from further aggression in the Far East, a proposal that was actually in keeping with Roosevelt's earlier declaration to Japan on 17 August 1941.¹⁶ Beard, who drew upon the US Congressional Hearings on Pearl Harbor, also argued that the Pearl Harbor attack did not surprise Washington authorities, who were aware of earlier strategic estimates concerning such an attack. Other clues that they knew of included Japanese espionage in Hawaii, the 'Winds' messages in which Japan notified its overseas staff of the prospect of war, and Japan's fourteen-part message that ended diplomatic relations on 7 December 1941, a message which Washington only belatedly shared with Hawaii.¹⁷ Beard's book, however, was poorly received in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.

In 1962, Roberta Wohlstetter offered a brilliant traditionalist account of pre-Pearl Harbor intelligence in *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*. Wohlstetter advanced her now classic 'signal and noise' theory, postulating that US authorities received an information overload: 'signals announcing the Pearl Harbor attack were always accompanied by competing or contradictory signals, by all sorts of information useless for anticipating this particular disaster. . . . In short, we failed to anticipate Pearl Harbor not for want of the relevant materials, but because of a plethora of irrelevant ones.'¹⁸ Wohlstetter based her study upon the Pearl Harbor Congressional Hearings (1941–46), which many historians believe demonstrate how Japanese radio practices defied the efforts of United States Navy (USN) cryptanalysts and traffic analysts.

¹⁶ Charles A. Beard, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941: A Study in Appearances and Realities* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1948), 556.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 364–74, 525, 534–6.

¹⁸ Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1962), 3, 387.

In 1981, Gordon Prange and associates reasserted the traditionalist thesis in their exhaustive study *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor*. Prange discounted the ability of radio intelligence to provide the United States with any meaningful information. For him, '[the] Japanese blackout of the task force, the dummy message traffic, and American complacency effectively cancelled out the possibility of locating Japan's First Air Fleet by these means.'¹⁹

In 1982, John Toland, author of *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath*, offered a revisionist account based upon testimony from various sources. He argued that Roosevelt and his senior staff ignored radio intelligence, amongst other warning signs, because they needed a Japanese strike on Pearl Harbor to enter the Second World War. Toland's new sources, which included American radio officer Leslie Grogan, Dutch Naval Attaché Captain Johan E.M. Ranneft, and NEI officer General Hein Ter Poorten, emphasized the success of direction finding and traffic analysis in the Pacific as opposed to cryptanalysis. Toland drew upon these American and Dutch sources to argue that US authorities knew the location of the *Kido Butai* (Japanese Strike Force) in the North Pacific prior to the attack.²⁰ Toland's book drew much criticism, but provided historians with new evidence to consider.

In 1985, Rear-Admiral Edwin T. Layton and associates offered a different perspective in *And I Was There: Pearl Harbor and Midway – Breaking the Secrets*. Layton, who had served as Pacific Fleet Intelligence Officer at Pearl Harbor in 1941, argued that radio intelligence offered potential clues as to Japan's intentions, but that it failed to yield results because of inadequate resources and poor leadership within the USN. His account was based upon his personal

¹⁹ Gordon W. Prange, with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), 734.

²⁰ John Toland, *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and its Aftermath* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 279–81, 283, 286, 299, 317–8.

recollections as well as archival material from Washington. He and his associates believed that Japanese radio silence thwarted USN traffic analysis, and that USN cryptanalysis only recovered 10 percent of JN-25, the principal Japanese naval code.²¹

In 1999, Robert Stinnett, author of *Day of Deceit: The Truth about FDR and Pearl Harbor*, reasserted the revisionist position with the added benefit of seventeen years of archival research, including Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Stinnett argued that Roosevelt followed an 'action plan', first postulated by a USN intelligence officer in late 1940, which was designed to encourage Japan to commit an overt act against America. According to Stinnett, radio intelligence and cryptanalysis played a vital role in providing Roosevelt's team with foreknowledge of the Pearl Harbor attack. He also drew upon USN intercept logs to argue that the 1st Air Fleet, which led the *Kido Butai*, broke radio silence several times.²² Stinnett concluded that a number of military and naval personnel joined forces with Washington in a plan to sacrifice Pearl Harbor as a means to enter the Second World War.

In 2001, two studies surveyed Pearl Harbor historiography with a special emphasis on American-Allied intelligence.²³ Roland Worth studied British-American cooperation in the field of pre-Pearl Harbor signals intelligence in his book *Secret Allies in the Pacific: Covert Intelligence and Code-Breaking Prior to the Attack on Pearl Harbor*. Worth drew upon the US Congressional Hearings on Pearl Harbor to test both traditionalist and revisionist views. He maintained a traditionalist perspective, but nevertheless fully explored all views about pre-Pearl Harbor intelligence. As such, he provided readers with a comprehensive, analytical and relevant

²¹ Rear-Admiral Edwin T. Layton, USN (Ret.), with Captain Roger Pineau, USNR (Ret.), and John Costello, *And I Was There: Pearl Harbor and Midway – Breaking the Secrets* (New York: William Morrow, 1985), 95–101, 231–3.

²² Robert B. Stinnett, *Day of Deceit: The Truth about FDR and Pearl Harbor* (New York: Free Press, 1999), 208–9.

²³ Roland H. Worth, Jr., *Secret Allies in the Pacific: Covert Intelligence and Code-Breaking Prior to the Attack on Pearl Harbor* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001); and Stephen J. Sniegowski, 'The Case for Pearl Harbor Revisionism', *The Occidental Quarterly* 1.2 (Winter 2001).

summary of Pearl Harbor historiography. Stephen Sniegoski focused upon revisionist interpretations in his article, 'The Case for Pearl Harbor Revisionism', in which he lent some credence to evidence and interpretations suggesting that the United States and its allies may have predicted the Pearl Harbor attack.

Canadian strategy has been discussed in both specialist and survey studies.²⁴ In his 1964 study *In Defence of Canada: Appeasement and Rearmament*, James Eayr explained how the Mackenzie King government planned for a war of limited liability. With respect to Pacific strategy, Eayr showed how Canadian officials avoided conflict with Japan but shifted their priorities to Pacific Coast defence before the outbreak of war in Europe, only to shift them back later to the Atlantic. In 1970, C.P. Stacey explained Canadian wartime strategy in *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939–1945*. Stacey emphasized how Mackenzie King's civilian ministers often defined military policy, rather than the Chiefs of Staff. He also noted that Mackenzie King used Pacific Coast defence as a means of avoiding a conscription crisis. In 1975, J.L. Granatstein explained Canada's wartime achievements in *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939–1945*. Granatstein focused on Canada's domestic politics during wartime, but also demonstrated how Mackenzie King and his associates skilfully negotiated with both American and British authorities to secure Canadian interests, although he noted that Canada became increasingly marginalized over the course of the war. In 1977, R.D. Cuff and J.L. Granatstein spoke of common US-Canadian defence concerns in *Ties that Bind: Canadian-American Relations in Wartime from the Great*

²⁴ James Eayr, *In Defence of Canada: Appeasement and Rearmament* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964); C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939–1945* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada, 1970); J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939–1945* (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1975); R.D. Cuff and J.L. Granatstein, *Ties that Bind: Canadian-American Relations in Wartime from the Great War to the Cold War* (Toronto: S. Stevens, Hakkert, 1977); and Desmond Morton, *Canada and War: A Military and Political History* (Toronto: Butterworth, 1981).

War to the Cold War. They also noted that Canada became increasingly marginalized in the face of growing American influence during the Second World War, and in 1981, Desmond Morton expressed similar views in *Canada and War: A Military and Political History*.

More recent works have also addressed those themes.²⁵ In 1985, John Herd Thomson, with Allan Seager, demonstrated how successive Canadian governments avoided foreign entanglements and failed to impose punitive measures against the rising dictatorships in *Canada 1922–1939: Decades of Discord*. In 1996, Norman Hillmer offered a collection of essays about Canada's position on the eve of the war in *A Country of Limitations: Canada and the World in 1939*. Within that book, Gregory Johnson contributed a chapter entitled 'Canada and the Far East in 1939'. Johnson explained that Canada considered both British and American views in the formation of its own Far East policy, which in 1939 still involved appeasement, even though Pacific Coast defences were considered a priority. In 2004, John Meehan, author of *The Dominion and the Rising Sun: Canada Encounters Japan, 1929–41*, offered the first major study of Canadian-Japanese diplomacy in the interwar period. Meehan examined the political, economic and cultural relations between the two countries, revealing Canada's important 'Pacific dimension' and the tension between its 'commitment to peace and its trade with an aggressor.'

At least two Ph.D. dissertations have addressed the theme of Canadian Pacific strategy. In 1982, Roger Sarty's Ph.D. thesis entitled 'Silent Sentry: A Military and Political History of Canadian Coast Defence, 1860–1945' noted that Canada had only a minor presence in the

²⁵ John Herd Thomson, with Allan Seager, *Canada 1922–1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1985); and Norman Hillmer (ed.), *A Country of Limitations: Canada and the World in 1939* (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1996); John D. Meehan, *The Dominion and the Rising Sun: Canada Encounters Japan, 1929–41* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004). For recent survey studies of Canadian-American relations, see Norman Hillmer (ed.), *Partners Nevertheless: Canadian-American Relations in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1989); J.L. Granatstein and Norman Hillmer, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1991); and J.L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, *Canada and the Two World Wars* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2003).

Pacific, but maintained a defensive outlook.²⁶ In 1989, Gregory Johnson produced a Ph.D. thesis entitled 'North Pacific Triangle: The Impact of the Far East on Canada and its Relations with the United States and Great Britain, 1937–1948'. He argued that until 1945 Canada sought 'to prevent entanglement in Anglo-American power struggles for the control of Asia', although after the war it tried but failed to pursue an independent Far East policy. According to Johnson, the Canadian government made the Pacific Coast a priority because it feared a Japanese attack and American encroachment on Canada in the event of a Pacific War. He also noted that Mackenzie King frequently warned Britain against provoking Japan because he feared a two-front war without American involvement. For Johnson, the fate of Canadian troops sent to Hong Kong demonstrated how 'the interplay between international and domestic circumstances forced the government to make a decision it lived to regret.'²⁷

Published works have also discussed Canada's Pacific Coast strategy.²⁸ In 1986, W.A.B. Douglas included a thorough account of air-defence preparations along the Pacific Coast in his comprehensive study *The Creation of a National Air Force*. He explained how aircraft surveillance and radio monitoring figured in preparations made before the war. In 1999, Michael Whitby focused specifically on the Pacific Coast in 'The Quiet Coast: Canadian Naval Operations in Defence of British Columbia, 1941–1942'. Whitby carefully outlined all Pacific Coast defence preparations, but emphasized that Japanese forces only posed a minimum threat to coastal security. In 2003, Galen Perras commented on Canadian defence strategy in *Stepping*

²⁶ Roger Sarty, 'Silent Sentry: A Military and Political History of Canadian Coast Defence, 1860–1945' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1982).

²⁷ Gregory A. Johnson, 'North Pacific Triangle: The Impact of the Far East on Canada and its Relations with the United States and Great Britain, 1937–1948' (Ph.D. Thesis, York University, 1989), 10.

²⁸ W.A.B. Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force*, Vol. II of Norman Hillmer (ed.), *The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986); Michael Whitby, 'The Quiet Coast: Canadian Naval Operations in Defence of British Columbia, 1941–1942', in Peter T. Haydon and Ann L. Griffiths (eds.), *Canada's Pacific Naval Presence: Purposeful or Peripheral* (Halifax: The Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, 1999), 68–9; and Galen Roger Perras, *Stepping Stones to Nowhere: The Aleutian Islands, Alaska, and American Military Strategy, 1867–1945* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003).

Stones to Nowhere: The Aleutian Islands, Alaska, and American Military Strategy, 1867–1945.

He noted that both Canada and the United States feared a Japanese Pacific Coast campaign, one involving island hopping through the Aleutians, although such a plan was never really viable.

Perras offered a detailed, analytical account of how North American strategic planning developed with respect to Pacific Coast defence.

Several works have studied the plight of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War.²⁹ In 1976, W. Peter Ward produced an article entitled 'British Columbia and the Japanese Evacuation', explaining how public hostility and security measures led to the internment of Japanese Canadians. In 1988, J.L. Granatstein and Gregory Johnson discussed the internment decision in Norman Hillmer, et al. (eds.), *On Guard for Thee: War, Ethnicity and the Canadian State, 1939–1945*. They explained that the Mackenzie King government saw internment as a strategic necessity during wartime, noting that Ottawa's decision resulted not only from racism, but also from concerns over potential espionage, sabotage and invasion. In 1990, Patricia Roy and associates upheld the innocence of the Japanese Canadians in *Mutual Hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War*. In 1991, Ken Adachi also defended their reputation in *The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*. For Adachi, there was no justification for the internments, considering the circumstances facing the Canadian government in 1941–42.

Historians have offered various interpretations of Canada's decision to send two battalions to Hong Kong in November 1941.³⁰ In 1981, Major S.R. Elliot, author of the

²⁹ W. Peter Ward, 'British Columbia and the Japanese Evacuation', *Canadian Journal of History* 57 (1976); Norman Hillmer, Bohdan Kordan and Lobomyr Luciuk, *On Guard For Thee* (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the Study of the Second World War, 1988); Patricia Roy, et al., *Mutual Hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); and Ken Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991).

³⁰ Elliot, *Scarlet to Green*, 374; John Ferris, 'Savage Christmas: The Canadians at Hong Kong', in David J. Bercuson and S.F. Wise (eds.), *The Valour and the Horror Revisited* (Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP,

previously cited *Scarlet to Green*, emphasized that the Hong Kong decision was political and that faulty British intelligence sources contributed to the disaster: ‘To criticize today the lack of a Canadian Intelligence contribution before deciding to send Canadians to Hong Kong is futile. . . . All assessments came from the British who, almost to the end of November, discounted the probability of an attack.’ In 1994, John Ferris, as a contributor to *The Valour and the Horror Revisited*, emphasized how British strategists believed in the deterrent value of Hong Kong reinforcements, incorrect as that view turned out to be. In his 1995 article, ‘Britain and the Reinforcement of Hong Kong, 1941’, Galen Perras argued that ‘strengthening Hong Kong was a reasonable act that in hindsight has acquired an unworthy moral taint.’ Perras, who provided a detailed background to the decision-making of the period, also emphasized how British strategists saw reinforcing Hong Kong as a deterrent measure. In 1997, Brereton Greenhous produced a masterful, definitive study on the subject, entitled ‘*C’ Force to Hong Kong: A Canadian Catastrophe, 1941–1945*. Greenhous showed, step by step, how the decision to send Canadian troops to Hong Kong came to be taken, explaining how Canadian and British officials came to accept Hong Kong as an integral part of Allied deterrence in the Far East and how Canada met its imperial commitments.

Our survey of relevant historiography shows that many works have given an excellent overview of Canada’s wartime intelligence capabilities and strategic planning, thereby providing a solid foundation for further enquiries. A few specialist articles, books and dissertations have considered Canada’s role as a Pacific Power, although they have not focused on Canadian decision-making on the eve of the Pacific War. Many historians have skilfully surveyed the

1994), 109–27; Galen Perras, “‘Our position in the Far East would be stronger without this unsatisfactory commitment’: Britain and the Reinforcement of Hong Kong, 1941’, *Canadian Journal of History* 30.2 (1995): 231–59; and Brereton Greenhous, *‘C’ Force to Hong Kong: A Canadian Catastrophe, 1941–1945* (Toronto, Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1997).

period preceding Canada's entry into the Pacific War, but few have offered detailed accounts, possibly because relevant archival collections were closed until recent years. Moreover, Canadian intelligence capabilities in the early war years have sometimes been either neglected or characterized as having been in their formative phase. With the benefit of recent archival releases, a more detailed account of Canada's response to the Far East crisis in 1941 may be produced to complement the survey studies that have been published to date.

The Methodology of this Study

The present study offers a new interpretation of Canada's response to the Far East crisis through an examination of Canadian intelligence operations and strategic planning from December 1940 to December 1941, the period during which Japan's relations with the West worsened rapidly. During that time, Canada collected important intelligence concerning Far East affairs from a range of sources. It is essential to assess the capabilities of the Canadian and Allied intelligence networks and to examine any incoming intelligence that informed Canadian decision-makers. The intelligence reports considered in this study include not only those pertaining to Japan and Southeast Asia, but also those pertaining to the United States and its support for the Allies. The Allies regarded American intervention as crucial to resolving both the Far East crisis and the war in general. Furthermore, Canadian strategies and observations concerning the Far East, including diplomatic, political, economic and military decisions, must be examined with respect to Allied-American planning. That approach provides for a better understanding of Canada's role within the developing Anglo-American alliance.

More specifically, the following topics are explored: Canada's relationship to the Pacific Powers before the outbreak of war in the Pacific; Canadian and Anglo-American intelligence

operations that sought to penetrate Japan's strategy and preparations for war; Canadian strategy and the geopolitical aims of the Anglo-American alliance; and, in conclusion, the meaning of Canada's response to the Far East crisis, with a commentary on alternative traditionalist and revisionist interpretations of the evidence considered. These topics are presented using both thematic and narrative techniques. The chapters have been organized along thematic lines to emphasize various elements of the Canadian experience in 1941 and to provide researchers with a convenient means to study new archival sources relating to intelligence or strategy, many presented here for the first time. Although the chapters and their sub-sections are formed along thematic lines, a narrative style is often used within each thematic section to provide the clearest possible description and analysis.

Primary sources, which form the basis of this study, have been drawn from archives in Canada, Britain and the United States. These sources include wartime government documents, intelligence reports and personal papers, as well as post-war internal histories, personal correspondence and memoirs. Canadian archival sources include the following: National Archives of Canada – DND Files (RG 24), External Affairs Files (RG 25), and the Mackenzie King Papers/Diaries (MG 26); Directorate of History and Heritage, DND – Army, RCN and Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) intelligence summaries, and biographical files; Queen's University Archives – C.G. Power Papers; and St. Catharines Museum – Murton A. Seymour Papers. In particular, the ministerial papers of W.L. Mackenzie King, C.G. Power, J. Ralston, N. Robertson and O.D. Skelton have been considered, along with Mackenzie King's correspondence with Churchill and Roosevelt. Some references have also been drawn from Vancouver newspapers published in 1941, and the author has had other Canadian wartime documents declassified under the Access to Information Act (Canada). British archival sources

include the following: Public Records Office – Admiralty Papers (ADM 223), Cabinet Papers (CAB 66/10–20) and Intelligence Records (HW 18); and Churchill Archives – Churchill Papers (CHAR 20, CHUR 2), Ridsdale Papers, and Roskill Papers. American archival sources include the following: National Archives II – Navy Records (RG 38, RG 80, RG 457); National Archives, Pacific-Alaska Region – Navy Records (RG 181); and Franklin D. Roosevelt Library – Roosevelt Papers and Toland Papers.

Published collections of primary sources have also been considered. Government publications include the following: *The Canada Year Book 1941* (Ottawa, 1941); *Radio Broadcasting Censorship: Directives, 1940–42* (Ottawa, 1942); *Documents on Canadian External Relations, 1939–1941* (Ottawa, 1976); and *Hearings before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack* (Washington, 1946). Japanese plans have been consulted in Donald Goldstein and Katherine Dillon (eds.), *The Pearl Harbor Papers: Inside the Japanese Plans* (Dulles, VA, 2000). Useful references for the study of Mackenzie King's diaries were found in J.W. Pickersgill, *The Mackenzie King Record: Volume 1: 1939–1944* (Toronto, 1960). Apart from examining correspondence files in archival collections, the author has made use of the wartime correspondence of Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt given in Warren F. Kimball (ed.), *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, Vol. 1 of 3 vols. (Princeton, 1984).

Along with the many secondary sources that have been consulted, several general histories of the Second World War have been used as reference texts. These include Akira Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific* (London, 1987); Peter Calvocoressi, Guy Wint and John Pritchard, *Total War: The Causes and Courses of the Second World War*, rev. 2nd ed. (New York, 1989); Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global*

History of World War II (Cambridge, 1994); I.C.B. Dear (ed.), *Oxford Companion to World War II* (Oxford, 1995); and Robert Smith Thompson, *Empires on the Pacific: World War II and the Struggle for the Mastery of Asia* (New York, 2001).

This study is divided into nine chapters, including a chapter which introduces Canada and the Pacific Powers, four chapters on intelligence gathered before the Pacific War, and four chapters on the strategic planning that preceded the war. Chapter 1 surveys the relationship between the Pacific Powers from 1922 to 1941 and discusses Canada's response to Far East affairs in that period, providing an appropriate historical context for the chapters that follow. Chapter 2 assesses the capabilities of the Allied intelligence networks that operated in Canada, concluding that those networks were well placed to study the Far East and the Pacific. Chapter 3 discusses intelligence produced in Canada during the Far East crisis, concluding that Canada was quite aware of Japan's intentions in Southeast Asia. Chapter 4 discusses intelligence shared with Canada during the Far East crisis, concluding that the Allies kept Canada fully informed of the developing crisis and shared critical intelligence that pointed to war with Japan. More controversially, Chapter 5 explores the subject of Allied intelligence concerning Pearl Harbor, concluding that several sources strongly suggest that, in the fortnight before the outbreak of war, Canada and its allies predicted an attack on Pearl Harbor.

The latter part of this study focuses on strategy. Chapter 6 explores the question of Canada's involvement in Allied strategies to contain Japan, concluding that Canada supported Allied initiatives to deter Japan (notably economic sanctions and the reinforcement of Hong Kong), but only when there was no risk of provoking hostilities before American support was assured. Chapter 7 considers Canada's defence strategy with respect to the North Pacific, concluding that Canada's anticipation of conflict in that region resulted in several timely defence

measures, including the invocation of ABC-1 in November 1941, the establishment of emergency anchorages in the Aleutians, and the controversial internment of Japanese Canadians. Chapters 8 and 9 provide a final, comprehensive study of Canada's strategy and observations throughout the entire Far East crisis. Chapter 8 concludes that Canada studied the Far East crisis in great detail, planned for war with Japan and prepared for several forms of Anglo-American cooperation. Chapter 9 concludes that Canada monitored US intentions, determining the point at which US support was assured, and intensified its war preparations in late November 1941, when it became convinced that war would break out within a few weeks. The conclusion to this study discusses the significance of Canada's response to the Far East crisis and addresses several themes, including the relationship between intelligence and strategy, the methods that minor powers use to project influence on the international stage, alternative traditionalist and revisionist interpretations, and questions of methodology for historians of the Second World War.

But now, we must turn to the very origins of the Pacific War to provide a broader context. We must strive to understand the relationship between the Pacific Powers in the eventful years following the Great War of 1914–18. As we will see, Canada and the Pacific Powers were slowly and inexorably drawn into a web of alliances and strategies that resulted in a crisis of epic proportions.

Chapter 1

Prelude to War: Canada and the Pacific Powers, 1922–1941

Years of rivalry between Japan and the Western Powers preceded the outbreak of war in the Pacific. Until the end of the Great War, Britain courted Japan and even supported the development of its navy. But in the aftermath of that conflict, both Britain and the United States sought to limit Japan's naval power and to curb its influence in the Far East. Throughout the 1930s, Japan waged brutal wars of conquest in Manchuria and China, and its alienation from the West became almost complete. With the outbreak of the Second World War, Britain's commitments in Europe compelled the United States to assume responsibility for limiting Japan's expansionism.

Many factors contributed to the crisis that ultimately led to the Pacific War. Although a complete history of pre-war diplomacy and strategy is beyond the scope of the present study, it is vital to present a survey of those elements before turning to the main object of this study – Canada's response to the Far East crisis in 1941.¹ To that end, this chapter begins with a portrait of the Pacific Powers, including Japan, China, the Netherlands East Indies, the Soviet Union, America, Britain and the Commonwealth. Japan, as the first nation discussed, will be considered in the context of Far East affairs from 1922 to 1941 in order to establish a foundation for the 'portraits' that follow. Next, Canada's response to Far East affairs from 1922 to 1940 will be surveyed, with particular emphasis on the eventful year of 1940.

¹ For detailed accounts of the origins of the Pacific War, see Akira Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific* (London, New York: Longman, 1987); and Peter Calvocoressi, Guy Wint and John Pritchard, *Total War: The Causes and Courses of the Second World War*, rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989).

This chapter demonstrates that conflict between Japan and the democracies resulted from a long-maturing diplomatic crisis over the destiny of China and the control of resources in Southeast Asia. It will also be shown that Canada and its allies initially avoided confrontation with Japan, but eventually courted the United States' favour and planned for the likelihood of war in the Pacific.

A Portrait of the Pacific Powers

Early on, Japan had impressed the Great Powers with its new imperial might. In 1895, it demonstrated its military strength when it successfully fought China over control of Korea, although the resulting treaty that year, which the Great Powers had moderated, limited Japan's territorial acquisitions to Port Arthur, Formosa and the Pescadore Islands.² Britain wanted Japan as an ally because it needed to check German and Russian aspirations in the Far East. In 1902, the two countries formed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and Japan subsequently received British support for the development of the Imperial Japanese Navy, which in 1904 impressed the Great Powers with its victory over Russian forces at Port Arthur. In 1910, Japan was able to annex Korea, perhaps as a result of its victory over Russia in the Far East. The Anglo-Japanese alliance was renewed in 1911, and the British Commonwealth traded with Japan under the terms of an Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce. Japan sided with Britain in the Great War and in 1919 received German concessions in the Pacific, known as the 'Mandated Islands', which included the Caroline, Mariana, Marshall and Palau Islands. In 1920, Japan took control of Sakhalin, south of 50°. The Japanese Empire was expanding.

At that point, Britain and the United States sought to limit Japan's naval power and territorial ambitions. In 1922, Britain, America, Japan, France and Italy signed the Washington

² Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 612.

Naval Treaty, which placed British, American and Japanese naval tonnages in a 5:5:3 ratio.³ Significantly, Japan could only expand its navy to 60 percent of the size of either the Royal Navy (RN) or the United States Navy. In essence, the treaty replaced the old Anglo-Japanese Alliance with international naval arms limitations. Japanese strategists criticized the new arrangement, particularly when they later discovered that during the naval conference leading up to it the Americans had decrypted Japanese messages revealing how much Japan was willing to concede in terms of naval power. Herbert Yardley, head of the 'Black Chamber', an American cryptanalysis unit funded by the US Army and State Department, revealed those decryption successes in his 1931 book, *The American Black Chamber*.⁴ Meanwhile, other diplomatic initiatives sought to limit Japanese expansionism. Notably, in 1922, Japan, China, America, Britain, France, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands and Belgium signed the Nine Power Treaty, which guaranteed China from invasion. Japan would now be watched quite carefully.

On the domestic front, Japan gradually evolved into a centralized military state. Japan's 1889 Meiji Constitution had long ago established a constitutional monarchy, but Japanese militarists loyal to Emperor Hirohito now seemed to exert increasing influence over the Tokyo Diet (parliament). Political assassinations occurred throughout the 1930s and the Japanese Army sought to create a 'national defence state', known as *Kokubo Kokka*.⁵ Between 1934 and 1937, electricity, oil, rice production and shipbuilding came under government control. In March 1938, Japan invoked the 'National General Mobilization Law', which was a total war measures act.⁶ In August 1939, it enacted the 'Major Industries Association Ordinance' to control strategic

³ Ibid., 640–3, 691.

⁴ Layton, et al., *And I Was There*, 29. See also Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996), 70–3.

⁵ Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 767–95.

⁶ Gordon Daniels, 'Japan', in I.C.B. Dear (ed.), *Oxford Companion to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995), 608.

industries. In October 1940, Japanese militarists created the ‘Imperial Rule Assistance Association’ as a Nazi-style organization, although civilian politicians moderated its influence, and in the following January the ‘Greater Japan Youth Corps’ was formed to offer military training to youth. On 17 October 1941, General Tojo Hideki replaced Prince Konoye, who had served Japan as a ‘moderate’ Prime Minister since July 1940. Tojo, who represented the interests of Japanese militarists, now served as Prime Minister, Army Minister and Home Minister.

Building a military state also taxed Japan’s economy. From 1931 to 1939, Japan’s military spending increased from 29 percent of its total expenditures to 72 percent.⁷ Between 1936 and 1940, Japan’s inflation rate was 75 percent, compared with Britain’s 25 percent and the United States’ 2 percent.⁸ Japan was self-sufficient in rice, importing only a fifth of the total amount required for its 70 million people, but not in strategic materials such as nickel, tin, bauxite, rubber and oil. The nation had, for example, to import nearly 70 percent of its required oil from America.⁹ It was also dependent on American trade in other respects: over 40 percent of its exports went to the United States and over half of its imports came from there.¹⁰ Thus the Japanese Empire faced a currency crisis, dependence on imported strategic materials, and a potential trade deficit, depending on the United States’ response. For Japanese militarists, however, wars of conquest would provide the necessary resources and independence, rather than participation in free trade with all nations, which the United States advocated under its ‘Open Door’ economic policy. From the militarists’ perspective, the United States only advanced such

⁷ Ibid., 606.

⁸ Ibid., 607.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 927.

a policy because it could compete easily in a free market, having already conquered its continental resources; Japan would now do the same.

To build its empire, Japan expanded into Southeast Asia whilst shifting its alliances. In September 1931, the Japanese staged an incident at Mukden in northern China as a pretext to invade Manchuria, which it subsequently conquered and renamed 'Manchukuo'.¹¹ This violated the Nine Power Treaty, which guaranteed China from invasion, but control of Manchuria offered Japan mineral resources, a strategic 'buffer' against the Soviet Union and, more grimly, a remote place to develop chemical and biological weapons.¹² In March 1933, following the Manchurian Incident, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations, and in 1934 it abrogated its naval treaties with the West, notably the Washington Naval Treaty, which had placed Japan in an inferior naval position with respect to Britain and America. In November 1936, Japan joined Germany and Italy in signing the Anti-Comintern Pact, seemingly as a means to contain the Soviet Union, which had offered increasing support to China.¹³

Next, Japan sought control over China. In July 1937, Japanese troops attacked Chinese forces at Marco Polo Bridge in an action known the China Incident, thus beginning its lengthy war against China. Japanese strategists had long seen territorial expansion in Southeast Asia as a means of providing national security and economic benefits.¹⁴ China could 'buffer' Japan against Soviet threats and also provide iron, coal and agriculture. But Japan's war in China was both costly and brutal: Western commentators were shocked at the Rape of Nanking and other

¹¹ Ibid., 703–4, 712–13, 730–1.

¹² Ibid., 1201–6. Calvocoressi and associates offer a survey of Japan's chemical and biological programme, which they claim began as early as 1932 in Manchuria.

¹³ Stephen E. Pelz, *The Race to Pearl Harbor: The Failure of the Second London Naval Conference and the Onset of World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1974), 174–6.

¹⁴ Mushakoji Kinhide, 'Structure of Japanese-American Relations in the 1930s', in Dorothy Borg, et al. (eds.), *Pearl Harbor as History: Japanese-American Relations, 1931–1941* (New York: Columbia UP, 1973), 597; and Michael A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919–1941* (Ithaca, London: Cornell UP, 1987), 49, 64–7.

atrocities.¹⁵ Britain kept the Burma Road open so that Western aid would reach China, even though Japan controlled the coastal areas and ports. America, in the midst of the Depression, showed restraint in its response, even though it deplored Japan's actions in China and expressed outrage in December 1937 when a Japanese aeroplane bombed its gunboat USS *Panay* on the Yangtze River. The United States responded with speeches and economic sanctions, but peaceful coercion had entirely the opposite effect on Japanese militarists from the one intended, convincing them that the United States lacked the will to wage a lengthy war in the Far East.¹⁶ Ultimately, nearly a million Japanese and about ten million Chinese would perish in the eight-year war.

Apart from its war in China, Japan embarked on other imperial adventures in the region. In 1939, it acquired Hainan and the Spratly Islands without much effort. During the Tientsin Crisis of June to August 1939, Japanese forces successfully blockaded the British Concession at Tientsin in protest over Chinese assassinations of Japanese officials.¹⁷ Japan was also displeased that China's Nationalist government had deposited its silver reserves in banks at Tientsin. Japan and Britain finally came to terms over Tientsin, but Japan had demonstrated its ability to intervene in European-controlled areas of China. From May to September 1939, however, Japan became embroiled in a costly campaign against Soviet forces along the Manchurian border in a conflict which it termed the Nomonhan Incident and which the Soviets referred to as the Battle of Kalkhin-Gol. Under any name, the border clash ended in defeat for Japan: Mongolia

¹⁵ Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 803–5, 820–1.

¹⁶ Kinhide, 'Structure of Japanese-American Relations', *Pearl Harbor as History*, 596. As early as 1932, America had imposed a 'Moral Embargo' on Japan. In 1933, Roosevelt recognized the Soviet Union, perhaps as a means of limiting Japan's influence in the Far East. On 5 October 1937, Roosevelt responded to Japan's actions with his 'Quarantine Speech', in which he denounced aggressor nations and called for collective action. John Buchan, Governor General of Canada, had links with British Intelligence and later wrote that Roosevelt's speech was 'the culmination of a long conspiracy between us.' Quoted in Mahl, *Desperate Deception*, 4. Even so, military force impressed Japanese militarists more so than carefully crafted speeches.

¹⁷ Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 858–67.

remained unconquered, Japanese forces sustained about 28,000 casualties as opposed to the Soviet's 9,000, and Japan was left with more military debt.¹⁸ Japan temporarily redirected its efforts to the south.

On the eve of the Second World War, Japan possessed powerful armed forces, with about five million people in service. The Japanese High Command consisted of the Board of Field Marshals and Admirals, the Supreme War Council and the Liaison Conference, which represented the Imperial General Headquarters with its Army and Navy Ministers and Chiefs of Staff.¹⁹ The Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) consisted of six separate armies: the General Defence Army, the Korean Army, the Kwantung Army (based in North China), the China Expeditionary Army, the South Expeditionary Army and the Formosan Army. The General Defence Army alone had 31 divisions, with about 20,000 men per division.²⁰ The Japanese troops were supported by over 150 aircraft squadrons. The Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN), third largest in the world, consisted of the Combined Fleet, the China Area Fleet and the Naval Stations. By December 1941, the IJN had ten battleships, ten aircraft carriers, 38 cruisers, 112 destroyers, 65 submarines and 156 other vessels, in all nearly 1.5 million tons of shipping.²¹ Over 2,000 aircraft supported its operations, and the IJN had developed the most advanced oxygen-fuelled torpedoes in the world. In terms of overall offensive capability, the Japanese fleet had temporarily eclipsed the Americans. Japan, as an expansionist power, had invested quite heavily in naval development at a time when the United States had limited its peacetime defence spending. Throughout the 1930s, the US Congress had often failed to approve President

¹⁸ Ibid., 899–900.

¹⁹ Daniels, 'Japan', *Oxford Companion*, 617.

²⁰ Ibid., 618–22.

²¹ Ibid., 624.

Roosevelt's requests for naval funding.²² It is likely that this lack of political resolve or credible naval deterrence emboldened Japan.

For Japan, the war in Europe created new alliances, along with prospects for expansion in the Far East. In June 1940, when Germany defeated the Allies in Western Europe, Japan considered acquiring more influence and territory. In July it put pressure on Britain to close the Burma Road, which stayed closed until October: Britain did not wish to provoke Japan whilst it faced Germany alone in Europe.²³ During an Imperial Conference that month, General Tojo Hideki proposed cutting all Western aid to China and absorbing European Far East possessions into Japan's 'New Order', although Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku cautioned that such expansion would bring war with America. In August, Japan advanced the idea of a 'Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere' to legitimize its imperial designs over Southeast Asia. On 23 September, Japan occupied bases in northern French Indochina to threaten the Burma Road. On the diplomatic front, Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke brought Japan into the Axis orbit. On 27 September, it joined Germany and Italy in signing the Tripartite Pact, which pledged mutual defence in the event of an attack made on any member by a neutral country, excepting the Soviet Union.²⁴ Japan hoped that the Pact would deter Britain and the United States from blocking Japanese expansionism, but in response the United States expanded its navy, provided more funding to Chinese nationalists and strengthened its unofficial alliance with Britain and the Netherlands East Indies. In Japanese eyes, those actions were not deterrence but provocation.

Japan's expansionist programme continued into the following year. In January 1941, it began 'mediating' the border dispute between Thailand and French Indochina in order to gain more regional influence. On 14 April, Foreign Minister Matsuoka brokered the Soviet-Japanese

²² Pelz, *Race to Pearl Harbor*, 202–11.

²³ Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 907–8.

²⁴ Ibid., 915–16.

Non-Aggression Pact: Japan now had a more free hand in Southeast Asia. Even so, Matsuoka favoured attacking the Soviets after Germany's attack on Russia on 22 June, but on 2 July an Imperial Conference favoured waiting to see the war's outcome.²⁵ On 27 July, Japan occupied bases in southern French Indochina to strengthen its position in Southeast Asia, a move that resulted in a US-led asset-freeze against Japan the next day.²⁶ The United States, Britain, the Commonwealth and the Netherlands East Indies all ceased trading with Japan. Within a month, the asset-freeze resulted in an effective trade embargo. Significantly, Japan was deprived of American oil at a time when it only had enough domestic oil for two years consumption, and less under war conditions. The Konoye government sought to renew US-Japanese negotiations, but the Roosevelt administration would not entertain new initiatives at that time.

In response to the asset-freeze, Japan considered a southward drive to gain more resources. Japanese strategists now deemed that such a move was necessary because of 'ABCD encirclement', referring to the informal alliance between the Americans, British, Chinese and Dutch. In August, Japanese military officials decided to forego operations against the Soviets that year, but began planning for a possible southward advance against European colonial possessions, notably the oil-rich NEI.²⁷ Those plans extended to neutralizing the only two obstacles to Japanese expansion: the British base at Singapore, which could be attacked via Malaya, and the American base at Pearl Harbor, which could be attacked with aircraft carriers. With Britain embroiled in the European War, the United States posed the greater threat to Japan. According to Japanese strategy, following the destruction of the USN Fleet at Pearl Harbor, the Americans would face a war of attrition in the Far East: a campaign involving sustained Japanese

²⁵ Hatano Sumio, 'Japanese-Soviet Campaigns and Relations, 1939–45', *Oxford Companion*, 634–7.

²⁶ Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 928–9.

²⁷ Sumio, 'Japanese-Soviet Campaigns', *Oxford Companion*, 634–7.

air and naval attacks.²⁸ If possible, the USN would be lured into a decisive naval battle in the West Pacific. As early as January 1941, Admiral Yamamoto had created Pearl Harbor attack plans, and in late July Japanese pilots began training for such an operation.²⁹ In October, another Soviet-Japanese conflict along the Manchurian border seemed a distinct possibility, but Japan avoided a confrontation. By November, the final plans were completed for a southward advance against Malaya, the Philippines, Hong Kong and the NEI, with a full air attack on Pearl Harbor. If Japanese-American diplomacy failed, then Japan would secure much needed resources in Southeast Asia.

Japan had not yet abandoned diplomacy, however, even though an Imperial Conference called on 5 November for the continuation of war plans. It set 25 November as a diplomatic deadline, although that date was later extended. In November, the Tojo government sent special envoy Kurusu Saburo to Washington, where he joined Japanese Ambassador Nomura Kichisaburo in a final attempt to prevent conflict between Japan and America. Kurusu and Nomura offered US Secretary of State Cordell Hull two different plans.³⁰ Plan A involved withdrawing most troops from China and all troops from French Indochina upon a diplomatic settlement with China. In short, Japan would end the 'China Incident' on its own terms, withdraw troops and later expect trade relations to resume with the United States and the Allies. Plan B, a final option, promised no further southward advances and a withdrawal of troops from

²⁸ Daniels, 'Japan', *Oxford Companion*, 624. For other accounts of Japanese wartime strategy, see Arthur Marder, *Old Friends, New Enemies: The Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy: Strategic Illusions* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1981); and H.P. Wilmot, *Empires in the Balance: Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategies to April 1942* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982).

²⁹ Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 941–3. Preparations were extensive. Japanese pilots practised air-torpedo attacks and Japanese specialists modified their torpedoes to operate in shallow waters such as Pearl Harbor. Aircraft carriers and their oil tankers practised refuelling at sea. Japanese officials even investigated the proposed convoy route across the Pacific. On 22 October 1941, the Japanese ocean liner *Taiyu Maru* left Yokohama for Honolulu on a trial run for the Strike Force. Three officers of the Naval General Staff stayed aboard to study the route: Cmdr. Maejima Toshihide, Sub Lt. Matsuo Keiu and Lt. Cmdr. Suzuki Suguru. On 1 November, the liner arrived in Honolulu, but Suzuki returned to Japan, where he reported his findings to the Strike Force commanders.

³⁰ Akira Iriye, *Pearl Harbor and the Coming of the Pacific War: A Brief History with Documents and Essays* (Boston, New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 38–40.

French Indochina if the United States restored full trade relations and stopped sending aid to China. On 22 November, Hull drafted a *modus vivendi* based on Plan B, but Washington rejected this compromise solution following consultation with the Allies. China in particular voiced considerable concern over any compromise. Moreover, considering Allied objectives, if China fell, more Japanese troops would be available for operations elsewhere in the Far East. On 26 November, Hull issued a final note to Japan, one that contained terms unacceptable to the Tojo government: an end to all hostilities in Asia, complete troop withdrawals, recognition of Chiang Kai-Shek in China, and international access to Asian markets.³¹ Finally, on 2 December, Japan made the decision to go to war. Diplomacy was over.

The Pacific War began on 7 December 1941, when Japan launched near-simultaneous attacks across the Pacific. An attempted landing at Kota Bharu in northern Malaya preceded its attack on Pearl Harbor by one or two hours (reports offered various estimates of its timing).³² Several hours later, Japan launched air attacks against British forces in Hong Kong and American forces in Manila, where several B17 bombers were destroyed. At Pearl Harbor, Japan inflicted heavy losses with its Strike Force, or *Kido Butai*, which consisted of 31 ships, including six aircraft carriers, that had sailed over 3,000 miles from Japan's Kurile Islands to the waters north of Honolulu. The *Kido Butai* launched 353 aircraft that sank or damaged eighteen American ships, including eight battleships, and destroyed 188 aircraft, damaging many others. The attack claimed 2,403 American lives, and left another 1,178 wounded. Japanese losses were slight: 29 aircraft, one submarine, five midget submarines, and less than 100 lives. The attack stunned American and Allied commentators, who had believed that Japan was an inferior power.

³¹ Ibid., 73–7.

³² Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 950–2.

The attack on Pearl Harbor was an enormous tactical success, although the course of the Pacific War would later prove it to have been a strategic failure.

Japan later conquered most European and American possessions in the Far East.³³ Its forces occupied Guam on 10 December and Wake Island thirteen days later. On 25 December, Canadian and British troops surrendered Hong Kong to the Imperial Japanese Army. On 8 February 1942, Japanese forces took Rangoon in Burma. Soon afterwards, Japanese forces completed their conquest of Malaya, and on 15 February General A.E. Percival surrendered Singapore. On 2 March, Japanese forces took Batavia in Java, giving Japan control of the Netherlands East Indies. With the fall of Bataan on 9 April, Japanese forces had conquered all the Philippines, except Corregidor, which surrendered a month later. The Pacific War would last almost four years, claim millions of lives, and end abruptly with American nuclear attacks on Japan. Needless to say, such tragedies could have been averted if Japan and the Western Powers had resolved their differences over the destiny of China.

China deserves due consideration as a Pacific Power because it had tied down so many Japanese forces that might have been deployed elsewhere across the Far East and the Pacific. In 1937, when the China Incident began, China had a population of 480 millions, 85 percent of which was rural, a Gross National Product (GNP) less than a quarter of the United States', and two ruling factions: the Chinese Nationalists, or *Kuomintang*, under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, and the Chinese Communist Party under Chairman Mao Tse-Tung.³⁴ Before the Japanese invasion, the Nationalists fought a bitter struggle against the Communists, who in 1934–35 had retreated in a 6,000-mile 'Long March' to the Shensi Province. This civil war was interrupted by the Japanese onslaught: in 1937, Chiang's coalition forces of 1.5 million men and Mao's forces

³³ For a chronology of events, see Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 1227–42.

³⁴ Lyman P. Van Slyke, 'China', *Oxford Companion*, 210–24.

of 40,000 (a number that would grow to over 760,000 by 1941) faced a common enemy.³⁵ In 1938, Chiang moved his government from Nanking to Hankow and finally to Chungking, whilst Japan installed a puppet regime in Nanking under Wang Ching-Wei. From 1937 to 1941, China suffered nearly 2.5 million casualties, but tied down at least two million Japanese troops.

In terms of aid for China's cause, Joseph Stalin, General Secretary of the Soviet Union, offered material support to Chiang Kai-Shek (rather than Mao Tse-Tung whom he distrusted) until about 1940, when Stalin became concerned about inciting Japan and weakening his own resources.³⁶ In the summer of 1941, however, China began to receive American Lend-Lease aid. Most of this reached China through the Burma Road, which Britain always kept open, except for the period July–October 1940, when it was closed because of Japanese pressure. China's strategy involved maintaining material support from the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain, keeping the Burma Road open, and coaxing the Great Powers into a formal alliance or declaration of war against Japan.

The Netherlands East Indies (NEI), an archipelago colony of about 70 million people, exerted a disproportionate influence over Far East matters owing to its material resources, strategic location and intelligence activities. The NEI, which existed as a separate Dutch entity after the fall of the Netherlands in Europe, was rich in rubber, tin and oil, making it an important Allied resource, but a potential Japanese target. In terms of its strategic location, the NEI included territory located across the Malacca Straits from Singapore, along with an island chain extending east to the north Australian coastline. It had an important intelligence centre in Bandung, Java, known as *Kamer 14*, which broke Japanese codes and produced direction-finding

³⁵ Ibid., 216.

³⁶ Ibid.

reports on Japanese vessels operating in the Far East.³⁷ In support of its intelligence activities, it had a submarine fleet that could monitor Japanese naval activity. After the outbreak of the European War, the NEI participated in all Allied conferences on Far East affairs and shared intelligence estimates with Anglo-American authorities through its representatives in Washington and London. The NEI sought formal assurances of active support from the Allies and the Americans in the event of war with Japan.

The Soviet Union served as a direct challenge to Japan's aspirations, although events in Europe would later direct most of its resources away from the Far East. A vast state with over eight million square miles of territory, eleven republics and 170 million citizens, the Soviet Union could potentially place and support large armed forces in its Far East provinces, providing that it was not engaged along its European frontiers.³⁸ In 1939, the Red Army was three million strong. The Soviet Navy, though not as large as the Imperial Japanese Navy, consisted of four fleets: the Pacific, Polar, Baltic and Black Sea Fleets. In 1941, the Soviets produced over 150 million tons of coal, nearly eighteen million tons of steel and 33 million tons of oil, far eclipsing Japan's domestic production.³⁹ The Soviet Union, however, faced a serious threat from Nazi Germany. In 1939, it had been able to check Japan's attempted advance into Mongolia, but when the German-Soviet war broke out in June 1941, Russia no longer posed a threat to Japan as long as both powers respected the Japanese-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. Soviet strategy had changed from containing Japan to avoiding conflict until the European War was successfully concluded.

The United States was the Pacific Power that many counted on to resolve the Far East crisis. In terms of national strength, in 1941 it had a population of 133 millions, a labour force of

³⁷ For examples of *Kamer* 14 intelligence activities, see Layton, et al., *And I Was There*, 149, 206.

³⁸ Heinz-Dietrich Lowe, 'USSR', *Oxford Companion*, 1207–11.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1217.

over 50 millions, armed forces of over 1.3 millions, and a GNP of about \$120,000 millions.⁴⁰ Significantly, the United States' national income was *seventeen* times greater than Japan's, and its production figures were also far higher: its steel production was five times more, its coal production seven times more, and its automobile production 80 times more.⁴¹ As previously discussed, the United States supplied nearly 70 percent of the oil Japan depended on. In 1941, it produced nearly five times more merchant shipping than Japan and over five times more aircraft.⁴² Both American and Japanese strategists knew that the United States could defeat Japan in a long-term conflict, owing to its superior resources and production capacity.

The United States' avowed neutrality and peacetime defence development, however, had suggested that it might stay out of a long-term conflict, a prospect that Japanese strategists depended upon in their planning. US Neutrality Acts had been passed in 1935–37 to maintain US neutrality and to prevent the sales of US arms to belligerents. A powerful isolationist lobby opposed President Roosevelt's increasing support for the Allied cause. The lobby, led by organizations such as Charles Lindbergh's *America First* and congressmen such as Senator Burton K. Wheeler, argued against American participation in the war. As late as October 1941, one opinion poll showed that 79 percent of those polled wanted the United States to stay out of the European War, whilst 43 percent believed that it should not act against Japan unless that nation attacked US territory or interfered with US supplies.⁴³ Moreover, the United States had not yet developed its full military capability. Roosevelt had failed to attain his defence-spending goals throughout the 1930s, owing to the effects of the Depression and US isolationist sentiment.

⁴⁰ 'USA', *Oxford Companion*, 1177–1183.

⁴¹ See relevant statistics cited in Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Unwin, 1988), 296, 299, 324, 330, 332, 354, 355.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Rita James Simon, *Public Opinion in America: 1936–1970* (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing, 1974), 125, 137.

On the eve of the Pacific War, the United States spent about 10 percent of its GNP on defence, whereas Japan spent over 70 percent. The US forces had only about a quarter of Japan's number of service personnel. The US Navy was a two-ocean force of nearly 2,000 ships, but had fewer aircraft carriers than Japan.⁴⁴ Until the outbreak of the Pacific War, US economic leverage seemed to influence Japan more than its display of military power, which had still not reached its potential.

The Roosevelt administration tried to achieve its objectives through economic sanctions, aid to China, deterrent measures and firm diplomacy. Economic measures had been considered as early as 1938, when US military officials switched their 'Orange Plan' concerning Japan from a defensive to an offensive strategy, which included a military and economic blockade of the country.⁴⁵ In January 1940, the United States allowed its commercial treaty with Japan to expire, and nine months later it imposed an embargo on iron and scrap steel. On 28 July 1941, it led a full asset-freeze against Japan, even though nine days earlier Roosevelt had noted at a press conference that cutting all oil shipments to Japan would be likely to lead to war in the Pacific.⁴⁶ In the summer of 1941, China became eligible to receive material aid through the US Lend-Lease Act, and Roosevelt supported an international air force for China, which saw service in the latter half of 1941. The United States took other deterrent measures: in January 1941, the USN Pacific Fleet became officially based at Pearl Harbor, and in late 1941 the Philippines received US troop reinforcements and new B17 bombers. On 14 November 1941, General George C. Marshall, US Army Chief of Staff, announced at a press conference that the Philippines were receiving reinforcements and that the United States was preparing for an 'offensive war' against

⁴⁴ In June 1941, the USN had 1,899 vessels. See 'USA', *Oxford Companion*, 1199.

⁴⁵ Robert Smith Thompson, *Empires on the Pacific: World War II and the Struggle for the Mastery of Asia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 68.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 92–3.

Japan.⁴⁷ In terms of diplomacy, the emancipation of China remained at the very heart of the United States' diplomatic exchanges with Japan. As previously discussed, Cordell Hull was compelled to drop his proposed *modus vivendi* in response to China's plight, replacing it on 26 November with a final note to Japan, in which US principles concerning China were strongly reiterated.

Roosevelt and his team also took actions that benefited the entire Allied community. In August 1940, Roosevelt and Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King concluded the Ogdensburg Agreement, which pledged their two nations to create a Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD) as an expression of continental defence.⁴⁸ Ogdensburg signified that the United States had extended its 'Monroe Doctrine' to Canada: European infringement, particularly of the Axis variety, would not be tolerated anywhere in the Americas. That year, the US Neutrality Acts were also modified to permit 'cash and carry' sales. The Allies could now purchase US arms if they arranged their own shipping. On 3 September 1940, the United States and Britain concluded the 'destroyers for bases' deal, which displeased the Axis Powers and Japan.⁴⁹ Britain would receive 50 US destroyers in exchange for leasing various British bases throughout the Caribbean, Atlantic and Newfoundland to the United States. Later in September, the Roosevelt administration introduced peacetime US conscription through the Selective Service System (the 'draft'). The US armed forces would now expand in preparation for possible conflict.

Other welcome measures soon followed. On 11 March 1941, The United States passed the Lend-Lease Act, which ensured that US material aid would reach Britain and the Allies.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 96–7.

⁴⁸ Churchill Archives Centre (CAC), Cambridge, CHUR 2/7/102, W.L.M. King, 'The Ogdensburg Agreement', House of Commons speech, 12 Nov. 1940. See also Morton, *Canada and War*, 108–9; Mackenzie King's remarks in Hillmer (ed.), *Partners Nevertheless*, 99–102; Granatstein and Hillmer, *For Better or For Worse*, 138–44; and Granatstein and Morton, *Canada and the Two World Wars*, 189–92.

⁴⁹ Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 219.

Lend-Lease provided a quarter of all British munitions and a tenth of all Soviet munitions.⁵⁰

Significantly, oil comprised two-thirds of all shipped US supplies: the Allies needed fuel to stay in the war. These measures inevitably had financial implications. Britain had problems paying for US imports and Canada had developed a trade deficit with the States, but Roosevelt's Hyde Park Declaration of 20 April 1941 solved those problems. In essence, the United States would purchase more Canadian defence materials whilst sending Lend-Lease materials to Britain through Canada and its industries, a scheme that would create a 'lasting integration' of economies.⁵¹ Canada would produce defence items for Britain using components that the United States had supplied to Britain under Lend-Lease, thereby allowing Britain to accumulate a Sterling debt with Canada. In the same month, Roosevelt increased US convoy support in the Atlantic to protect Allied shipping as well as Lend-Lease shipments to Britain. In November, by which time the United States was involved in an undeclared naval war against Germany in the Atlantic, the US Neutrality Acts were modified to allow armed US merchant ships into war zones.

The Roosevelt administration also entered into several agreements and staff talks with the Allies.⁵² On 27 March in Washington, British and American staff officers signed the ABC-1 Agreement (American-British Conversations), which outlined a joint defence plan to be followed in the event either of the United States' entry into the war in Europe or of a war against Japan. On 27 April in Singapore, American, Dutch and British (ADB) staff officers

⁵⁰ 'USA', *Oxford Companion*, 1180–2.

⁵¹ J.L. Granatstein, 'Canada', *Oxford Companion*, 184. See also Morton, *Canada and War*, 113; Mackenzie King's remarks in Hillmer (ed.), *Partners Nevertheless*, 103–7; and Granatstein and Hillmer, *For Better or For Worse*, 144–8. For a discussion of America's attitudes toward Canada in the early war years, see Robert Bothwell and John Kirton, 'A Sweet Little Country', in Hillmer (ed.), *Partners Nevertheless*, 46–50.

⁵² The text of three American-Allied agreements, ABC-1 (Washington, 27 Mar. 1941), ADB (Singapore, 27 Apr. 1941) and ABC-22 (Montreal, 28 Jul. 1941), are found in *Hearings before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack*, 79th Congress, part 15 of 39 parts (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1946), 1485–1593.

signed the joint-defence ADB Agreement to be followed in the event of war with Japan. On 28 July in Montreal, Canadian and American staff officers signed the ABC-22 Agreement, which built upon ABC-1. From 9 to 12 August, Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met aboard warships off Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, and decided upon mutual war aims, which formed the basis of the Atlantic Charter.⁵³ At that time, Churchill asked Roosevelt to warn Japan against further encroachment, although Roosevelt preferred to buy time, perhaps another 30 to 90 days, in order to delay confrontation. Throughout 1941, the American-Allied conferences addressed the question of the United States' participation in the war and proposed mutual defence arrangements for both the European and Pacific theatres of operation.

American strategy concerning the Far East crisis seemed to evolve throughout the year. In early 1941, American objectives included deterring Japan from moving south against ADB possessions, and splitting the Axis alliance so that the United States could enter the war without fighting Japan.⁵⁴ Towards the end of the year, however, American objectives had expanded to include offering more support to China and keeping Russia in the war, but these goals were strategically problematic. US aid to Chiang Kai-Shek and his Nationalists made Japan commit more of its military resources to China rather than elsewhere in Southeast Asia, but hardly improved Japanese-American relations and would be likely to force Japan further into the Axis orbit. Keeping Russia in the war meant providing material aid through Vladivostok, leading to protests from Japan. Furthermore, to prevent Japan from moving north

⁵³ National Archives of Canada (NAC), Ottawa, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (London) to British High Commission (Ottawa), Most Secret Circular Z258, 12 Aug. 1941; CAC, CHAR 20/42A/39-41, Churchill to Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand, Telegram T530, 30 Aug. 1941.

⁵⁴ Paul W. Schroeder, *The Axis Alliance and Japanese-American Relations, 1941* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1958), 203-4.

against Russia, it might be necessary to encourage Japanese interest in southern objectives, but that could be a dangerous game: ADB deterrent measures might easily lead to provocation.⁵⁵ Certainly, the Roosevelt administration accepted that its asset-freeze against Japan might lead to war in Southeast Asia. Nonetheless, US foreign policy had long focused on the destiny of China, and Roosevelt seemed to view Soviet participation as critical to the war's outcome.⁵⁶ On the eve of the Pacific War, the Roosevelt administration probably accepted war with Japan as a means to protect China and Russia whilst gaining a better opportunity to enter the war against Germany and Italy, Japan's Tripartite partners.

Unlike America, Britain could not afford to face Japan alone because of its commitments in Europe. In 1941, Britain had a population of 47 millions, a labour force of over 20 millions, over three millions serving in its armed forces, and a GNP less than half that of the United States.⁵⁷ Britain's aircraft production trebled in 1940–41 and its Royal Navy was still the largest in the world, but its hold over its global empire was tenuous at best because its armed forces were committed to European and Atlantic operations. None knew this better than Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill, who had assumed office in May 1940. Accordingly, Britain's Far East strategy adapted to the new conditions of total war. In the past, its strategy in the event of war with Japan had involved diverting warships to the Far East for a decisive confrontation with the Japanese Fleet whilst containing the German Navy in Europe.⁵⁸ Following the Fall of France, however, Britain had to adopt a defensive strategy, avoiding conflict with Japan because it could no longer despatch significant naval forces to the Far East.⁵⁹ Moreover, some British strategists

⁵⁵ Waldo Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American entry into World War II* (New York, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988), 158–60.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ M.R.D. Foot, et al., 'UK', *Oxford Companion*, 1129–1159; and Mahl, *Desperate Deception*, 2.

⁵⁸ Calvocoressi, et al., *Total War*, 909.

⁵⁹ Public Records Office (PRO), Kew, Surrey, CAB 66/10, COS (40) 592, War Cabinet, 'The Situation in the Far East in the event of Japanese intervention against us', 31 Jul. 1940, 3–5.

realized that the strength of Singapore was overvalued. A War Cabinet report of 5 August 1940 revealed Britain's vulnerability in the Far East, but worse yet, a copy of that report reached Japan after the sinking of the SS *Automedon*, a British merchant ship carrying important documents to Singapore.⁶⁰ On 11 November, a German merchant raider sunk the ship and captured the documents, which the Germans shared with the Japanese a month later. Britain's opponents were now aware of its weakness in the Far East.

Britain's strategy towards Japan seemed to involve a combination of deterrence, encirclement and US participation. In November 1940, Britain's Ministry of Economic Warfare produced a report concerning Japan's economic position in the event of war.⁶¹ The report considered the possible impact of economic sanctions and active participation by the United States. In December, British officials invited their US and Allied counterparts to participate in secret discussions about the economic encirclement of Japan. In the same month, British and US staff officers planned an Anglo-American Naval Conference to discuss cooperation in the Pacific.⁶² That conference evolved rapidly into the more familiar ABC-1 agreement, which concerned not only Japan and the Pacific, the original focus of the conference, but also the war in Europe.⁶³ In early 1941, Britain proposed that Canada intercept neutral vessels, particularly Soviet and Japanese ones, suspected of shipping Axis contraband across the Pacific. Some British strategists believed that such interceptions might also result in welcome American

⁶⁰ James Rusbridger, 'The Capture of the *Automedon* and the Sinking of the *Nanking*', *Encounter* 64/5 (May 1985): 8–16. The *Automedon* documents seemingly influenced Japan's strategy in the Far East. See S. Hatano and S. Asada, 'The Japanese Decision to Move South, 1939–41', in R. Boyce and E.M. Robertson (eds.), *Paths to War: New Essays on the Origins of the Second World War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), 393–4.

⁶¹ A copy of the report is found in the National Archives of Canada. See NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1793, Vol. 777, File 365 (pt. 4), Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (SSDA), London, to Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA), Ottawa, Secret Circular 84, 17 Feb. 1941.

⁶² NAC, RG25, B3, Vol. 2453, File: 'UK-US Naval Conference, 1941', 'Beaver' (Washington) to 'External' (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 336, 23 Dec. 1940.

⁶³ Ibid., Escott Reid (Washington) to N.A. Robertson (Ottawa), Secret letter, 1 Feb. 1941; and BG (Barry German, Washington) to CNS (P.W. Nelles, Ottawa), Most Secret letter no. 3, 1 Feb. 1941.

intervention in the Pacific, although Canada would have nothing to do with the plan.⁶⁴ In July 1941, Britain fully supported the US-led asset-freeze against Japan as a means of deterrence or, in the worst case, as a means to provoke a war with US participation. In August, Churchill invited Roosevelt to warn Japan about further expansion. Significantly, Churchill acquiesced in Roosevelt's wish that the United States take responsibility for negotiations with Japan. Under those circumstances, future diplomatic breaches might ensure active American participation. By late 1941, Britain was resigned to war with Japan, but awaited sure signs that the United States would participate as a co-belligerent. Initially, Britain had tried to deter Japan, but later saw the Pacific as a suitable 'back door' for US entry into the Second World War.

The British Commonwealth of Nations also tried to fulfil British strategic requirements in the Far East, but remained very cautious. Apart from Eire (known as the Irish Free State until 1937), the British Dominions supported Britain's war effort: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada each had something to offer in terms of strategic planning, material support or defence responsibilities in the Far East. Australia feared Japanese expansionism and had every reason to support Britain. In 1941, Australia had a population of seven millions, a munitions labour force of 53,000, several hundred thousand soldiers, and a GNP of over \$4,000 millions.⁶⁵ When the war began, it had nearly 200 combat aircraft and a navy consisting of six cruisers, five destroyers and two sloops. Australian troops later reinforced Singapore, Malaya and several South Pacific islands.⁶⁶ In 1941, Australia had created a Combined Operational Intelligence Centre and operated naval radio monitoring stations at Canberra, Darwin and Melbourne. Robert Menzies, who led the United Australia Party and served as Australia's Prime Minister from April

⁶⁴ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T2208, Vol. 826, File 730, Cabinet War Committee, Extract of minutes: 'British Blockade Policy, Interception of neutral vessels', 11 Feb. 1941.

⁶⁵ T.B. Miller, 'Australia', *Oxford Companion*, 78–90.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

1939 until August 1941, advocated full support for British defence in the Far East and also invited American participation. After Arthur Fadden's brief administration in September 1941, he was succeeded until the end of the war by John Curtin of the Labour Party, another believer in the importance of British Far East defences and American participation in the Allied cause. All told, Australia's contribution to British defence in the Far East included troop reinforcements, naval and air patrols, and intelligence gathering.

New Zealand, Australia's close ally in wartime, had a population of 1.63 millions, about 80,000 servicemen, and a proportionately smaller GNP.⁶⁷ It began the war with a navy consisting of two cruisers, two escort vessels and one minesweeper. It had, however, contributed significant funds to the construction of the Singapore naval base, and in 1941 sent airmen to Malaya. It also sent troops to Fiji and Faunang Island, a cable station located between Hawaii and the Cook Islands. New Zealand maintained close contact with Britain and its allies, although it had no legations in Canberra, Washington or Ottawa until 1942.⁶⁸ Peter Fraser, who led the Labour Party and became New Zealand's Prime Minister in March 1940, pledged his country's full support for Britain's cause. Like Australia, New Zealand provided troop reinforcements and participated in naval patrols and intelligence gathering.

South Africa played a minor role in supporting Britain's Far East operations through its participation in strategic planning and intelligence gathering. It did not commit troops to the Far East because it was already supporting the Allied armed forces in Egypt and the Middle East.⁶⁹ Whilst no Pacific Power in its own right, South Africa had two important resources with respect to the Far East crisis: Prime Minister Jan Smuts and an intelligence network. Jan Smuts had

⁶⁷ W. David McIntyre, 'New Zealand', *Oxford Companion*, 796–801.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ For a survey of South Africa's wartime performance, see Ian Phimister, 'South Africa, Union of', *Oxford Companion*, 1024–7.

been one of Britain's principal adversaries in the Boer War, but through the course of two world wars proved to be a staunch ally. Commonwealth leaders, notably Winston Churchill, respected Smuts' long political experience and appreciated his informed opinion on strategic matters. In terms of intelligence gathering, South Africa was part of Britain's 'Pacific Naval Intelligence Organisation' and collected information on ship movements, particularly with regard to vessels bound for the Far East.

Canada, the principal object of this study, served as Britain's senior ally until the United States entered the war. In 1941, Canada had a population of about 11.5 millions, a labour force of nearly five millions, about 490,000 serving in its armed forces with 100,000 abroad (when the war began, there had been fewer than 9,000 regular service personnel), and a GNP of \$8,282 millions, which was about fourteen times less than the United States'.⁷⁰ The war had greatly affected Canada's economy: from 1939 to 1941, the GNP increased by almost 50 percent, steel production almost doubled, imports and exports approximately doubled, and the cost of living increased by nearly 18 percent (until wage and price controls were implemented in October 1941).⁷¹ Canada had financed \$905 million of Britain's war expenditures, a figure that would continue to increase under the Hyde Park Agreement. As of August 1941, Canada produced about 40 aircraft per week or over 2,000 per year, and had built 800 infantry tanks, 1,000 cruiser tanks and over 130,000 army vehicles.⁷² The Dominion had spent \$320 million on shipbuilding, specializing in corvettes and minesweepers, which substantially increased its naval strength: the Royal Canadian Navy had begun the war with only six destroyers and four minesweepers, but

⁷⁰ Figures regarding the Canadian armed forces are found in Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL), Hyde Park, New York, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Papers as President, President's Secretary's File, Box 25, File: 'Canada, 1941', Director of Public Information (Ottawa), 'Canada's War Record: Revised to September 1, 1941'. See also J.L. Granatstein, 'Canada', *Oxford Companion*, 182.

⁷¹ Ibid., Leighton McCarthy to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Letter, 17 Oct. 1941.

⁷² Ibid.

could now look forward to having over 100 corvettes for convoy duty.⁷³ Canada operated the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP), which in September 1941 had 90 schools, 124 establishments and about 100 airfields across Canada.⁷⁴ At that time, Canada paid 64 percent of the total cost of the BCATP and supplied 80 percent of its trainees. The circumstances of war had compelled Canada to abandon its normal role as a minor power.

In 1941, an expanded team of statesmen and officers helped the Mackenzie King government face the challenge of war.⁷⁵ C.D. Howe, an American industrialist, served as Minister of Munitions and Supply. Norman Robertson took over as Under Secretary of State for External Affairs following O.D. Skelton's death in January 1941. In External Affairs, Dr. Hugh L. Keenleyside served as a policy advisor, whilst Lester B. Pearson supported intelligence activities and liaised with the armed services. Colonel J.L. Ralston served as the Minister of National Defence, receiving support from several Associate and Deputy Ministers. Charles G. 'Chubby' Power served as Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of National Defence for Air. Angus L. Macdonald served as Minister of National Defence for Naval Services. Like Britain, Canada had three Chiefs of Staff: Air Marshal L.S. Breadner, Chief of the Air Staff; Vice Admiral P.W. Nelles, Chief of the Naval Staff; and Lieutenant-General H.D.G. Crerar, Chief of the General Staff. In Washington, several diplomats and officers represented Ottawa: Leighton McCarthy, Canadian Minister to the United States; H. Hume Wrong, Counsellor to the Canadian Minister; Air Commodore W.R. Kenny, Air Attaché; Rear-

⁷³ For more information about the RCN during the Second World War, see James A. Boutilier (ed.), *The RCN in Retrospect, 1910–1968* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1982); and W.A.B. Douglas (ed.), *The RCN in Transition, 1910–1985* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988).

⁷⁴ FDRL, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Papers as President, President's Secretary's File, Box 25, File: 'Canada, 1941', Director of Public Information (Ottawa), 'Canada's War Record: Revised to September 1, 1941'.

⁷⁵ Dominion Bureau of Statistics (Canada), *The Canada Year Book 1941: The Official Statistical Annual of the Resources, History, Institutions, and Social and Economic Conditions of the Dominion* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1941), 25, 42–4; Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments*, 529–31; and James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Peacemaking and Deterrence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 8–11, 28–39.

Admiral V.G. Brodeur, Naval Attaché; and Brigadier H.F.G. Letson, Military Attaché. In London, Vincent Massey served as High Commissioner for Canada in Great Britain. Lester Pearson also served in London until his recall to Ottawa in early 1941. More controversially, Pierre Dupuy served as Canadian Charge d’Affaires in Vichy France: the Allies wanted to maintain ‘back channel’ communications with the Vichy government. In Tokyo, E. d’Arcy McGreer served as the Canadian Charge d’Affaires. The team was complete.

Even so, William Lyon Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada and leader of the ruling Liberal Party, was determined to fight a war of limited liability. In contrast, the opposition Conservative Party campaigned for a total war effort, a position that Mackenzie King’s own Department of Defence privately accepted.⁷⁶ Yet Mackenzie King, who served as his own Secretary of State for External Affairs, exerted great control over Canada’s foreign policy, which he usually formulated with respect to domestic issues. Notably, the National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA), which the Mackenzie King government introduced in March 1940, established conscription for home defence, but not for overseas duty, which was still voluntary.⁷⁷ The Prime Minister had to placate Quebec, where many French Canadians did not wish to serve overseas in a British war, and his powerful ‘Quebec lieutenants’, Chubby Power and Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe, worked tirelessly to keep Quebec on board with the Dominion war programme. In addition, Mackenzie King and his civilian advisors often tried to emphasize a need for home defence as means of avoiding a confrontation over conscription for overseas service. That is not to say that many Canadians failed to volunteer for overseas service: eventually, hundreds of thousands did so. By November 1941, however, the Pacific Coast

⁷⁶ For Conservative Party views of the government’s conduct of the war, see J.L. Granatstein, *The Politics of Survival: The Conservative Party of Canada, 1939–1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), Chapters 4 and 5, 58–112.

⁷⁷ Granatstein, ‘Canada’, *Oxford Companion*, 183.

provided another excuse to keep troops in Canada.⁷⁸ In terms of Far East strategy, the Mackenzie King government offered tacit support for Britain's defence of the Far East and the Pacific, but wished to avoid war with Japan at all costs until active American participation was assured.⁷⁹

Canada's role as a Pacific Power involved participation in Allied conferences, economic sanctions and intelligence gathering. Canada participated in ABC-1 and ABC-22, both of which contained provisions for Pacific area defence in the event of war with Japan. Canada imposed the strictest economic sanctions against Japan, including restrictions on aluminium, cobalt, copper, nickel, zinc, wheat and wood, and participated fully in the US-led asset-freeze of July 1941.⁸⁰ Canada, as a member of Britain's 'Pacific Naval Intelligence Organisation', ran a merchant shipping intelligence network, collecting and disseminating information on ship movements and cargo. The Royal Canadian Navy operated a radio monitoring station at Gordon Head, near Esquimalt, British Columbia, which reported its findings to the Admiralty in London. William Stephenson, a Canadian businessman from Winnipeg, ran British Security Coordination (BSC) in New York with a measure of support from the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa.⁸¹ BSC, amongst its many other duties, collected intelligence concerning the Far East crisis.

Canada also improved its Pacific Coast defences and contributed to collective security in the Far East. It gradually introduced more manpower, radio monitoring stations and air/naval reconnaissance patrols along the Pacific Coast. By early December 1941, its Pacific naval forces

⁷⁸ Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments*, 47–8.

⁷⁹ Several of Mackenzie King's diary entries from 1939 to 1940 show how he regarded the growing power of Japan. For example, see his diary entries for 30 November 1939, 28–9 April, 31 May, 26–7 September, and 8 October 1940 in J.W. Pickersgill, *The Mackenzie King Record: Volume 1, 1939–1944* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 30, 112, 114, 121, 145 and 149–50.

⁸⁰ An account of Canada's early economic sanctions against Japan may be found in Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Appeasement and Rearmament*, 163–6.

⁸¹ Macdonald, *The True Intrepid*, 269.

included two cruisers, three corvettes, six minesweepers, one battle-class trawler, four armed yachts and 29 'Fishermen's Reserve' vessels.⁸² According to ABC-22, Canada's Pacific Command and Western Air Command were responsible for defending sea approaches to Esquimalt, Victoria, Vancouver and Prince Rupert, as well as shipping in coastal and inshore British Columbia waters, whilst the US Navy was responsible for offshore patrols along the Pacific Coast. More controversially, Canadian authorities also imposed compulsory registration for Japanese Canadians, who numbered 23,000 in 1941, and formed plans for their internment in the event of war.⁸³ Ultimately, in the summer of 1942, about 18,000 Japanese Canadians were interned inland as a Pacific Coast security measure. Regarding Far East security measures, in September 1941, Canada met a British request to send two reinforcement battalions to Hong Kong. Consequently, on 16 November, the Royal Rifles and Winnipeg Grenadiers arrived in Hong Kong. Canada now had a minor presence in the Far East.

By late 1941, the Pacific Powers were locked into a pattern of alliances and strategies that made conflict in the Far East practically inevitable. Japan wanted to end the China Incident on its own terms whilst acquiring much-needed resources in Southeast Asia without the benefit of trade with the democracies. To that end, Japan developed increasing ties to the Axis Powers and maintained a Non-Aggression Pact with Russia. China encouraged the United States and the Allies to provide it with material aid and to declare war on Japan, the common enemy. It was in Allied interests to keep China in the war because it tied down so many Japanese forces. Russia could not threaten Japan whilst it faced a brutal war in Europe, and the Allies had every intention of keeping Russia in that war: thus, the democracies had to check Japanese expansionism on their own. The NEI needed assurances of Allied support in the likely event that Japan invaded

⁸² Whitby, 'The Quiet Coast', in Haydon and Griffiths (eds.), *Canada's Pacific Naval Presence*, 63–4. The 'Fishermen's Reserve' had been established in 1938 to patrol the inner coastline of British Columbia.

⁸³ Granatstein, 'Japanese-Canadians', *Oxford Companion*, 634.

its territory to take its oil and other resources. The United States had committed itself to the possibility of war when it initiated the asset-freeze against Japan, although US isolationist sentiment compelled the leadership to avoid direct intervention unless the Japanese made a first strike against US targets. Britain desperately required active US participation in the war and now looked to the Far East crisis as a means of achieving that objective. In that regard, encirclement and provocation were more effective means to use against Japan than deterrence. The British Dominions supported Britain in the interests of imperial solidarity and collective security in the Far East. The stage was set for an epic struggle over mastery of the Far East.

Canada and Far East Affairs, 1922–1940

Well before the Pacific War, Canada had approached Far East affairs with caution, as it had approached foreign affairs in general. In 1922, Mackenzie King, as the newly elected Liberal Prime Minister, minimized Canada's role at the Washington Conference on naval arms reduction because he focused more on Canadian unity than on Canada's role as a partner in a reformed British Empire.⁸⁴ To that end, in 1924 he appointed Dr. O.D. Skelton, who embraced isolationism and nationalism as twin ideals, as Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, a position Skelton held until his death in January 1941. Between 1927 and 1929, however, Canada established legations in Washington, Paris and Tokyo.⁸⁵ In 1932, during the single-term premiership of Conservative Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, Canadian delegates at the League of Nations avoided criticizing Japan's actions in Manchuria, seeking compromise rather than

⁸⁴ Thompson with Seager, *Canada 1922–1939*, 39–40.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

punitive measures.⁸⁶ Canadian delegate C.H. Cahan delivered a speech that was somewhat sympathetic to Japan and in agreement with British policy and Bennett's own views.

In 1935, Mackenzie King returned to power and continued to avoid confrontation in foreign affairs. He also formed policy with due consideration for both US and British views. Lester Pearson, an External Affairs official who worked with the League of Nations, perhaps best explained the reasons for such an approach to Canadian policy-making when he wrote this passage in 1935:

Canada's position becomes impossible if Great Britain and the United States drift apart on any major [Far Eastern] issue. . . . Canada is a British Dominion. She is also an American State. She cannot permit herself to be put in a position where she has to choose between these two destinies. Either choice would be fateful to her unity; indeed to her very existence as a State.⁸⁷

In the age of appeasement, however, Mackenzie King did not have to make difficult choices because the United States and Britain, like the rest of the democracies, were not willing to take any real action against Japan. In response to the rise of military regimes in Germany, Italy and Japan, Mackenzie King supported British-sponsored appeasement in Europe, but expressed some concern over Japan's growing power.⁸⁸ Yet, in 1937, his government refrained from imposing sanctions against Japan during its war in China.⁸⁹ In June of that year, Canada participated in British talks concerning a proposed 'Pacific non-aggression pact', but the initiative came to nothing.⁹⁰ No member of the League of Nations dared to intervene in the Sino-Japanese War.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 307.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Gregory A Johnson, 'Canada and the Far East in 1939', in Hillmer, et al. (eds.), *A Country of Limitations*, 282.

⁸⁸ For a discussion of Mackenzie King's response to the European dictators, see Morton, *Canada and War*, 98–9.

⁸⁹ See the correspondence in NAC, RG25, A2, Reel T1748, Vol. 723, File 64: 'China – Dispute with Japan (1931–1939)'; and NAC, RG25, A2, Reels T1809 and T1810, Vol. 806, File 579: 'League of Nations – Canadian Interests (1927–1941)'.

⁹⁰ NAC, RG 25, B3, Vol. 2453, File: 'International Relations: Pacific Pact, 1937', 'Imperial Conference, 1937: Report of Technical Committee on the Pacific Pact', Secret report E (37) 33, June 1937. For a contemporary British assessment of Japan's disposition, see Ibid., J.L. Dodds (Tokyo) to A. Eden (London), Letter, 12 Jul. 1937.

But discussions did ensue over the need to defend the Pacific Coast. In August 1936 at Chautauqua, New York, President Roosevelt gave his 'Good Neighbour' speech, which Mackenzie King believed was meant to warn Japan away from North America.⁹¹ Roosevelt later spoke to Mackenzie King about an Alaska Highway project to improve Pacific Coast defences in case of war with Japan, although Mackenzie King's military advisors rejected the idea because it compromised Canada's neutrality in the event of a US-Japanese war.⁹² Undaunted, Roosevelt met with BC Premier T.D. Pattullo in September 1937 to discuss Pacific defence. Pattullo favoured the Alaska Highway project, but the Dominion government still said no. In August 1938, during a speech made at Queen's University in Kingston, Roosevelt even pledged US support for Canada if another empire attacked it. Some thought that Japan, as well as Germany, had been on Roosevelt's mind. However, Ottawa did not completely neglect the Pacific Coast. In 1936, Canadian military officials made the defence of the Pacific Coast a priority over the Atlantic Coast.⁹³ In February 1938, Canadian military officials planned to provide strong air/land/naval defences on the Pacific Coast as a deterrent measure that would allow Canada to remain neutral in the event of a US-Japanese war.⁹⁴ In 1938, Mackenzie King expressed the need to reinforce the Pacific Coast with more destroyers. In 1939, four of Canada's six destroyers were based on the Pacific Coast. Canadian strategists reasoned that the growing

Dodds offered this explanation: 'Japan is young in the world and is still finding her feet. She is intensely suspicious of the foreigner and not without reason. She is still suffering from an inferiority complex, nor is the fundamental hostility of the yellow races for the white a factor to be ignored. She is conscious of her vitality and capacity, and still believes that in many ways she can beat us at our own game. She is in a mood for expansion which may last for years. All these are influences which tend to stimulate in her the growth of a fierce nationalism and a refusal to tolerate advice or interference from abroad. She chiefly respects force. It is hardly logical to suppose that anything but force will persuade her to disarm.'

⁹¹ Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada*, 177.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 178. Other examples of American-Canadian negotiations of the period may be found in R.J. Brown, 'Emergence from Isolationism: United States – Canadian Diplomatic Relations, 1937–1941' (Ph.D. Thesis, Syracuse University, 1968).

⁹³ Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments*, 3–4; and Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada*, 213–22.

⁹⁴ Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada*, 177.

menace of Japan necessitated strong defences along the Pacific Coast, whereas Britain's Royal Navy could adequately defend all approaches to the Atlantic Coast.

In the summer of 1939, when the Tientsin Crisis brought the possibility of war between Britain and Japan, Canadian intelligence staff prepared for increased surveillance of Japanese transmissions. On 20 July, Canadian naval authorities in Esquimalt, British Columbia, informed Ottawa that the 'Mexican Government W/T Station' had recently transmitted messages to Tokyo in 'Japanese Morse' and that the Esquimalt station would attempt to intercept this traffic.⁹⁵ A day later, the Admiralty informed intelligence staff in Ottawa and Hong Kong that the installation of a 'high speed recorder' at Esquimalt would enable the station to intercept important Japan-North America traffic.⁹⁶ The Admiralty also requested that Esquimalt forward any 'Japanese military traffic' not required in London to Hong Kong. On 1 August, British intelligence staff in Hong Kong informed Pacific monitoring stations, including Esquimalt, that Japanese naval call signs had changed, but that several new call signs had already been identified.⁹⁷ Two days later, all Pacific stations were requested to identify the new call signs of Japanese warships.⁹⁸ On 5 August, the Esquimalt station asked naval headquarters in Ottawa to pass on a request to the Admiralty regarding which 'Japanese military frequencies' the station was to monitor.⁹⁹ Canadian naval authorities made that request three days later. Finally, on 12 August, British intelligence staff in Hong Kong sent

⁹⁵ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12131, SO(I) Esquimalt to DNIP Ottawa, Message no. 1404/20 (serial no. 2456), 20 Jul. 1939.

⁹⁶ Ibid., DNI Admiralty to DNIP Ottawa and Captain on the Staff, HMS TAMAR, Message no. 1544/21 (serial no. 2462), 21 Jul. 1939.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Captain on the Staff, HMS TAMAR, to CinC China, et al., Message no. 1946/1 (serial no. 2510), 1 Aug. 1939.

⁹⁸ Ibid., CinC China to R.A. Yangtse 818, et al., Message no. 1139/3 (serial no. 2511), 3 Aug. 1939.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Captain in Charge (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 0951/5 (serial no. 2519), 5 Aug. 1939; DNIP Ottawa to Captain on the Staff, HMS TAMAR, Message no. 1416/8 (serial no. 212), 8 Aug. 1939. Ottawa also decided to alter its priorities regarding the reporting of ship movements. On 5 August, Naval Intelligence in Ottawa informed British Consuls in the United States that it was no longer necessary to report on the domestic movements of USN warships, although reports on their movements to foreign ports was still desired. See DNIP Ottawa to HBM Consuls General, Message no. 1058/8, 5 Aug. 1939.

the entire Pacific intelligence community a report that included a Japanese call sign list and information on Japanese ships, bases, air squadrons and naval intelligence.¹⁰⁰ On the eve of the Second World War, Canada and its allies were studying the Pacific region quite carefully.

Canadian officials also considered defence strategy. On 24 August 1939, seventeen days before Canada declared war, O.D. Skelton sent Mackenzie King a note concerning 'Canadian War Policy', in which he emphasized the need to defend Canada's coasts: 'The defence of Canada should be put in the foreground. . . . We cannot in this war ignore the Pacific as we did in the last'.¹⁰¹ Skelton also prioritized the deployment of the armed forces: wherever possible, air power would be deployed first, followed by naval power and then by land forces. Skelton wanted to minimize both casualties and public criticism. Skelton's note foreshadowed the approach that the Mackenzie King government would take in determining Canada's war policy: domestic defence would be used as a means to keep some troops in Canada, and the Department of External Affairs would often set war policy rather than the Chiefs of Staff.¹⁰²

Some officials wanted to cultivate Japan as an ally. On 3 September, H.L. Keenleyside, a policy advisor in External Affairs, shared his own views on the forthcoming war with Skelton. Keenleyside believed that the Allies had to obtain either the 'benevolent neutrality' or the 'active assistance' of every nation not associated with the enemy powers, particularly the United States and Japan. Keenleyside emphasized Japan's new position in the world:

The importance of Japan as the possessor of the third largest navy in the world, as the only major power in Asia and the Western Pacific, as the home of one of the greatest merchant fleets in existence, as a strong industrial nation, as the possessor of a highly efficient army, based on a healthy population of over seventy million people, and as the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., Captain on the Staff, HMS TAMAR, to Admiralty, et al., Message no. 1528/12 (serial no. 2549), 12 Aug. 1939. See also Message no. 1807/11 (serial no. 2546), 11 Aug. 1939, in which FECB Hong Kong reports on Japanese fleets, aircraft carriers and *Marus*.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments*, 9. Apart from studying Far East and Pacific affairs at that time, Canadian strategists also studied Hitler's likely course of action in Europe, as well as US public opinion and isolationism. See NAC, RG 25, B3, Vol. 2353, File: 'Secret Files, 1939'.

¹⁰² Ibid., 9, 48.

inveterate opponent of the U.S.S.R., (which is now apparently prepared to cooperate with Germany) can hardly be exaggerated.¹⁰³

Keenleyside recommended appointing a new Canadian Minister to Tokyo as almost two years had passed since the former Minister returned to Canada. Ultimately, Canada relied upon a Charge d'Affaires at its Legation in Tokyo, although some correspondence continued to refer to that individual as 'Minister'.

During the period of the 'Phoney War', when Canada and its allies were officially at war with Germany but faced no immediate threats in Western Europe, Far East issues continued to command attention. In January 1940, Canada restricted nickel and wheat shipments to Russia, and in April restricted nickel shipments to Japan.¹⁰⁴ Economic sanctions were imposed because those powers were regarded as potential enemies. British authorities also wanted to hold up shipments to Japan as a 'bargaining counter' in their negotiations with Japan over the creation of British 'contraband-control bases' throughout the Pacific.¹⁰⁵ In March 1940, however, Canada rejected Britain's request for the RCN to board and examine a Soviet vessel suspected of carrying war materials to Germany via Vladivostok because such action might provoke the Pacific Powers.¹⁰⁶ Mackenzie King speculated that Russia, possibly in combination with Japan, might threaten Canada's Pacific Coast in the event of war. In April 1940, Canadian officials had to consider Far East affairs even when they met a British request to establish a base in Greenland to protect its cryolite mines, which were essential for aluminium production. US authorities

¹⁰³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), H.L. Keenleyside, 'Memorandum for Dr. Skelton: Canadian Legation in Japan', 3 Sep. 1939. For further insight into Keenleyside's views as a policy advisor, see Hugh L. Keenleyside, *Memoirs of Hugh L. Keenleyside, Vols. I and II* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1981-82).

¹⁰⁴ For a discussion of Canada's restriction of wheat to Russia, see NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel 2208, Vol. 826, File 726, A.D.P.H. (Cabinet War Committee), Most Secret report, 22 Jan. 1940.

¹⁰⁵ Eays, *In Defence of Canada*, 165.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 175.

argued that Japan might regard such an action as an excuse to occupy the NEI.¹⁰⁷ Despite Mackenzie King's assurance to Roosevelt that Canada had little interest in Greenland, Canadian defence ministers planned to use a civilian vessel to transport a paramilitary force to Greenland, so as not to alarm the Americans. But two months later, when that plan was executed, the Americans protested: US State Department official Adolph A. Berle did not want Canadian economic influence over Greenland.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps Japanese encroachment in Southeast Asia had only been an American excuse.

Even so, as early as February 1940, Canadian officials noted that Japan seemed to be making special preparations in anticipation of war in the Pacific. Canadian officials intercepted a message sent on 22 February from the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Tokyo to the Japanese Consul in Vancouver, which contained the following text according to one translation:

We are concerned over possible eventualities in Japanese-American relations as they affect the disposition to be made of Japanese nationals and persons of Japanese descent residing in Hawaii and the coast states. All things considered, the prospect is not promising. In the case of Japanese among those residing in the localities mentioned who desire to remove elsewhere, it will of course be appropriate at some time to comply (with that desire).¹⁰⁹

If Japan was considering evacuating Japanese nationals resident in Hawaii and along the Pacific Coast, then war might be near. At O.D. Skelton's request, External Affairs sent a copy of the message to the Canadian Legation in Washington, where it was passed it on to the US State Department for comment.¹¹⁰ The State Department, however, 'was not inclined to take the matter very seriously.'¹¹¹ For the moment, Canadian officials would wait and see.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 168–9. See also FDRL, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Papers as President, President's Secretary's Files, Box 25, File: 'Canada: 1940', Cordell Hull to Franklin Roosevelt, Letter, 22 Apr. 1940.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 171–2.

¹⁰⁹ NAC, RG 25, B3, Vol. 2453, Minister for Foreign Affairs (Tokyo) to Japanese Consul (Vancouver), Mackay Wireless, Message no. 2, 22 Feb. 1940.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., Norman Robertson (Ottawa) to Loring Christie (Washington), Secret letter, 14 Mar. 1940.

¹¹¹ Ibid., Christie to Robertson, Secret letter, 20 Mar. 1940.

The Fall of France in June 1940 placed Far East affairs in quite a different light. Allied strategists feared that the German defeat of the Allies in Western Europe would incite the Japanese to further encroachment in Southeast Asia. Indeed, Japan now demanded that Britain withdraw its troops from Shanghai and close both the Burma Road and the Hong Kong frontier, in order to close supply routes into Nationalist China. Nonetheless, British strategists believed that three checks against Japanese aggression were already in place: the war in China, the Soviet Union and the presence of the USN Fleet in the Pacific.¹¹²

In late June, however, Canadian officials received a British 'Aide Memoire' that not only revealed Britain's vulnerability in the Far East, but also suggested two courses of action: negotiate a new Far East settlement to deter Japan; or impose a full US-led embargo against Japan and despatch ships to Singapore, actions that would either deter Japan or cause war.¹¹³ Considering the first approach, Sir Robert Craigie, British Ambassador to Japan, believed that a joint British-US initiative might restore peace to China and keep Japan neutral in the present war. Considering the second approach, a Foreign Office report suggested that economic sanctions might provoke Japan into attacking targets throughout Southeast Asia to seize resources.¹¹⁴ All told, the reports reaching Canada indicated that defeat in Europe had placed the Allies in a precarious position in the Far East.¹¹⁵

In July, Canadian officials spoke to their British counterparts about the new Far East crisis. On 2 July, O.D. Skelton learned from the Canadian Legation in Washington that Cordell

¹¹² NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular D279, 21 Jun. 1940.

¹¹³ Ibid., British Embassy (Washington), 'Aide Memoire', 27 Jun. 1940.

¹¹⁴ Best, *British Intelligence and the Japanese Challenge*, 165. Best cited PRO, FO 371/24735, F3267/205/23, 'Economic report for June 1940'.

¹¹⁵ For Canadian correspondence concerning Far East affairs in June 1940, see Queen's University Archives (QUA), Kingston, Ontario, C.G. Power Papers, Ministerial Files C, Box 49, File: 'Japan 1940', O.D. Skelton to C.G. Power, Secret letter, 21 Jun. 1940; Canadian Minister in United States (CMUS), Washington, to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 132, 21 Jun. 1940; and Canadian Minister in Japan (CMJ), Tokyo, to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 46, 20 Jun. 1940.

Hull had assured British Ambassador Lord Lothian that the USN would not move its Pacific Fleet to the Atlantic without informing Britain in advance.¹¹⁶ On 25 July, Keenleyside informed Skelton that he regarded Lord Lothian's proposed Allied-US oil embargo against Japan as 'absurd': 'If the United States placed an embargo on oil, the Japanese would move into the Netherlands Indies at once. The British would be in no position to do anything, and the Americans would probably do nothing except express moral disapproval.'¹¹⁷ Keenleyside emphasized that Canada and Britain must *not* participate in such an action. For that matter, Canadian officials would not consider any action that precipitated war in the Pacific without full Anglo-American support.

In the same month, External Affairs produced a six-page report entitled 'Notes on Far Eastern Situation', drawing several conclusions.¹¹⁸ Japan at present remained deterred by the USN Pacific Fleet and stalemate in China, but in the event of war would probably attack the Malay Straits, Indochina, Hong Kong and possibly the NEI. Canadian strategists did not think that a Japanese landing on the Pacific Coast of North America was a likely prospect. Britain did not want war with Japan because it wished to retain Singapore and Hong Kong. The United States was sympathetic to China, but owing to isolationist sentiment would not protect Singapore, Hong Kong or even the Philippines, a US possession. Australia was exposed in the Far East and might be willing to make concessions to Japan. In Canada there was public sympathy for China and resentment of the fact that Japan still received limited shipments of Canadian nickel, zinc and lead to carry out its war against China, which had included attacks against Canadian missionaries. But Canada and the British Commonwealth could not fight a

¹¹⁶ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, M.M. Mahoney (Washington) to O.D. Skelton (Ottawa), Most Secret letter, 2 Jul. 1940.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., H.L. Keenleyside to O.D. Skelton, Memorandum, 25 Jul. 1940.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., External Affairs, 'Notes on Far Eastern Situation', undated (c. late July 1940).

two-front war without US support. The report concluded that the Allies had to avoid war with Japan lest they face further defeat in Europe.

In September, Canada dealt with two incidents concerning the Far East. On 14 September near the island of Oshima, a Japanese naval aeroplane accidentally dropped a 'practice bomb' on the Canadian Pacific liner *Empress of Asia*, injuring four Chinese seamen and slightly damaging the ship.¹¹⁹ Yoshizawa Saijiro, who had replaced Baron Tomii as Japanese Minister to Canada, offered profuse apologies on behalf of Tokyo: the incident was not akin to the bombing of the USS *Panay* three years earlier. Skelton briefly considered how opposition parties in Ottawa might exploit the incident: 'We will have some bright C.C.F. man saying that this bomb was made out of Canadian copper or nickel.'¹²⁰ But the incident was quickly forgotten in the face of more serious developments: on 27 September, Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy. In response, Mackenzie King strongly urged British authorities to reopen the Burma Road when the temporary Anglo-Japanese agreement expired on 18 October.¹²¹ In his correspondence with London, Mackenzie King usually refrained from commenting upon Far East affairs or other elements of grand strategy, but Japan had gone far enough in his estimation.

In October, Canada and its allies formed several contingency plans in response to the Tripartite Pact. On 2 October, Canadian officials learned that Cordell Hull believed the new alignment would 'inevitably' draw the United States into the war, although not in the Far East in

¹¹⁹ See the correspondence in NAC, RG 25, A2, Vol. 2959, File B-16: 'Miscellaneous Collections'.

¹²⁰ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), O.D. Skelton, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister', 14 Sep. 1940. 'C.C.F.' refers to the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, a Canadian socialist party.

¹²¹ NAC, RG 25, B3, Vol. 2453, File I28, SSEA (Ottawa) to SSDA (London), Most Secret telegram no. 176, 30 Sep. 1940. See also Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M58, 4 Sep. 1940; and High Commissioner for Canada in Great Britain (HCCGB), London, to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret and Personal telegram no. 1652, 2 Oct. 1940. Winston Churchill, following consultation with Cordell Hull, announced in the House of Commons that the Burma Road Agreement would expire on 18 Oct. 1940.

the near future.¹²² Hull could foresee a long-distance US blockade against Japan. The next day, Canadian officials received a British report on reactions to the Tripartite Pact.¹²³ The United States pledged to resist Japanese aggression and maintain its material support for Britain. China believed that Japan would push southward and urged Britain to allow the Burma Road Agreement to expire. Britain advocated further economic sanctions against Japan and planned to impose a full economic blockade against Japan in the event of war. Surveying all those reactions, Canadian officials who supported Allied objectives could take pride in the fact that Canada had already imposed the strictest sanctions against Japan. Not only had it restricted shipments of aluminium, cobalt, copper, lead and nickel to Japan, but it was also considering imposing a wheat embargo in the near future.¹²⁴ Furthermore, it had steadily reduced its imports from Japan. Canadian officials also considered the prospect of a war declaration. On 11 October, Mackenzie King responded to a British query about Canada's intentions and assured British officials that Canada, like Britain, would declare war against Japan in the event of a US-Japanese war.¹²⁵ As well, Mackenzie King had sent instructions to the Canadian Legation in Tokyo regarding steps to be taken in the event of war with Japan. On 19 October, Mackenzie King learned that 'Anglo-Dutch-American technical conversations' would be held to discuss the

¹²² Ibid., HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 1652, 2 Oct. 1940.

¹²³ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular D496, 3 Oct. 1940.

¹²⁴ For correspondence concerning Canada's proposed wheat restrictions, see NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, O.D. Skelton to Mr. Wilgress, Letter, 12 Oct. 1940; and HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 2063, 11 Dec. 1940. For Japanese reactions to Canadian trade sanctions in 1940, see NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), O.D. Skelton, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister: Re Baron Tomii', 11 Apr. 1940; and NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, O.D. Skelton to W.L.M. King, Memorandum, 28 Aug. 1940.

¹²⁵ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, SSEA (Ottawa) to SSDA (London), Secret telegram no. 179, 11 Oct. 1940.

possibility of joint defence against Japanese aggression.¹²⁶ In brief, Canada did not seek war with Japan at this point, but fully anticipated that eventuality.

Canadian officials had also considered the ‘problem’ of the Japanese Canadians on the Pacific Coast. In British Columbia, many residents had long discriminated against the local Asian community of about 45,000 Chinese and 23,000 Japanese, but the war in China had made the Japanese community a particular object of scorn. On 10 June 1940, Baron Tomii, Japanese Minister to Canada, sent a memorandum to Skelton, complaining of remarks made by Alderman Halford D. Wilson of Vancouver.¹²⁷ During a speech made in Vancouver, Wilson claimed that Japanese residents would be greater menace than other ‘aliens’ on the Pacific Coast in the event of a US-Japanese war. The next day, Keenleyside sent Skelton a memorandum on the subject, complaining that Wilson was simply using racism to gain ‘political favours’.¹²⁸ According to Keenleyside, the RCMP and local city council in Vancouver could deal with any potential problem. Keenleyside had also advised Mayor Telford of Vancouver, a Socialist, to avoid a confrontation with Wilson at the city council because Wilson might offer a racist response, such as claiming that ‘the Socialists and the C.C.F. are in favour of having white girls raped by the “Japs and Chinks”’.¹²⁹ In essence, External Affairs had to balance the rights of Chinese and Japanese Canadians against the reality of racist sentiment amongst the public and its elected Provincial politicians.

Later in the year, Canadian officials took other decisions with respect to the Asian community. In September, the Cabinet War Committee acceded to BC Premier Pattullo’s

¹²⁶ QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Ministerial Files C, Box 52A, File: ‘Anglo-Dutch-American Technical Conversations, 1940’, HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 1756, 19 Oct. 1940.

¹²⁷ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), Baron Tomii to O.D. Skelton, Memorandum, 10 Jun. 1940.

¹²⁸ Ibid., H.L. Keenleyside, ‘Memorandum for Dr. Skelton: Baron Tomii’s Memorandum on Alderman Wilson’, 11 Jun. 1940.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

request that Canadians of Chinese and Japanese origin not participate in military training. On 28 September, Keenleyside protested against that decision in a memorandum prepared for Skelton.¹³⁰ He noted that Pattullo was concerned that 'Orientals' might become eligible for other rights and privileges of citizenship. Keenleyside believed that a great majority of 'Orientals' were good citizens and wanted to serve their country, a view that Skelton shared, according to a memorandum that he sent to Mackenzie King two days later.¹³¹ Despite such opposition within External Affairs, on 25 October Mackenzie King informed Pattullo that Chinese and Japanese Canadians were to be excluded from compulsory military training.¹³² External Affairs, however, continued to work for some basic rights. Throughout October, much discussion ensued over the prospect of removing Japanese Canadians through enforced or voluntary repatriation, but the Dominion government would not give in to Provincial demands. On 30 October, for example, Skelton informed the Mayor of Nanaimo, BC, that he rejected the Mayor's suggestion that all people of Japanese origin in Canada be deported.¹³³ Instead, Skelton wanted to encourage good citizenship amongst Japanese Canadians. In November, Keenleyside even sent a three-man commission to the Pacific Coast to study the Japanese-Canadian situation.¹³⁴ By late 1940, Canadian officials had considered the 'problem' of Japanese Canadians in the event of war, but had shown restraint with respect to repatriation and internment.

In summarizing Canada's response to Far East affairs from 1922 to 1940, certain diplomatic and political approaches come to our attention. In the interwar period, Canada, like its partners in the League of Nations, avoided responsibility in Far East affairs and adopted an

¹³⁰ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 573, H.L. Keenleyside, 'Memorandum for Dr. Skelton: Discrimination against Canadians of Oriental Racial Origin in Military Training Scheme', 28 Sep. 1940.

¹³¹ Ibid., O.D. Skelton, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister', 30 Sep. 1940.

¹³² Ibid., W.L.M. King to T.D. Pattullo, Letter, 25 Oct. 1940.

¹³³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, O.D. Skelton to V.B. Harrison, Letter, 30 Oct. 1940.

¹³⁴ Ibid., Keenleyside to Skelton, Letter, 5 Nov. 1940; and Skelton to Keenleyside, Letter, 7 Nov. 1940.

appeasement strategy with respect to Japan. Throughout the 1930s, as Japan consolidated its control over Manchuria and coastal China, Canada failed to impose economic sanctions or other punitive measures. It did, however, adopt a new defensive strategy with respect to its Pacific Coast, and at Britain's request also monitored Japanese naval and military communications at its Esquimalt station. Pacific Coast defence and intelligence measures were more convenient and cost effective than direct intervention in the Far East.

With the outbreak of war in Europe, however, the Far East commanded more attention, particularly after the Allied defeat in Western Europe in June 1940. The Mackenzie King government favoured a war of limited liability, seeking to retain some troops for domestic defence duties along the coasts and to reduce casualties through the use of air and naval power before committing large land forces. Canada, however, participated in Allied economic sanctions against Japan, notably trade restrictions on strategic metals. In response to the Tripartite Pact, Canada also prepared contingency plans concerning the possibility of war with Japan, and in October 1940 considered war declarations, withdrawal of the Canadian Legation in Tokyo, and the future treatment of Japanese Canadians. The Prime Minister himself believed that war with Japan was increasingly likely. Canada exhibited anxiety over the Far East crisis and could not remain indifferent to its outcome. Significantly, Canada and its allies realized that they had to avoid conflict with Japan until active US support was assured. In late 1940, that support was not yet visible.

Conclusions

Questions regarding Canada's response to the Far East crisis in 1941 may now be considered in greater detail because the topic has been placed in a broader historical context. As

shown, by 1941, the Pacific Powers were locked into a pattern of alliances and strategies that made war in the Pacific practically inevitable. Japan would not withdraw from China and continued to develop its weapons arsenal and to pursue expansionist policies. In response, the United States and the Allies imposed trade sanctions against Japan, depriving it of much needed oil, which Japan saw as provocation. These sanctions also sharpened Japan's awareness that the necessary resources might be obtained from the vulnerable colonial regimes in Southeast Asia, notably the NEI. Meanwhile the European War and the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact essentially eliminated Russia's ability to intervene in the Far East. Britain accepted US leadership in Far East affairs because it could no longer defend its Far East possessions and it sought active US participation in the war effort. For Britain, early deterrent measures against Japan bought time, but encirclement later provided the means to provoke a confrontation between the United States and Japan. Canada sought to avoid entanglement in Far East affairs, particularly before active US participation was assured, but as a belligerent was committed to cooperation with the British Commonwealth and to imperial defence.

The Far East crisis raised certain questions that Canadian and Allied intelligence staff sought to answer. Would economic sanctions deter Japan from further expansionism or encourage it to go to war? What was the nature of Japan's relationship with the Axis Powers and the Soviet Union? Would Japan pursue northern or southern objectives? What military targets would Japan attack in the event of hostilities with the democracies? How could America be encouraged to support the Allies as a co-belligerent? To better understand how Canada responded to the Far East crisis in 1941, it is necessary to examine the role of intelligence networks in that period. We must first establish that incoming intelligence was indeed the product of viable networks, rather than informed opinion. We must appreciate the scope of

British and Commonwealth intelligence operations, with reference to networks that operated in Canada. Let us now examine how Canada and its allies created a global information web to penetrate the vast expanses of the Pacific.

Chapter 2

The Allied Web: Intelligence Networks operating in Canada before the Pacific War

Canadian participation in wartime intelligence activities, particularly in the early war years, has often been portrayed as marginal at best. Until recently, the security classification of relevant wartime files has obscured the extent to which Canada cooperated with British Commonwealth networks following the outbreak of the Second World War. This chapter draws upon a variety of archival and secondary sources to discuss how Allied intelligence networks operated in Canada before the Pacific War and how Canada developed its own networks. A survey of British and Commonwealth intelligence networks before the Pacific War will not only provide a broad context, but also show that Canada was an important integral part of those networks. A discussion of BSC operations, including Canada's support for that organization, will follow. A survey of Canadian intelligence operations in 1939–41 reveals the scope of Canada's commitment to information gathering. The RCN intelligence network in 1941 is also surveyed because that network provided Canada with the greater part of its information. Such surveys also reveal the extent to which Canadian intelligence staff liaised with their Anglo-American counterparts. As we will see, Canadian and Allied decision-makers maintained constant vigilance in the Pacific throughout the Far East crisis. Canada was part of an Allied intelligence system that tracked Japanese ships, intercepted and decrypted Japanese messages, coordinated espionage and established ties with the US intelligence community before the Pacific War.

A Survey of British and Commonwealth Intelligence Operations in the Pacific, 1924–1941

British Intelligence began monitoring the vast expanses of the Pacific soon after the Great War. In 1924, Paymaster-Lieutenant Eric Nave, an Australian naval officer who served in the Royal Navy, began intercepting Japanese communications at the China Station. In 1925, the Royal Canadian Navy established a direction finding (D/F) station at Esquimalt, British Columbia, to serve with the Admiralty's Pacific network. In 1935, the British established a cryptanalysis unit in Hong Kong, along with an intercept station at nearby Stonecutter's Island. The Far East Combined Bureau (FECB) in Hong Kong (formerly the Combined Intelligence Bureau) decrypted Japanese naval and diplomatic codes and even predicted the Sino-Japanese war of 1937.¹ At that time, Shanghai was also a centre of British intelligence gathering activities.² Meanwhile, in Britain, the Government Code & Cypher School (GCCS), with branches in London and Bletchley Park, provided more advanced decryption services, whilst the Secret Intelligence Service, known also as SIS or MI6, produced and distributed estimates based on diplomatic, human and communications intelligence. The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), created in 1936, held meetings in London attended by the various representatives of the intelligence branches, but had not yet achieved the authority that it would enjoy by the end of the Second World War.³

At a relatively early stage, Britain and the Commonwealth revised and expanded their pattern of intelligence gathering in Asia and the Pacific. As Hong Kong was seen as vulnerable or even indefensible, the FECB moved to Singapore for security reasons in August 1938, and improvements were made to Singapore's Kranji radio intercept station. This would become part

¹ P. Elphick, *Far Eastern File: The Intelligence War in the Far East, 1930–1945* (London: Hodden and Stoughton, 1997), 70–86; Aldrich, *Intelligence*, 26.

² On Shanghai, see B. Wasserstein, *Secret War in Shanghai* (London: Profile Books, 1998).

³ Christopher Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (London: Heinemann, 1985), 432–7; Aldrich, *Intelligence*, 52.

of a network including Stonecutter's Island, the China Station, Australian naval bases and ships, and New Zealand stations, as well as sites at Nauru Island, Esquimalt and Bombay, that all supported FECB radio intelligence, known then as wireless telegraphy (W/T) intelligence.⁴ W/T intelligence included direction finding, traffic analysis (the study of call signs, traffic volume and address headings) and cryptanalysis, a task usually performed by special 'Y' committees. Out of 59 naval D/F stations worldwide, fourteen directly supported the FECB.⁵ Regarding the North Pacific, in August 1939, Canadian naval authorities responded favourably to the Admiralty's request that the Esquimalt D/F station intercept as much Japanese naval traffic as possible.⁶ To that end, construction began on new 'Y' and High Frequency Direction Finding (HFDF) facilities at Gordon Head, near Esquimalt. As well, both the FECB and the GCCS, despite staff shortages, began to make headway in decrypting two new Japanese codes introduced in 1939: the 'Type B' diplomatic code, known later to the Allies as PURPLE, and the 5-Numeral code, a Japanese general-purpose naval code known later to the Allies as JN-25.

British, Commonwealth, Dutch and US service groups increasingly shared intelligence as the Far East crisis developed. Strategic assessments and intelligence reports were already being exchanged within the British Commonwealth: Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa all contributed to Britain's Pacific Naval Intelligence Organisation (PNIO) and Far East

⁴ Elphick, *Far Eastern File*, 153–5; PRO, ADM 223/496, *H.M.S. Anderson and Special Intelligence in the Far East*, 4.

⁵ Elphick, *Far Eastern File*, 155–7; Aldrich, *Intelligence*, 75; and NAC, RG 24, D1b, Vol. 3807, File 1008–75–44 (vol. 1), Lt. J.R. Foster to Cmdr. J.M. de Marbois, 'Report on Visit to Admiralty', undated (c. late Aug. 1941), Appendix 6. The accuracy of wartime D/F bearings ranged from about 1° for strong signals to 5° for weak signals. An Admiralty study of 1942 determined that bearing-fixes based on three D/F bearings were accurate to within 2°. See C.H. Waddington, *O.R. in World War 2: Operational Research against the U-Boat* (London: George Allen & Unwin 1973), 96–7. For a comparison with American sources, see Timothy Wilford, *Pearl Harbor Redefined: USN Radio Intelligence in 1941* (Lanham, MD and Oxford: University Press of America 2001), 55.

⁶ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12131, Message no. 0951/5, 5 Aug. 1939, from Captain in Charge, Esquimalt, to Naval Service Headquarters (NSHQ), Ottawa; and Message no. 1416/8, 8 Aug. 1939, from DNI&P, Ottawa, to Captain on the Staff, HMS *Tamar*.

Direction-finding Organisation (FEDO).⁷ British intelligence officers began cooperating with their US counterparts as early as late 1940, largely because of Roosevelt's complete support for such activities.⁸ By March 1941, that cooperation extended to the exchange of British JN-25B code information for US PURPLE decryption machines. In May, the FECB in Singapore, which was already exchanging information with *Kamer 14*, an NEI cryptanalysis unit in Bandung, Java, began cooperating with Station Cast, a US Navy communications intelligence station in Corregidor, Philippines. By April 1941, intelligence services in Australia, Singapore and the NEI were using direct radio links to communicate with each other, an arrangement that Corregidor would soon join.⁹

W/T intelligence, cryptanalysis and direct observation of ship movements yielded results. On 19 June, British Intelligence reported fully on the organization of the Japanese fleet, although the report was not as detailed as one produced by the USN at that time.¹⁰ The RCN tracked all merchant vessels travelling to and from the Americas, using information collected from around the world.¹¹ Indeed, the RCN shipping intelligence network rivalled BSC as the largest foreign intelligence service operating within the United States. Naval Headquarters in Ottawa issued intelligence reports about ship movements to service groups located throughout the British Commonwealth and Empire, as well as America. Australian Naval Intelligence, which reported its findings to the FECB, tracked Japanese ships and read Japanese weather reports, movement

⁷ For an explanation of the PNIO, see PRO, ADM 223/495, Most Secret report dated 30 March 1940, *The Far East Combined Intelligence Bureau, Singapore*, from John H. Godfrey, DNI. See also Jozef Straczek, 'The Empire is Listening: Naval Signals Intelligence in the Far East to 1942', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* 35 (Dec. 2001), e-journal, 12 pages.

⁸ Aldrich, *Intelligence*, p. 38.

⁹ *Hearings*, part 15, ADB Conversations, 27 Apr. 1941, 1578.

¹⁰ PRO, ADM 223/495, Secret report no. NID 02344/41 dated 19 June 1941, *Organization of Japanese Fleet*, from C.R.W. Lamplough for DNI; National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Modern Military Records Branch (MMRB), College Park, Maryland, RG 80, Pearl Harbor Liaison Office (PHLO) Records, 370/21/17/5, Entry 167F, Box 41, Letter dated 15 June 1941, from Lieutenant Rudolph Fabian, Fort Mills, Philippines, to CINCAF, Manila, Philippines.

¹¹ Milner, *Canadian Naval Force Requirements*, passim.

reports, consular messages and the 'Mandated Island code'.¹² New Zealand intercept stations also contributed to Allied intelligence. The FECB, supported by Paymaster-Lieutenant Eric Nave and an Australian professor, seems to have decrypted some Japanese naval messages transmitted in JN-25B, a code that had been introduced on 1 December 1940 as the second version of JN-25.¹³ According to some primary evidence, US and Allied cryptanalysts could partially read JN-25B on a current basis by November 1941.¹⁴ Antony Best noted that on 9 November 1941 the FECB informed London that 'Y' intelligence, 'possibly JN-25,' had revealed that the majority of the Japanese Combined Fleet, including five carriers, was still at Kure in Japan.¹⁵ But such intelligence was limited by a shortage of Japanese-language staff, and JN-25B intelligence seems to have served more as a means to corroborate direction finding and traffic analysis, then the Allies' principal source of information on the Japanese Navy.

In 1941, British Intelligence also benefited from important technological advances in radio surveillance. Range Estimation (R/E) allowed radio operators to estimate the range of an intercepted signal, but not its direction. Most significantly, R/E could determine a position along a single line-bearing, without the need for multiple-bearing fixes or triangulation.

¹² PRO, ADM 223/496, Most Secret Letter no. NID 43/81 dated 30 July 1941, from DNI, Melbourne, to The Captain on the Staff, Singapore [FECB].

¹³ PRO, ADM 223/496, Most Secret Letter no. 1006/040.C/3 dated 3 September 1941, from Captain K.L. Harkness, The Captain on the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief, China, HM Naval Base, Singapore [FECB], to DNI, Melbourne.

¹⁴ The following primary sources suggest that British and American naval cryptanalysts could partially read the 5-Numerical code, cypher version 7 (JN-25B7) by November 1941: PRO, ADM 223/496, Lt.-Cmdr. C.N.R. Barham, Most Secret report: 'Japanese Cyphers – Notes', 10 Jul. 1942, 3; and NARA, MMRB, RG 38, Crane – Inactive Stations, 370/27/23/7, Box 15, 3200/1 – *NSRS Philippines, Operations Summaries*, Letter dated 16 November 1941 from Lieutenant John Lietwiler, Fort Mills, Philippines, to Lieutenant L.W. Parke, Navy Dept., Washington. The following article, which is a revised version of Chapter 2 of *Pearl Harbor Redefined*, contains archival evidence demonstrating that the USN could read the message headings of Japanese naval traffic as late as 29 November 1941: Timothy Wilford, 'Decoding Pearl Harbor: USN Cryptanalysis and the Challenge of JN-25B in 1941,' *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord* 12.1 (Jan. 2002): 17–37. Message headings constituted vital intelligence as they revealed the composition of the Japanese Fleet. For an excellent assessment of intercepted Japanese messages, see Frederick D. Parker, 'The Unsolved Messages of Pearl Harbor,' *Cryptologia* 15.4 (Oct. 1991): 295–313.

¹⁵ Best, *Britain, Japan and Pearl Harbor*, 178.

Alternatively, R/E could help to confirm existing multiple-bearing fixes. Operationally, R/E consisted of a radio receiver, an oscilloscope and a camera.¹⁶ An intercepted radio signal was displayed as a waveform on the oscilloscope and photographed. A range estimate was produced after analysing the waveform's frequency and phase properties with respect to local propagation characteristics. An Allied radio intelligence conference later offered the following explanation: 'R/E is a method of calculating the distance of a transmitter by measuring the time interval between the receipt of reflected waves from various layers of the ionosphere and a knowledge of the virtual heights of the latter.'¹⁷ British Admiralty reports confirmed that R/E was accurate to within 10 percent over a working range of 500 to 3,500 miles.¹⁸ Various stations in the Admiralty network experimented with R/E, but there is no available record to show whether or not the Esquimalt station used the technique in 1941.

Another new technique was Radio Finger Printing (RFP), which identified radio transmitters by their operating characteristics. Most transmitters had unique waveform 'signatures' that defied both code and call sign changes. As with R/E, the suspected transmitter signal was displayed as a waveform on an oscilloscope and a photograph of this

¹⁶ PRO, HW 18/206, Head of 'Z' Section, Flowerdown, to Head of Naval Section, B.P., *RFP/TINA/R/E report for month of October 1941*, 7 Nov. 1941.

¹⁷ NAC, RG 24, Examination Unit Records (CSE Files), Vol. 29167, WWII-32: 'Final Report: British-Canadian-American Radio Intelligence Discussions, Washington, D.C., April 6-17, 1942', Appendix i, 19. Researchers should consult this report if they are interested in the state of Canadian radio intelligence in early 1942. The Canadian contingent at the conference included Capt. E.M. Drake (RCCS), Wing Cmdr. M.M. Hendrick (RCAF), Cmdr. J.M.B.P. de Marbois (RCN), Lt. J.R. Foster (RCN), Lt. E. Hope (RCN), Capt. K.J. Maidment (BSC, Army) and Professor B. Bayly (BSC). It was reported that Canada monitored Japanese traffic with nine RCN receivers and eleven Canadian Army receivers. Britain monitored Japanese traffic with six receivers in Colombo, four receivers in Flowerdown and four receivers in Australia. The United States did not disclose similar information. It was also suggested that Esquimalt, Hawaii and Seattle stations continue to maintain close cooperation with respect to Pacific D/F. See Appendix i, 9, 39. For a Canadian assessment of the conference, see NARA, MMRB, RG 38, Crane - Inactive Stations, Box 21, 370/27/24/1, 3270/1: 'Canada - Canadian/British Evaluation of U.S. HFDF Operations; 16 Jul 41 - 1 Apr 45', NSHQ (Ottawa) to DDS (Y), 8-page Memorandum: 'Visit to Washington', 1 Aug. 1942. Lt. Skarstedt and Sub. Lt. McDiarmid, the authors of the memorandum, concluded that the conference was useful, although 'the Canadian organization is more advanced, no doubt owing to longer experience in this particular type of work.'

¹⁸ PRO, HW 18/206, Lt. Merlin Minshall, RNVR, distribution DSD9, *R/E: Its Application and Importance*, Report, May 1941.

was compared to photographs of known radio transmitters as an aid to re-identification. The technique was seen more as means of corroborating other radio intelligence than as an independent source of information. Many Admiralty wartime reports show that RFP identified about a quarter of all intercepted transmissions.¹⁹ However, in terms of 'classifiable' intercepted transmissions (referring only to transmissions that had previously been logged and recognized), RFP allowed over three-quarters of transmissions to be identified.²⁰ Several British stations benefited from this technique, including Singapore, although Canadian stations did not receive RFP equipment until after November 1941.

Radio operators under surveillance could also be identified by their Morse-keying style, using a method of paper-tape recording known as TINA. An operator's keying style was as distinctive as his handwriting. Allied W/T interceptors already listened carefully to the 'fist' of foreign operators and could often identify distinctive keying styles by ear. TINA offered an electronic refinement to that process by recording Morse-keying on inked paper tape, resulting in an undulating ink line that revealed the particular keying style. The term TINA came from an abbreviation of 'Serpentina', an expression that had been used before to describe the undulating ink line. TINA, like RFP, allowed about a quarter of intercepted transmissions to be identified, although much better results were obtained in dealing with classifiable intercepted transmissions. Some British stations experimented with TINA, although Canadian

¹⁹ See the following wartime reports on RFP: PRO, HW 18/206, Naval Section, distribution A.D.I.C., *Memorandum on R.F.P. and TINA (German)*, Report no. Z284, 8 Sep. 1941; PRO, HW 18/206, Head of 'Z' Section (Flowerdown) to D.S.D.9 (Admiralty), *R.F.P./TINA/R/E Report for July, 1942*, 21 Aug. 1942; PRO, HW 18/89, N.S. IV – D file, Lt. Cdr. A.M.S. Mackenzie, RNVR, to D.D. (N.S.), *R.F.P. AND TINA EFFORT ON GERMAN U-BOATS*, Report no. N.S. IV.A/No. 11, 9 Mar. 1944.

²⁰ Ibid. In April 1942, Capt. H.R. Sandwith, RN, reported that '84 per cent of the classifiable results are correct. . . . One hundred per cent classifiable results were obtained in Singapore. . . . The radio fingerprint in England has been of great assistance to the cryptanalyst by identifying transmitters.' See NAC, RG 24, Vol. 29167, WWII-32: 'Final Report', Appendix iii, 27.

stations did not receive the equipment until after December 1941.²¹ British Intelligence used it along with R/E and RFP to support standard W/T intelligence and 'Y' cryptanalysis.

By late 1941, Naval Service Headquarters (NSHQ) in Ottawa was studying the technical aspects of radio transmissions. In particular, it reported on the characteristic 'tone' or 'note' of radio transmitters as an aid to equipment alignment, an approach that anticipated the future use of RFP for such work.²² NSHQ also collected 'cosmic data' for the Admiralty so that radio propagation could be predicted with respect to changing conditions in the ionosphere.²³ On a daily basis, British and Commonwealth stations used coded messages to exchange data concerning ionospheric layers, virtual height and critical frequencies. In terms of mid-Pacific radio reception, on 11 November NSHQ ordered the Gordon Head W/T station to 'listen out for Honolulu W/T station for one week and report readability'.²⁴ On 25 November, FECB Singapore reported that Gordon Head D/F bearings taken on Japanese fixed stations from July to October showed a 'good degree of accuracy'.²⁵ Technical tests were essential to reliable global communications and surveillance.

In the weeks preceding the outbreak of war in the Pacific, NSHQ tightened its communication links with London and Washington. Messages exchanged between Ottawa,

²¹ NAC, Examination Unit Files (CSE), Vol. 29167, WWII-33 (pt. 3), 'Chronology of Canadian Intelligence Developments, 1939-1945'; and Vol. 29163, WWII-4 (pt. 7), File: 'OIC 7', 'History of "Z" in Canada', c. 1945. In December 1941, the RCN received a 'Marconi undulator for TINA' to complement its 'Mark 2 RFP set', which had been received earlier. In January 1942, the RCN experimented with TINA, and in March began using RFP to identify enemy vessels. From May to December 1942, the RCN's TINA and RFP classifications ranged from 7 to 25 percent of all enemy transmissions.

²² NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12151, NSHQ (Ottawa) to COAC (Halifax), Message no. 1928Z/30, 30 Nov. 1941; Vol. 12149, NSHQ (Ottawa) to COAC (Halifax), Message no. 1606Z/1, 1 Dec. 1941; and Vol. 12155, Admiralty to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 1454A/4, 4 Dec. 1941.

²³ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12149, BAD Washington to Admiralty, Message nos. 1103R/26 and 1805R/26, 26 Nov. 1941; and Vol. 12151, Admiralty to BAD Washington, Message no. 1832A/29, 29 Nov. 1941.

²⁴ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12152, NSHQ (Ottawa) to COPC (Esquimalt), Message no. 1526Z/28, 28 Nov. 1941. In this message, NSHQ asks the Esquimalt station how the Honolulu readability report, which had been ordered on 11 November, will be forwarded to Ottawa.

²⁵ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12142, Captain on the Staff (FECB Singapore) to COPC (Esquimalt) and NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 0827Z/25, 25 Nov. 1941.

London and Washington between 28 November and 5 December concerned improving the security of Most Secret messages, using NSHQ Ottawa as a teletype hub for incoming messages addressed to Washington, using Canadian networks for certain communications between Whitehall and the US Naval Operations office (OPNAV), and establishing teletype links between NSHQ Ottawa and the Admiralty's delegation in Washington.²⁶ These measures suggest that Canada and the British Commonwealth were anticipating the United States' active participation in the war and recognized the need for solid communications.

British Security Coordination (BSC)

In New York, British Security Coordination played a vital role in Allied intelligence operations. In the spring of 1940, Stewart G. Menzies, Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS or MI6), known also as 'C', appointed William Stephenson as head of British intelligence activities in America.²⁷ Stephenson, a wealthy Canadian businessman from Winnipeg, had made many contacts throughout Europe and America before the war and was a personal friend of Winston Churchill. His mandate was to 'assure sufficient aid for Britain, to counter the enemy's subversive plans throughout the Western Hemisphere . . . and eventually to bring the United States into the war.'²⁸ In January 1941, Stephenson began working under the title of BSC, and in April 1941 established a BSC office in 'Room 3603' on the 38th floor of the International Building in the Rockefeller Center, New York. Stephenson, codenamed 'Intrepid' because that

²⁶ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12152, Admiralty to BAD Washington and NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 1249A/28, 28 Nov. 1941; SPENAVO (London) to OPNAV (Washington) via NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 1101/28, 28 Nov. 1941; A/DSD to Ottawa W/T, Message no. 2205Z/5, 5 Dec. 1941; NSHQ (Ottawa) to OPNAV (Washington), Message no. 2124Z/5, 5 Dec. 1941; and NSHQ (Ottawa) to COAC, CCNF, et al., Message no. 1656Z/5, 5 Dec. 1941.

²⁷ Mahl, *Desperate Deception*, 10. Menzies took over SIS in November 1939 following the death of the former SIS chief, Admiral Hugh Sinclair. Menzies originally assigned Stephenson the task of establishing links between SIS and the FBI.

²⁸ Ibid. In the United States, Stephenson was replacing the outgoing British intelligence agent, Sir James Paget, RN.

was his New York cable address, used the title 'British Purchasing Commission' as a front name for BSC and also used British passport control offices throughout the world as a 'cover' for BSC intelligence operations.²⁹ In the Americas, Stephenson and BSC represented the interests of MI5, MI6, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), SOE and Scotland Yard. BSC conducted 'covert diplomacy', produced covert propaganda, ran 'political warfare' against isolationists, operated anti-isolationist front groups in the United States, collected shipping and port-security intelligence, and planned sabotage and subversion activities.³⁰ It also sent raw intelligence to London, produced forgeries in Toronto, and created Camp X (codenamed 'Special Training School 103') in Whitby, Ontario, which in 1941 ran an international Allied communications network.

Stephenson also received help from US interventionists. With Roosevelt's cooperation, he helped to create two important US intelligence organizations: the Coordinator of Information (COI) office under Bill Donovan, who later became the first chief of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and the 'Rockerfeller Office', which dealt with Latin American affairs, particularly economic warfare against pro-German business in South America.³¹ Donovan, who opened a COI office at the Rockerfeller Centre in August 1941, maintained close contact with Stephenson: records show that they corresponded on at least 36 occasions between 18 August and 7 December 1941.³² Other powerful friends of BSC in the United States included President Roosevelt and his son James, presidential speechwriter Robert Sherwood, White House

²⁹ Macdonald, *The True Intrepid*, 269.

³⁰ Mahl, *Desperate Deception*, 11–15. BSC anti-isolationist front groups included the following: The Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, The League for Human Rights, Friends of Democracy, Fight for Freedom Committee, American Labour Committee to Aid British Labour, Committee for Inter-American Co-operation, and America Last. BSC also had ties with the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA), which was supported by American film star Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 16–17, 19.

³² Macdonald, *The True Intrepid*, 86. According to Macdonald, COI was formed on 11 July 1941, but did not have an operational New York office until 9 August. On 24 October, Roosevelt told Churchill that Donovan was starting a COI office in London.

confidante Ernest Cuneo, millionaire Vincent Astor, and columnists Walter Lippmann and Walter Winchell.³³ In essence, Roosevelt and other US interventionists not only tolerated BSC's presence in New York, but also helped the organization to achieve its objectives.

Canada's relationship with BSC was very close, but clandestine at all times. Stephenson recruited BSC staff from the civil service in Ottawa with help from External Affairs officials, including Lester Pearson and Thomas Stone.³⁴ Another important Stephenson contact in Ottawa was Charles Vining, who was a friend of Defence Minister Ralston amongst others.³⁵ Stephenson also worked through External Affairs offices in the United States, and BSC liaised constantly with officials in Ottawa, New York, Washington and London. Canadian officials, however, sometimes avoided discussing BSC plans with Mackenzie King, who did not approve of British-led operations in his country. Historian David Stafford has remarked that Canadian officials entrusted with intelligence matters adopted the following principle with respect to their Prime Minister: 'Knowledge if necessary, but not necessarily knowledge.'³⁶ In terms of BSC operations in Canada, the RCMP assisted BSC in creating the 'Station M' forgery workshop and laboratory in Toronto, which operated under the 'cover' of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.³⁷ Canadian professor Benjamin de Forest Bayly organized the Camp X telecommunications centre in 1941, and by the end of the year had established the powerful 'Hydra' radio transmitter there, complete with 'Telekrypton' cryptographic machines.³⁸ David Stafford has noted that Camp X details were kept from Mackenzie King and that no Canadian

³³ Mahl, *Desperate Deception*, 18.

³⁴ Macdonald, *The True Intrepid*, 269.

³⁵ Stafford, *Camp X*, 34–5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 32–3.

³⁷ Stephenson (ed.), *British Security Coordination*, 104–5. Stephenson's book received an excellent review from Kurt F. Jensen (Carleton University, Ottawa) in *Intelligence and National Security* 15.3 (Autumn 2000): 163–5.

³⁸ Macdonald, *The True Intrepid*, 86, 317–20.

Cabinet records mention Camp X during the period in late 1941 when it was being completed: secrecy meant success in covert operations and intelligence.³⁹

With respect to the Far East crisis, BSC adopted a two-pronged strategy, trying to undermine Japan's relationship with the Axis whilst portraying Japan as an aggressor nation to the US public. In an attempt to break German-Japanese cooperation in 1940–41, BSC planted 'German Fifth Column' information in Japan through publicity in the US media and channels into Japan.⁴⁰ The second strategic element was boosted in the autumn of 1941, when Singapore authorities sent BSC a copy of a secret Franco-Japanese agreement that gave Japan economic control over French Indochina.⁴¹ According to Stephenson, BSC passed on the 'political dynamite' to Roosevelt and the State Department; Cordell Hull planned to use it as 'ammunition' against Kurusu, after which time the information could be made public. In terms of US support, Roosevelt, at BSC's request, sent two high-powered radio transmitters to Singapore through the Lend-Lease programme so that the Malaya Broadcasting Corporation could air pro-British propaganda in the Far East.⁴² BSC also secured Donovan's assistance in 'securing propaganda facilities' over at least two American commercial radio stations for the purpose of undermining Japan.⁴³ Furthermore, BSC used US news agencies to spread anti-Japanese propaganda that 'had the appearance of news originating from strictly US sources but which was directed to targets outside the United States.'⁴⁴

According to Stephenson, BSC also tried to rig US opinion polls in an attempt to break isolationism: 'Unknown to the public, the polls of Gallup, Hadley Cantril, Market Analysts Inc.,

³⁹ Stafford, *Camp X*, 33.

⁴⁰ Stephenson (ed.), *British Security Coordination*, 88–94.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 99–100.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

and Roper were all done under the influence of dedicated interventionists and British intelligence agents.⁴⁵ Stephenson thought that such support would help Roosevelt influence Congress:

In FDR the British and their interventionist allies were confronted with a president who was, in his own devious way, extremely sensitive to public opinion and would not move without it. The president, though by nature a procrastinator, was just as anxious to aid the British as they were to gain aid; corroborative public opinion polls would help get needed measures through Congress.⁴⁶

Stephenson's remarks, however, do not indicate how successful were British agents in modifying the polls. For example, Hadley Cantril's poll of October 1941 indicated that 79 percent of those polled wanted the United States to stay out of the war against Germany and Italy, whilst 43 percent believed that it should not take action against Japan unless that nation attacked US territory or interfered with US supplies.⁴⁷ Only 34 percent believed that Japan had 'already gone far enough' and needed to be checked with an ultimatum backed by the threat of war. At the very least, it may be said that BSC did its best in 1941 to convince Americans that Germany, Italy and Japan posed a threat to their security.

A Survey of Canadian Intelligence Operations, 1939–1941

With the approach of the Second World War, Canadian authorities tried to ensure that sufficient resources were allocated to intelligence operations. The RCN participated in the Admiralty's global intelligence network, including PNIO and FEDO, and monitored naval and maritime traffic at Sydney, Halifax, Saint John, Quebec, Vancouver, Esquimalt, Prince Rupert and Yorke Island.⁴⁸ The RCN kept card files on Japanese, German and Italian merchant ships

⁴⁵ Ibid., 69–70.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 71.

⁴⁷ Simon, *Public Opinion in America: 1936–1970*, 125, 137. For a complete survey of American public opinion regarding entry into the war, see Hadley Cantril and Mildred Strunk (eds.), *Public Opinion, 1935–1946* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1951), 954–5, 961, 966–78, 1135–7.

⁴⁸ Milner, *Canadian Naval Force Requirements*, 10–11.

and passed on shipping intelligence to the Admiralty through the 'VESCA' and 'CHATFOLD' information networks.⁴⁹ As well, the Esquimalt station monitored the positions and call signs of Japanese warships for the Admiralty.⁵⁰ In July 1939, Commander Eric S. Brand, RN, arrived in Ottawa to assume his new position as Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI) within the RCN's Naval Intelligence Division (NID), which gave him responsibility for monitoring merchant shipping and convoys. In September, he received assistance from Lieutenant-Commander John M.B.P. (Jock) de Marbois, RNR, who was placed in charge of W/T interception within the Foreign Intelligence Section (FIS). De Marbois, a former languages teacher at Upper Canada College, later received assistance from Lieutenant C.H. Little, his former pupil.⁵¹ Brand, de Marbois and Little also ensured that a Far East Intelligence (FEI) section was established within FIS. In late 1939, Colonel Maurice Pope, Director of Military Operations and Intelligence (DMO&I), became involved in wire-tapping telegram messages and supporting the Rockliffe experimental station in Ottawa.⁵² Pope also wanted to expand cryptanalysis operations in Canada, but was initially rebuffed by British authorities. In terms of D/F operations, the Canadian network included several stations run by the Department of Transport (DOT) and all three armed services.

In 1940, the command chain developed as intelligence operations expanded. In February, F.E. Jolliffe, Canada's Chief Postal Censor, visited Britain to tour British postal censorship

⁴⁹ Ibid., 15. See also Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), Ottawa, 81/145, Vol. 1 of 4 vols., Capt. E.S. Brand, 'Annual Report of Director of Naval Intelligence, Ottawa, for year 1939', 3. The RCN had kept file cards on Japanese merchant ships since 1934, on German merchant ships since 1938, and on Italian merchant ships since 1939.

⁵⁰ NAC, Examination Unit Records (CSE), Vol. 29163, WWII-03, Capt. E.S. Brand (ed.), 'Notes on the History of Operational Intelligence Centre in Canada', 10 Sep. 1945, 3-4. Lt.-Cmdr. F.G. Hart served as Staff Officer (Intelligence), known also as SO (I), at Esquimalt station. Chief Petty Officer Denniston, who had trained in Hong Kong, performed 'Y' work at Esquimalt. Many of the staff at Esquimalt station had originally trained in Japanese 'Kana' (code) interception at Singapore and Stonecutter's Island.

⁵¹ Bryden, *Best-Kept Secret*, 9-10. See also DHH, Little, C.H., Biographical File, C.H. Little, 'My Early Days in Naval Intelligence 1939-41', 29 May 1983.

⁵² Ibid. See also NAC, Examination Unit Records (CSE), Vol. 29163, WWII-02, E.M. Drake, 'Historical Narrative: MI2 of DMI, 1939-44 (Drake)', undated, 1-4 (606-9).

operations.⁵³ Following that visit, Major O.T. Raynor, a British liaison officer, was assigned to Canada to advise on censorship activities. In May, the Canadian 'Aircraft Detection Corps' increased surveillance along the Pacific Coast.⁵⁴ In Esquimalt, the RCN worked with the Army's Royal Canadian Corps of Signals (RCCS) on communications intelligence.⁵⁵ The RCN sent daily summaries of Japanese ship movements to FECB Singapore and weekly summaries of the same to the China Station.⁵⁶ In the summer of 1940, the Gordon Head station, which now served in the Admiralty's Pacific network and communicated directly with the Whitehall W/T station, began using its new HFDF equipment and became linked to cable stations, including the Harman D/F station in Canberra, Australia.⁵⁷ In late 1940, intelligence authorities in Ottawa and Bermuda fought over control of the Atlantic D/F network, but Brand and de Marbois maintained Canada's independence in that field.⁵⁸ At that time, Lieutenant E.M. Drake, RCCS, assumed command over the Rockliffe station and Lieutenant-Colonel W.W. Murray transferred from censorship duties to Army W/T intelligence. Meanwhile, the National Research Council (NRC),

⁵³ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁴ Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force*, 403.

⁵⁵ John S. Moir (ed.), *History of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals, 1903–1961* (Ottawa: RCCS, 1962), 61–2, 218–25. For a discussion of Canadian radar (RDF) activities, see Military Communications and Electronics Museum (Kingston), Box 821, Angus Hamilton Research Papers, 'Canadians on Radar South East Asia 1941–1945'; and Jack Nissen, with A.W. Cockerill, *Winning the Radar War: A Memoir* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1987).

⁵⁶ Milner, *Canadian Naval Force*, 33.

⁵⁷ DHH, 81/145, Vol. 1 of 4 vols., Capt. E.S. Brand, 'Annual Report of Director of Naval Intelligence, Ottawa, for year 1940', 6. Admiralty instructions sent to Gordon Head were not always passed on to NSHQ in Ottawa. As a result, RCN officials were not always sure about what Japanese 'Y' and D/F work was being carried out at Gordon Head. Even so, Gordon Head sometimes used airmail to send intercepts to NSHQ, where they were checked before being sent on to the Admiralty by safe hand. As well, RCN officials could inspect the Gordon Head station at will, even if they were not always sure of its Admiralty assignments. See NAC, RG 24, D1b, Vol. 3807, File 1008–75–44 (vol. 1), J.M. de Marbois to DNI Ottawa, Memorandum, 15 Oct. 1940; C.H. Little to DNI Ottawa, Memorandum, 24 Jan. 1941; and File 1008–75–44 (vol. 2), Capt. J.M. de Marbois to Asst. Chief of Naval Staff, Most Secret memorandum: 'Orange "Y" in Canada', 18 Feb. 1944. See also NAC, RG 24, Examination Unit Records (CSE), Vol. 29163, WWII-03, 'Notes on the History of Operational Intelligence Centre in Canada', 10 Sep. 1945, 27.

⁵⁸ Bryden, *Best-Kept Secret*, 25–6.

led by C.J. Mackenzie, received about \$1,000,000 in corporate donations for ongoing military research, including communications intelligence projects.⁵⁹

In early 1941, Ottawa officials pushed for the creation of a Canadian cryptanalysis unit and approached Washington for assistance.⁶⁰ In January, H.L. Keenleyside of External Affairs suggested that funding be provided for a centralized Canadian cryptanalysis unit. Further to that aim, in April, the University of Toronto recommended that Professors H.S.M. Coxeter and Gilbert de B. Robinson assist with a new NRC-sponsored cryptanalysis unit.⁶¹ The next month, Coxeter and de B. Robinson visited Washington and met with General Joseph Mauborgne, head of the US Army Secret Intelligence Service, who had already considered an earlier Canadian request for assistance. E.M. Drake (who had since been promoted to Captain) had visited Mauborgne in November 1940 without informing his intelligence counterparts in External Affairs. These multiple requests drew comment in Washington, according to a later report: 'General Maughborne [sic] was very interested in our enquiries but was a little puzzled that a second approach should be made by Canada. . . . He also mentioned that South Africa had consulted him on a similar project, and remarked on the apparent unwillingness of the U.K. to cooperate with the Dominions in such activities.'⁶² Given British attitudes at that time, it is understandable that the Canadians defaulted to US support.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 44.

⁶⁰ Several historians have provided accounts of Canada's first cryptanalysis unit, known as the 'Examination Unit': St. John, 'Canada's Accession', 5–21; Wark, 'Cryptographic Innocence', 639–65; J. Granatstein and David Stafford, *Spy Wars* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1990), 20–46; and Philip Rosen, 'The Communications Security Establishment – Canada's Most Secret Intelligence Agency', in Research Branch, Library of Parliament, BP-343E (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1994), 3. For an explanation of External Affairs' responsibilities concerning wartime intelligence, see NAC, RG 24, Examination Unit Records (CSE), Vol. 29167, WWII-33, 'Military Intelligence: 1939–45', Appendix E, 3.

⁶¹ Bryden, *Best-Kept Secret*, 47.

⁶² DHH, 86/555, File: 'NRC Examination Unit, Canada, Decrypt activities in Canada: Germany, Italy, Japan and Vichy France, 1941–42', G. de B. Robinson (ed.), 'A History of the Examination Unit, 1941–1945', July 1945, 12.

Despite British reservations, Mauborgne assisted the Canadians by referring them to Herbert O. Yardley, the brilliant American cryptanalyst.⁶³ It is likely that Mauborgne was trying to get rid of Yardley, who now sought work in Washington: Yardley's 1931 publication *The American Black Chamber* had revealed US code-breaking successes against Japan, thereby creating a huge security risk for Washington. Yardley had published the book quite legally, but intelligence officials remained unimpressed. Moreover, it had been rumoured that Yardley had not only offered assistance to the Japanese in the early 1930s, but also again in 1940 whilst still working for the Chinese government in Chungking. Nonetheless, Yardley's expertise as a cryptanalyst, along with his recent referral by Mauborgne, made him appealing to the Canadians.

In June 1941, External Affairs made important strides in the formation of the new Canadian cryptanalysis centre, codenamed the 'Examination Unit'. The NRC would set up the unit, although External Affairs would continue to arrange staffing and resources. As well, the unit would focus upon Japanese, German and Vichy diplomatic traffic. External Affairs had arranged for the services of Herbert Yardley, who would lead the Examination Unit for a period of six months commencing 9 June, working with two Canadian mathematicians and several translators.⁶⁴ He would report to the unit's 'Supervisory Committee', which included External Affairs and NRC staff. In a Most Secret letter of 5 June, Mackenzie King explained Yardley's role to Vincent Massey:

It is his intention to concentrate his efforts at first on Japanese interceptions and on enemy intelligence codes. A considerable number of these latter are picked out of the air by our monitoring stations, originating in the United States and Mexico particularly, and Naval Intelligence and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have already made some progress in decyphering them.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ibid., 12–18. For an account of Yardley's life and times, see David Kahn, *The Reader of Gentlemen's Mail: Herbert O. Yardley and the Birth of American Codebreaking* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2004).

⁶⁴ According to the NRC internal history, the Examination Unit staff grew from four in June 1941 to 50 at its peak in the summer of 1944. See Ibid., 69.

⁶⁵ DHH, 86/555, SSEA (Ottawa) to HCCUK (London), Most Secret letter no. 864, 5 Jun. 1941.

Yardley had recently completed two years' service with the Chinese government in Chungking and was well placed to begin work on Japanese decrypts for Ottawa.

On 30 June, Yardley, under the pseudonym 'Herbert Osborn', reported on his activities within the Examination Unit.⁶⁶ He explained that on 9 June the unit received rooms 202 and 203 of the NRC Annex building on Montreal Road in Ottawa. He listed his staff: Edna Ramsaier (secretary), Dr. G. de Bayly-Robinson (mathematician), Dr. Richard Rudey (German translator), Robert McLaren and Mary Valteau (RCMP), Vernon Gavel (RCCS), Dr. D. Cameron (telegraph censor), and Fred Bartlett (Post Office dept.). Edna Ramsaier, Yardley's secretary and lover, brought the benefit of her experience with Japanese traffic in Washington.⁶⁷ Yardley also received RCAF Flying Officer Francis Henry, who translated Japanese for the unit.⁶⁸ Most importantly, Yardley's team now received intercepted messages including: '(a) Suspicious letters held by the Postal Censor. (b) Japanese Diplomatic messages from the Chief Telegraph Censor from 1939 to date. (c) Current Japanese Diplomatic messages to various Japanese Diplomatic Agencies throughout the world, intercepted by the Navy. (d) Messages from unauthorized stations intercepted by the R.C.C.S.'⁶⁹ Moreover, the Esquimalt station provided Yardley's group with raw intercepts of diplomatic traffic exchanged between Japan, Mexico and Germany.⁷⁰ Yardley reported that his Japanese linguist could read the Japanese diplomatic messages, both past and current traffic.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Herbert Osborn, 'Memorandum for Secretary of Examination Unit', 30 Jun. 1941.

⁶⁷ Ibid., de B. Robinson (ed.), 'A History', 18.

⁶⁸ Ibid., N.A. Robertson (Ottawa) to Vincent Massey (London), Most Secret letter, 7 Jul. 1941.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Osborn, 'Memorandum', 30 Jun. 1941.

⁷⁰ As early as 1940, Jock de Marbois noted that 'Esquimalt is keeping watch for Commercial and Diplomatic traffic between Japan, Mexico and Germany.' See NAC, RG 24, D1b, Vol. 3807, File 1008-75-44 (vol. 1), J.M. de Marbois to DNI Ottawa, Memorandum: 'W/T Intelligence and H/F D/F, Period 15th October to 14th December, 1940', 16 Dec. 1940.

In August, the Examination Unit expanded its Japanese decrypt activities. A husband and wife team, the Coltons, were appointed to the Japanese diplomatic section. As well, British Intelligence sent details of several Japanese 'low category systems', or straight-book codes, as well as one transposition system, later designated as 'JAE'.⁷¹ On 22 August, Lester Pearson reported to Vincent Massey that 'the Unit is producing results of high value to our Intelligence Services and we are now on the point of substantially increasing its output as we have added some Japanese [censored] translators to the staff.'⁷² Pearson, who wanted to close the existing gaps in message decryption, also requested more support from British cryptanalysts who already decrypted a certain proportion of Japanese messages intercepted in Canada. Massey served as a middle man in that respect: he passed on intercepts from Canada to Britain and, in turn, passed on the resulting decrypts from Britain to Canada.⁷³

By September, Yardley was able to report positive results in Japanese message decryption:

The Japanese Code under study we have named "LA" because of the code indicator. About 75% of each message can now be read. Beginning November 1st, we plan to hand in current translation; in cases where too many code words still remain unidentified we will hand in resumes which will clearly give the subject matter under discussion.⁷⁴

As will be shown, in late 1941 Yardley's team provided Canadian intelligence staff with a modest, but useful, collection of translated Japanese messages.

Unfortunately for the Canadians, Yardley had to go. In September, Commander Alastair Denniston, head of Britain's GCCS under Menzies, visited Ottawa and insisted that Yardley leave for security reasons. The British and the Americans continued to regard Yardley as a huge

⁷¹ DHH, 86/555, de B. Robinson (ed.), 'A History', 137.

⁷² Ibid., L.B. Pearson (Ottawa) to Vincent Massey (London), Most Secret letter, 22 Aug. 1941.

⁷³ Ibid. Historians may also wish to consult Massey's memoirs. See Vincent Massey, *What's Past is Prologue: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Vincent Massey* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1963).

⁷⁴ DHH, 86/555, Herbert Osborn, 'Memorandum for Chairman, Supervisory Committee, NRC Report no. 5 (16 Aug. to 15 Sep. 1941), 15 Sep. 1941.

security risk, despite his brilliance as a cryptanalyst. Would he compromise Canadian (and therefore Allied) intelligence security? In a Most Secret letter of 22 November, Norman Robertson expressed his concerns to Hume Wrong in Washington:

As far as both the British and the Americans are concerned, the only replies which we have been able to get so far to our enquiries as to why Yardley is not trusted make vague and unsatisfactory references to the book which he published. . . . The British even go to the point of wanting Yardley out of Ottawa before their Cryptographer arrives here.⁷⁵

Almost as recompense for Yardley's imminent departure, Robertson asked Wrong in the same letter if the US War Department and FBI might provide Canada with confidential information.

Lester Pearson even visited Washington from 26 to 28 November in an attempt to reach an understanding about Yardley with the Americans. In support of that endeavour, on 27 November, Lieutenant Little, RCN, and Captain Belben, RN, flew from Ottawa to join Pearson in Washington.⁷⁶ Despite meetings with OPNAV staff, War Department staff, cryptanalyst William Friedman and Admiral Noyes, Pearson and his colleagues could not salvage Yardley's career with the Examination Unit.⁷⁷ Almost as an epitaph to that career, Pearson made the following comments to Vincent Massey in a letter of 9 December: 'So far as our experience with Osborn [Yardley] goes we have found him industrious, reliable, and most efficient. He has built up what we think is a successful, if small, organization here and has inspired in them an unusual sense of loyalty to the work they are doing.'⁷⁸ Yardley had to go, but he had created the nucleus of an effective Canadian cryptanalysis unit.

In terms of Japanese naval traffic, it appears that the Examination Unit had only made limited progress by December 1941. On 27 December, Captain Drake issued a Most Secret

⁷⁵ Ibid., N.A. Robertson (Ottawa) to Hume Wrong (Washington), Most Secret letter, 22 Nov. 1941.

⁷⁶ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12142, NSHQ (Ottawa) to BAD Washington, Message no. 1639Z/27, 27 Nov. 1941. Captain Belben was likely on secondment from the RN.

⁷⁷ DHH, 86/555, L.B. Pearson, 'Memorandum on Visit to Washington to Enquire into the Situation regarding H.O. Osborn', 28 Nov. 1941.

⁷⁸ Ibid., L.B. Pearson (Ottawa) to Vincent Massey (London), Secret letter, 9 Dec. 1941.

memorandum on Yardley's report concerning Japanese battle communications: 'At present there is very little information available on Japanese Battle communications such as procedure signals, frequencies, type of cipher etc.'⁷⁹ Drake believed that 'the lack of traffic available for interception' prior to hostilities had hindered progress, but that large quantities of Japanese naval traffic could now be intercepted at Pacific Command.⁸⁰ Drake hoped for a solution of Japanese naval codes and a better understanding of Japanese communication systems. His hopes were later realized in the spring of 1942, when Esquimalt intercepted 'a considerable volume of Japanese naval traffic', which was sent to US and British authorities for decryption.⁸¹ It is likely that the Examination Unit had attempted to decrypt Japanese naval traffic in the Yardley period, but had achieved its greatest success in solving diplomatic messages.

Apart from developments in Canadian cryptanalysis throughout 1941, measures were being taken to expand the scope of the Foreign Intelligence Section at the RCN.⁸² In August, Lieutenant J.R. Foster, who served in FIS, visited Britain where he toured Marconi research laboratories as well as Admiralty W/T and 'Y' stations.⁸³ As of early December, FIS operated

⁷⁹ Ibid., Capt. E.M. Drake (Ottawa) to GSO 1 Intelligence, Most Secret memorandum re: 'Japanese Battle Communications', 27 Dec. 1941.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ NAC, RG 24, Examination Unit Records (CSE Files), Vol. 29165, WWII-15 (pt. 3): 'Examination Unit – Organization (1942/01–1942/07)', Lt. C.H. Little to Cmdr. Denniston, Letter, 18 Apr. 1942. Little proposed that Anglo-American authorities provide Canada with relevant intelligence concerning Japan: 'It would appear incongruous for Canada to attempt to establish a Japanese section to deal with this material [Esquimalt intercepts] in view of the highly trained organisations already existing for this purpose in the United Kingdom and the United States. It will be agreed, however, that any intelligence concerning Japanese plans throughout the Pacific area is of great importance to Canada in view not only of Canada's Pacific interests but also of the Japanese population of the country.' In June 1942, BSC reviewed the Canadian Army's W/T and 'Y' capabilities with respect to Japanese military traffic: 'the Ottawa cryptographic section had neither the staff nor the equipment necessary for the study of Japanese operational cyphers and its knowledge of traffic analysis was rudimentary.' It should be noted, however, that BSC did not report on RCN and RN activities at the Gordon Head monitoring station. See Stephenson (ed.), *British Security Coordination*, 483.

⁸² NARA, MMRB, RG 38, Crane – Inactive Stations, Box 21, 370/27/24/1, 1000/1: 'Canada – Personnel Available for the War Effort (1945)', Cmdr. D.R.H. Macdonald to Capt. De Marbois (Ottawa), Memorandum, 20 Jun. 1945; and NAC, RG 24, D1b, Vol. 3807, File 1008–75–44 (vol. 1), RCN, Most Secret 'F.I.S. Report', 2 Dec. 1941. For a chart of NSHQ staff in March 1941, see Milner, *Canadian Naval Force*, 37.

⁸³ NAC, RG 24, D1b, Vol. 3807, File 1008–75–44 (vol. 1), Lt. J.R. Foster to Cmdr. J.M. de Marbois, 'Report on Visit to Admiralty', undated (c. late Aug. 1941).

five 'Y' stations and fifteen HFDF stations across Canada.⁸⁴ Its D/F staff received instructions from the Admiralty's NID 9 section and exchanged D/F bearings and intelligence with D/F groups in Britain, Bermuda, Freetown, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. All FIS D/F bearings were shared with the Admiralty, whereas FIS Pacific Coast D/F bearings were also shared with FECB Singapore. FIS staff included seventeen officers and 180 telegraphers, who worked on W/T intelligence, D/F analysis, D/F field maintenance, technical research, staff training and Far East Intelligence. The Far East Intelligence section collected D/F and communications intelligence on vessels plying the Far East and Pacific; translated Japanese, Chinese and Korean traffic received from 'Y' stations and cable sensors; and also trained operators to copy the Japanese 'Kana' code.⁸⁵

Wartime records provide a few examples of the specialists who served in Far East Intelligence. Lieutenant R.M. Cartwright, RCNVR, who had enlisted in December 1939, joined Gordon Head Naval W/T Station, where he was employed on Kana interception until August 1943. In July 1941, Lieutenant R.G. Strong, RCNVR, joined the FIS and worked as a radio technician, W/T operator and Kana operator. In August 1941, Lieutenant W.E. Jolliffe, RCNVR, joined the intelligence team, bringing with him special knowledge: he was born in China, spoke Chinese and had spent 20 years in the Orient. Such personnel were essential to Far East intelligence activities.

⁸⁴ Seemingly, Canadian Pacific Coast HFDF stations intercepted much of the same traffic that British stations intercepted out in the Far East. For example, in October 1940, Jock de Marbois offered this explanation to Captain Brand: 'It is interesting to note that 90% of bearings from Arawua, Kranji, Jandakot etc. are taken simultaneously with our own units. This fact proves that H/F D/F control is superfluous.' De Marbois's observation is not surprising: it is well known to communications specialists that high-frequency transmissions propagate exceptionally well. See NAC, RG 24, D1b, Vol. 3807, File 1008-75-44 (vol. 1), J.M. de Marbois to DNI Ottawa, Secret memorandum, 15 Oct. 1940.

⁸⁵ A list of the Japanese Kana code is provided in DHH, Herrington, S.W., Biographical Files, S.W. Herrington to W.A.B. Douglas, Letter, 23 Nov. 1982.

Growing links with American and British service groups helped to develop those intelligence activities. Throughout 1941, Canadian authorities ensured that close links were maintained between External Affairs and the Examination Unit in Ottawa; BSC in New York; the Canadian Legation, British Embassy and US authorities in Washington; the Canadian High Commission and British authorities in London; and all three Canadian armed services. In February, Lester Pearson requested British support for the decryption of telegrams intercepted in Canada.⁸⁶ In March, Norman Robertson of External Affairs assured Lieutenant-Colonel W.W. Murray, DMO&I (DND Ottawa) that Canadian-intercepted telegrams were being sent to London.⁸⁷ In April 1941, following the ABC-1 talks, Canadian and US naval intelligence officers exchanged visits to Ottawa and Washington to learn of each other's operations. The Roosevelt administration tolerated Canadian intelligence-gathering operations in the States, where these activities continued under the cover of Canadian 'shipping control'. In July, Robertson informed the Canadian Legation in Washington that messages intercepted in Canada 'are now being deciphered by the Examination Unit in some considerable numbers', and that most messages 'have to do with shipping and are being sent direct to Washington from the Director of Naval Intelligence.'⁸⁸ In August, Pearson asked Massey in London to secure more British help in message decryption and to continue exchanging Canadian intercepts for British decrypts. By late 1941, in anticipation of the implementation of ABC-22, Canadian Pacific Coast stations shared intelligence concerning ship movements with their US counterparts. Such cooperation enhanced the ability of the RCN to provide important information on the Far East crisis.

⁸⁶ DHH, 86/555, N.A. Robertson (Ottawa) to Lt. Col. W.W. Murray, DMO&I (Ottawa), Most Secret letter, 27 Mar. 1941.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ DHH, 86/555, N.A. Robertson (Ottawa) to H.H. Wrong (Washington), 18 Jul. 1941.

Other correspondence referred to links with BSC in New York. On 23 September, Captain Brand, DNI, recommended to T.A. Stone, External Affairs, that the Examination Unit only pass on its material to BSC in the United States, as US authorities might not be helpful in such intelligence exchanges.⁸⁹ On 29 September, Stone replied that he had spoken to Colonel Murray 'about the very wide distribution of our Examination Unit reports in the United States' and that 'Colonel Murray is in Washington, as you know, where he expects to see Lt. Little (either there or in New York) and he hopes to get this question of wide distribution cleared up.'⁹⁰ For security reasons, the Supervisory Committee of the Examination Unit had not told Yardley that Lieutenant Little sent copies of the unit's bulletins to the BSC. An internal history explained: 'Thus when B.S.C. asked for additional information concerning keys etc. [for message decryption], the request came on to us with no name attached.'⁹¹ Other letters establish that Captain K.J. Maidment served at the BSC as a form of liaison officer to Ottawa intelligence authorities.⁹² Also, NSHQ passed on BSC intelligence to other Commonwealth countries.⁹³ Clearly, BSC was part of the Ottawa information loop.

A complete understanding of that cooperation may have to await the future declassification of relevant sources, however. For example, one Examination Unit staff file is missing letters from 16 September to 5 December 1941.⁹⁴ Another is missing letters from 25 July to 7 December 1941.⁹⁵ Other files are censored, often in sections discussing Allied efforts

⁸⁹ DHH, 86/555, Capt. E.S. Brand (Ottawa) to T.A. Stone (Ottawa), 23 Sep. 1941.

⁹⁰ DHH, 86/555, Stone to Brand, 29 Sep. 1941.

⁹¹ DHH, 86/555, de B. Robinson (ed.), 'A History', 22.

⁹² NAC, RG 24, Examination Unit Records (CSE), Vol. 29165, WWII-15 (pt. 3), File: 'Examination Unit – Organization (1942/01–1942/07)', passim.

⁹³ For example, see NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12147, NSHQ (Ottawa) to DNI Wellington and DNI Melbourne, Message no. 2159Z/8, 8 Dec. 1941. The message conveys BSC intelligence regarding a person suspected of pro-German sympathies.

⁹⁴ NAC, RG 24, Examination Unit Records (CSE), Vol. 29165, WWII-20 (pt. 1), File: 'Staff – Examination Unit (1941/05–1944/02)', passim.

⁹⁵ NAC, RG 24, Vol. 29165, WWII-15, pt. 3, passim.

to decrypt Japanese messages in 1941. Indeed, the released version of an internal history entitled, 'A History of the Examination Unit, 1941–1945', edited by G. de Bayly-Robinson, has eight pages severed and an entire section on Japanese message decryption in 1941 completely deleted.⁹⁶ However, sufficient archival sources are available to offer a detailed explanation of Canada's principal intelligence service in 1941, the RCN network.

The RCN Intelligence Network in 1941

In early 1941, the RCN already had the beginnings of a substantial radio intelligence network. On 13 February, Rear-Admiral Percy W. Nelles, Chief of Naval Staff, RCN, produced a Most Secret report entitled 'H/F D/F and "Y" Organization in Canada and Newfoundland'.⁹⁷ This listed the following HFDF facilities: Botwood (Newfoundland), fourteen operators and three receivers; Hartlen Point (Nova Scotia), fourteen operators and six receivers; St. Hubert (Quebec), four operators and two receivers; and Gordon Head (British Columbia), eight operators and one receiver. Nelles also listed the following 'Y' facilities: throughout Newfoundland, fourteen operators and eight receivers; Ottawa (Ontario), ten operators and five receivers; Forrest (Ontario), four operators and three receivers; Strathburn (Ontario), four operators and three receivers; Esquimalt (British Columbia), twelve operators and five receivers; and Vancouver (British Columbia), eight operators and three receivers. In terms of reporting structure, all 'Y' stations were allotted assignments according to Admiralty instructions, and each D/F and 'Y' station sent weekly or monthly reports to NSHQ, which passed on reports to

⁹⁶ DHH, 86/555, de B. Robinson (ed.), 'A History'. Pages 139 to 146 are severed and 'Section 15', dealing with Japanese message decryption in 1941, is missing. In contrast, the sections on German and Vichy French message decryption are intact.

⁹⁷ NAC, RG24, D1b, Vol. 3807, File 1008–75–32 (vol. 1), Rear-Admiral P.W. Nelles (Chief of Naval Staff, RCN, Ottawa) to CinC Americas and West Indies (Bermuda), Most Secret report, 'H/F D/F and "Y" Organization in Canada and Newfoundland', 13 Feb. 1941. This report is also found in NAC, RG24, D1b, Vol. 3805, 1008–75–10 (vol. 1).

the Admiralty. Japanese intercepts were sent to both the Admiralty and the FECB in Singapore. In terms of administration, NSHQ in Ottawa had three officers and two civilians working on W/T and 'Y' intelligence, with technical help from the DOT and scientific advice from the NRC. The RCN continued to build upon this foundation throughout the year.

Captain Eric Brand outlined major developments in Canadian naval intelligence in his annual report of 1941.⁹⁸ In May, a technical division, responsible for the supply and maintenance of technical equipment, was added to the Naval Staff. The Naval Intelligence Division was also organized into the following divisions: Main Office; General Intelligence Section; Foreign Intelligence Section (FIS); Far Eastern Intelligence Section; Sea Transport Section; Mercantile Movements Section; Routing and Convoy Section; Naval Distributing Authority; and Staff Officer Control Section. FIS, now exclusively responsible for D/F and W/T intelligence, was divided into the following sections after reorganization: W/T I, enemy and potential enemy W/T 'Y' traffic; D/F A, for D/F plotting and distribution by NSHQ; FEI, Far Eastern intelligence recovered from D/F, W/T and 'Y' intercepts including Japanese, Korean and Chinese translation; FIS (R), a research section working with NRC and US research centres on D/F, 'Y' and technical innovations; FIS (FO), field officers in charge of D/F stations; and FIS (School), an operators' school opened in Ottawa in November 1941.⁹⁹ By the end of 1941, Atlantic D/F stations included Harbour Grace and Botwood (Newfoundland), Hartlen Point (Nova Scotia), Pennfield Ridge (New Brunswick), Cap d'Espoir and Montreal (Quebec), Rivers (Manitoba), and finally Ottawa (Ontario). The Pacific D/F stations included Gordon Head, Ucluelet and Coal Harbour, all in British Columbia. 'Y' stations were located at Harbour Grace, Hartlen Point, Ottawa, Strathburn, Forrest, Point Grey and Esquimalt.

⁹⁸ DHH, 81/145, Vol. 1 of 4 vols., Capt. E.S. Brand, *Annual Report of Director of Naval Intelligence for Year 1941*.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 4.

In terms of censorship activities, Brand's organization increased telephone/telegraph censorship, and handled 263 tons of mail in the course of 1941.¹⁰⁰ Regarding Axis traffic, the establishment of Berlin–Tokyo airmail connections in the spring of 1941 offered more opportunities for censorship at Vancouver: German airmail sent to America via the Pacific might be subjected to Canadian scrutiny.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the Censorship Co-ordination Committee complemented Brand's activities by issuing censorship directives to radio stations across Canada. Throughout 1941, the Committee issued nearly 90 censorship directives, an average of seven or eight per month.¹⁰² Typically, these directives prohibited the civilian media from discussing troop movements, travel itineraries of political leaders, or weather information about critical coastal areas.

Brand's annual report also explained reporting structures. Daily summaries of shipping movements were sent to the Admiralty, whilst the Americans were informed of shipping information through the 'CHATFOLD' system of reporting. For security, messages to the Americans were sent using secret addresses, as the United States was still only an unofficial ally (secret addresses ceased to be used following the US entry into the war). 'Q' messages, along with corresponding 'W' messages, provided navigational aid and warnings.¹⁰³ Brand himself liaised with External Affairs, Department of National Defence (DND), DOT, the Department of Justice (RCMP), the Department of Mines and Resources (which, paradoxically, administered immigration in Canada), the Department of National War Services (which administered public

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹⁰¹ NAC, RG 25, B3, Vol. 2163, File 160: 'Shipping: Pacific Coast, 1941 (file 1: January-April)', Canadian Legation (Washington), Minute Sheets, 25 Feb. and 10 Mar. 1941. In early 1941, American support for Canadian censorship activities was still limited: the Canadian Legation in Washington reported that the US State Department was hesitant to divert mail to Vancouver for Canadian scrutiny.

¹⁰² Censorship Co-ordination Committee (Canada), *Radio Broadcasting Censorship: Directives, 1940–42* (Ottawa: Carleton University Library, Doc. Div.), DDV.CA1.CCC.39C22. Curiously, the collection does not contain any censorship directives from 7 Nov. to 8 Dec. 1941; perhaps none were ever issued in that period.

¹⁰³ DHH, 81/145, Vol. 1 of 4 vols., Brand, *Annual Report*, 5.

information), the Post Office, and the Department of the Secretary of State (which administered the press censors as well as internment).¹⁰⁴

Brand highlighted the many liaisons between Canada, Britain and the United States throughout 1941.¹⁰⁵ Brand's staff only liaised with the Anglo-American community, and had no Japanese contacts: in early 1941, Japanese authorities withdrew Commander Youmatsi, the Japanese Naval Attaché in Ottawa, without replacement.¹⁰⁶ In April, Brand made an important visit to the USN headquarters and the British Admiralty Delegation (BAD) in Washington. US and Canadian naval control services were not yet combined, but advanced planning was necessary in anticipation of the United States' entry into the war. In May, Commander E.W. Strother, USN, was appointed to Ottawa as Assistant Naval Attaché; he served under Captain O.M. Read, USN Naval Attaché, and later received three additional USN staff members.

More exchanges and visits followed. In June, a USN naval observer was appointed to Halifax, and Lieutenant-Commander J.G. MacKinlay, RCNVR, was appointed to Washington as Assistant Naval Attaché (liaising with Captain M.K. Metcalf, USN). In the same month, Rear-Admiral John H. Godfrey, DNI Admiralty, and Vice Admiral Sir Charles Kennedy-Purvis, Commander in Chief Americas and West Indies Station, Bermuda, visited Brand in Ottawa, as did Vice Admiral H.R. Moore, Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Trade) in August. Captain Read returned to Washington in September, and Commander Strother succeeded him as USN Naval Attaché in Ottawa. In November, Admiral Little and Captain Belben, both of the RN, visited NSHQ Ottawa and discussed plans to be made with US authorities, and Paymaster Rear-Admiral Sir Eldon Manisty, RN, visited Ottawa and Washington to discuss the trade

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 21.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 20–1.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 20.

organization in November and December. It is clear from Brand's report that his naval intelligence organization was in no way isolated from the Anglo-American community.

Conclusions

Canada benefited from participation in several intelligence networks before the Pacific War. As a member of Britain's PNIO and FEDO, Canada exchanged valuable information on Pacific shipping, including D/F intercepts and call signs, and supplied the Admiralty with ionospheric data to assist with radio propagation studies. In late 1941, Canada received new RFP and TINA equipment to assist with transmitter and operator identification, although that equipment came too late for use against pre-war Japanese signals. BSC, which received full support from External Affairs and DND, operated a forgery workshop in Toronto, developed a communications network at Camp X, collected intelligence on the Axis and Japan, sought to undermine US isolationism, and served as a liaison between British intelligence authorities and their counterparts in Ottawa and Washington. Canadian intelligence networks employed techniques such as wire tapping, postal censorship, press and trade analysis, radio interception and cryptanalysis. The Examination Unit, supported by both the NRC and External Affairs, began decrypting Japanese, German and Vichy traffic in the summer of 1941. The RCN network included a Foreign Intelligence Section, a Far Eastern Intelligence unit, three Pacific D/F stations, eight Atlantic D/F stations and seven 'Y' stations, receiving support from several ministries as well as DOT, NRC, RCCS and the RCAF. As well, the RCN operated a worldwide shipping intelligence network for the Admiralty. In 1941, its network rivalled BSC as the largest foreign intelligence service operating within the United States. Significantly, the RCN established important liaisons with intelligence authorities in both Washington and London.

It must be emphasized that Canada was not operating on the periphery of Allied intelligence operations on the eve of the Pacific War. Canadian cryptanalysis was still in its formative phase at that time, but many of the other intelligence activities were quite well developed. It is true that Canada's intelligence networks did not reach their peak performance until later in the war, but it would be incorrect to assume that these networks were merely in their infancy in 1941. One look at the thousands of RCN despatches produced daily throughout 1941 soon dispels such a notion. Canadian intelligence reports were not simply the product of informed opinion, but were based upon the analysis of detailed information. Furthermore, Allied networks could often compensate for any deficiencies in Canada's domestic networks. Britain in particular had every interest in keeping its senior ally well inside the Allied information 'loop'. Having established the capability of Allied and Canadian intelligence networks before the Pacific War, it is now necessary to examine the information that these networks provided to Canadian decision-makers. We must try to understand what Canada knew about the Far East crisis from its own intelligence operations.

Chapter 3

Know your Enemy: Intelligence produced in Canada concerning the Far East Crisis

Canada sought to understand Japan's intentions in 1941 because the prospect of participating in a Pacific War as Britain's ally was very real and immediate. Canada's domestic networks produced more intelligence concerning the Far East than has often been recognized. In this chapter, intelligence reports produced in Canada will be examined in the order of their relative significance, from the least to the most important. To begin with, we will look at Censorship Intelligence, which collected information from private correspondence. A discussion of Press and Trade Intelligence will investigate the relative utility of public and commercial information. Colonel B.R. Mullaly's intelligence reports will offer an indication of what Pacific Command thought of the Far East crisis. Our discussion of 'Human Intelligence' will show how Allied agents and informers resident in Japan perceived the situation. Finally, we will examine decrypts of Japanese diplomatic messages as furnished by Canada's Examination Unit. It should be noted that two kinds of Canadian intelligence are not presented in this chapter because they are more closely related to other themes. Intelligence collected at Canada's overseas diplomatic missions is discussed in the next chapter, which concerns external intelligence sources, whereas RCN intelligence concerning Pacific shipping is discussed in Chapter 7, which deals with Canada's defence strategy in the North Pacific. Yet the sources considered in this chapter show that Canada's domestic intelligence networks provided information about public reaction to the Far East crisis, revealed Japan's intentions in Southeast Asia, offered assessments of Japan's military and naval capability, and offered forewarning of conflict between the United States and Japan.

Censorship Intelligence

DND in Ottawa produced weekly 'Censorship Intelligence Summaries', which concerned trade and political information taken from censored letters and telegrams. These summaries, which were shared with both the Canadian Legation and the British Embassy in Washington, offered no insight into Japan's grand strategy, but provided some insight into public reaction to Far East affairs. The summaries always contained excerpts from messages intercepted over the course of a few months. Censored correspondence provided in the summaries of November and December 1941 not only described conditions in Japan and occupied territories, but also discussed the prospect of war with the West.

Some messages sent in the summer and autumn of 1941 offered examples of public reaction to conditions in Japan. For example, a letter of 22 August sent from Tokyo to Vancouver described the construction of air-raid shelters in Tokyo.¹ A letter sent six days later from Kyoto to New Westminster, BC, complained of chronic shortages in Japan of various supplies, including rice.² Letters exchanged between Japan and Canada in September told of the presence of Germans in Tokyo, a war scare in Japan and the presence of Japanese troops in Manchukuo, which might mean 'a possible drive north before extending south.'³ Other letters that month indicated that 'Liberal' leaders in Japan hoped for successful US mediation in the China war, and that the asset-freeze had compelled some British subjects to leave Japan for India and Australia because their businesses were affected.⁴ In a letter of 15 October, a Japanese writer informed his colleague in Montreal that little cooperation existed within the Japanese government, and that it was important to not express any form of criticism in future

¹ DHH, 314.009 (D152), File: 'Intelligence Summaries, Trade and Political, Nov-Dec 41'; DND, *Censorship Intelligence Summary No. 114, Trade and Political (Part 2: Postal)*, period 1–7 Dec. 1941, 22.

² Ibid., No. 113, *Trade and Political (Part 2: Postal)*, period 24–30 Nov. 1941, 19.

³ Ibid., No. 115, *Trade and Political (Part 2: Postal)*, period 8–14 Dec. 1941, 13, 16.

⁴ Ibid., No. 111, *Trade and Political (Part 2: Postal)*, period 10–16 Nov. 1941, 21.

correspondence: 'To conform to the spirit of Bushido, everything is supposed to be good, all the time.'⁵ Not surprisingly, the public seemed to sense a general state of tension in Japan as it mobilized for war.

Other correspondence referred to conditions in occupied China and Manchuria. In a letter of 27 September sent from Shanghai to Vancouver, a Canadian explained how Japanese authorities discouraged the presence of all foreigners in North China: 'the Nips have announced that they will not allow *any* foreigner to be appointed to the North, be he an Axis friend or one of us! . . . The Russo-German war has shown them they have nothing to fear from the [Germans]'.⁶ A letter sent the next day from a Canadian in Hong Kong explained how Japan encouraged the 'drug habit' in occupied China to subjugate the people and to create profit: 'Hitlerism in its best form is bad, but to my knowledge it has not hit the inhuman and low methods adopted by the Japs to attain full conquest and control over masses of people.'⁷ A letter of 4 October described conditions in occupied China, where Japanese troops looted and burned villages, but not without reprisals: 'There is much unrest and Japanese officers and soldiers are picked off on the streets frequently. They have many hostages bottled up and when those incidents occur they trot out the hostages and kill them in public.'⁸ Clearly, Japanese atrocities offended the sensibilities of Western observers.

Writers also discussed Japan's diplomatic position and the prospect of war. In a letter of 16 October from Tokyo, a Japanese writer tried to influence the *Nisei* in Canada: 'it is the duty of the second generation in the American continent to do their part in clarifying Japan's policy in East Asia. . . . I hope and pray that you will have absolute faith in Japan's diplomatic and

⁵ Ibid., No. 116, *Trade and Political (Part 2: Postal)*, period 15–21 Dec. 1941, 15.

⁶ Ibid., No. 112, *Trade and Political (Part 2: Postal)*, period 17–23 Nov. 1941, 32.

⁷ Ibid., No. 113, *Trade and Political (Part 2: Postal)*, period 24–30 Nov. 1941, 18.

⁸ Ibid., No. 114, *Trade and Political (Part 2: Postal)*, period 1–7 Dec. 1941, 21.

military measures.’⁹ That letter was unusual as most Japanese writers were unwilling to provoke the *Nisei*. A New York–Tokyo telegram of 18 November conveyed uncertainty over the course of the US-Japanese talks in Washington.¹⁰ In the first week of December 1941, Censorship Intelligence analysed telegrams of 26 and 28 November that suggested several outcomes: the US-Japanese talks in Washington were close to collapsing; the Americans might send a task force to the NEI to protect vital resources; the Americans were preparing to apply more economic sanctions against Japan whilst increasing aid to Chiang Kai-Shek; and any Japanese moves against Indochina or the Burma Road would cause an immediate end to negotiations.¹¹

Censorship Intelligence did not necessarily provide accurate information in a timely way; nor did it offer anything more than a superficial look at conditions within the Japanese Empire. At the very least, however, it captured public reaction to current affairs. Intercepted private correspondence allowed Canadian intelligence authorities to explore the vagaries of public opinion.

Press and Trade Intelligence

Captain Eric S. Brand offered another intelligence dimension in his ‘North American Station Intelligence Reports’, which were based on press and trade information. The reports surveyed public and political reaction to the war in general, commented occasionally on Far East affairs, but focused more on Allied war production as well as American defence spending, material aid and political attitudes. The latter issues were not unrelated to the Far East crisis, particularly as some commentators anticipated an Allied-American war against Japan, one that

⁹ Ibid., No. 114, *Trade and Political (Part 2: Postal)*, period 1–7 Dec. 1941, 23.

¹⁰ Ibid., No. 113, *Trade and Political (Part 1: Cable, Wireless and Telegraph)*, period 24–30 Nov. 1941, 17.

¹¹ Ibid., No. 114, *Trade and Political (Part 1: Cable, Wireless and Telegraph)*, period 1–7 Dec. 1941, 17–18.

would tax existing resources to the limit. In his report of 1 October 1941, Brand's sources indicated that labour strikes were undermining Canadian war production and that Ontario Premier Mitchell F. Hepburn undermined the Mackenzie King government through 'his apparently opportunistic criticism of its policies' and war effort.¹² Hepburn had even given a radio address and press conference in New York City, where he blamed the King administration for Canada's war deficiencies. Hepburn, though somewhat discredited, was seen as a potential threat because he had 'mob-appeal' and might become a 'quasi-fascist leader in times of grave crisis.' Intelligence staff regarded any criticism of Canada's war effort as potentially dangerous.

In terms of US activities in September, Brand reported that President Roosevelt had prepared a defence bill worth nearly \$6,000,000 for the US armed forces, but also faced an isolationist public: 'The American public do not want war. In truth, they are puzzled, irritated and apprehensive over the concerted efforts of pressure groups who are busily laying the foundations for war sentiments.'¹³ It would seem that American interventionists, the Roosevelt administration and Stephenson's BSC faced a daunting task in managing public consent. Brand's sources also suggested that US labour strikes undermined the production of war materials for Britain. However, it was believed that the trade embargo against Japan would not interfere significantly with either the US economy or its armaments production.¹⁴ In terms of support for the Russians, Brand noted that ships carrying war supplies from Seattle to the Soviet Union were using 'the new and faster route' to Komsomolsk, Siberia, north of the Aleutian

¹² DHH, 112.3M1009 (D129), File: 'RCN North American Station Int. Reports, Oct 41/Jun 42', Capt. E.S. Brand, *North American Station Intelligence Report* (NASIR) no. 10, 1 Oct. 1941, 654–5.

¹³ Ibid., 581–2, 584.

¹⁴ Ibid., 576, 615.

Islands, rather than simply relying upon the Great Circle route to Vladivostok, a move that might avoid North Pacific gales and reduce tensions with Japan.¹⁵

In his intelligence report of 1 November 1941, Brand discussed the United States' support for Britain and for the defence of the North American continent.¹⁶ The Washington press indicated that by 1942 the United States would probably produce about half of 'democracy's war materials', an amount that would equal the combined output of Canada and Britain. The press also estimated that about 35 percent of Britain's production of heavy bombers would be made possible through US supplies. At a Washington press conference held on 21 October, Roosevelt stated that plans for joint US-Canadian continental defence might include US protection of Toronto and Halifax, although he denied that Halifax was already under USN protection. Perhaps the United States could be persuaded to protect Allied interests in the Pacific. Brand's report did not offer significant commentary on Far East affairs throughout October.

His report of 1 December 1941, however, offered more analysis of the Far East along with reports on US attitudes toward the war in general. Support for Britain was still hard to find in America. On 4 November in Detroit, female peace demonstrators hurled eggs and tomatoes at Lord Halifax, calling him a 'War Monger'. Nonetheless, the press emphasized the United States' preparations for war, reporting on the effectiveness of USN radar, the recruitment of radio technicians, the training of a joint Army-Marine assault force at San Diego and Roosevelt's order of 14 November to withdraw US marines from China, who he feared might be

¹⁵ Ibid., 588, 617, 652.

¹⁶ DHH, 112.3M1009 (D129), Capt. E.S. Brand, NASIR no. 11, 1 Nov. 1941, 677, 719.

taken as hostages in the event of war with Japan.¹⁷ The Esquimalt station reported that Washington had also taken the precaution of re-routing Soviet aid shipments (other than petrol and oil shipments to Vladivostok) through the Atlantic rather than the Pacific. In terms of Japan's actions, other reports indicated that a Japanese flotilla, sailing from Honolulu, carried repatriated Japanese nationals from Hawaii; such were US-Japanese tensions.¹⁸ The Esquimalt station offered the comments of Hallet Abend, 'noted writer-authority on the Orient', who believed that a Japanese attack on Siberia would also lead to conflict in Southeast Asia between Japan and Anglo-American forces. Abend also noted that German 'sea raiders' had already established rendezvous at Japanese mid-Pacific islands, and that Japan's twice-daily flying service between Palau and Timor served as an 'observation post for naval traffic' between the Antipodes and Singapore.¹⁹ Brand's sources suggested that both sides were preparing for war in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Brand's next intelligence report, dated 1 January 1942, concerned the eventful month of December, when the Pacific War began. His report discussed Soviet merchant vessels plying the North Pacific such as the *Uritski* and the *Klara Zetkintue*, but did not mention security measures for these ships.²⁰ The report, quite understandably, focused more upon events following the outbreak of war on 7 December. Canada's Pacific Command went on full alert, and on 17 December the Prime Minister's Office announced compulsory registration of all Japanese Canadians over the age of sixteen. In the United States, it was reported that Congress raised a bill to expand USN control over merchant marine radio operators to counter 'subversive'

¹⁷ DHH, 112.3M1009 (D129), Capt. E.S. Brand, NASIR no. 11a, 1 Dec. 1941, 743, 749, 775. Oddly, the 1 December report has been numbered '11', just like the 1 November report. For convenience, the author has cited the 1 December report as '11a'.

¹⁸ Ibid., 731-2.

¹⁹ Ibid., 796-7.

²⁰ DHH, 112.3M1009 (D129), Capt. E.S. Brand, NASIR no. 12, 1 Jan. 1942, 867.

influences. Brand's sources also examined Roosevelt's Pearl Harbor enquiry and the replacement of Rear-Admiral Husband Kimmel, Commander-in-Chief of the USN Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, with Rear-Admiral Chester Nimitz; the scapegoating had begun.²¹ By January 1942, Brand's reports considered the prospect of Japanese attacks on Alaska and 'sub-Arctic Canada'.²² All told, Brand's reports provided insight into public and political moods concerning the war, accurately discussed war production and trade patterns, but failed to provide substantial information on the Far East crisis.

The Intelligence Reports of Colonel B.R. Mullaly

Colonel B.R. Mullaly, a former military attaché in Tokyo who later joined the General Staff of Pacific Command in Esquimalt, produced regular intelligence reports that specifically focused upon Far East affairs. Mullaly's reports combined incoming intelligence with strategic assessments. In one of his first reports, dated 6 August 1941, he confirmed much information already in hand at Pacific Command.²³ Japanese moderates and militarists had created political tension within the Diet, although Prince Konoye moderated this conflict. Matsuoka demonstrated his pro-Axis tendencies during his European tour and 'engineered' the Soviet-Japanese Pact as a face-saving diplomatic move. Mullaly explained that the German attack against Russia had surprised the Japanese, who were now preparing for a move either north or

²¹ Ibid., 806, 811, 854, 860. Laurance Safford, head of OP-20-G, later wrote that he had clear evidence of the official scapegoating of the Hawaiian commanders. See John Costello, *The Pacific War* (London: Collins, 1981), Chapter 38, 647.

²² DHH, 112.3M1009 (D129), Capt. E.S. Brand, NASIR no. 1, 1 Feb. 1942, 55. The report offered this explanation: 'The recent shelling and sinking of tankers by Japanese submarines along the Pacific Coast has directed attention anew to the importance of sub-Arctic Canada. . . . Alaska, only half as far as Hawaii from Japan, must be defended, and because of its nearness to Tokyo it may be the region from which the most telling aerial counter-blows may be struck.'

²³ NAC, RG24, D11, Vol. 11764, File: PC 09-6-I, 'Comments on Developments in the Far East', Charles M. Cree, SO (O), to COPC (Esquimalt), Report entitled 'Conference with Colonel Mullaly, ex Military Attache, Tokyo', 6 Aug. 1941.

south depending on the outcome in Russia. He foresaw, as a *casus belli*, a Japanese campaign against Thailand and thence the Burma Road, noting that Hainan and Formosa had been strengthened. He believed that Allied oil sanctions might halt a Japanese move southwards for a few months, but that a complete US oil embargo would make attacks against the NEI 'inevitable', given that Japan only had about a year's worth of oil reserves. Mullaly emphasized Germany's influence in Tokyo and its encouragement of Japan's entry into the war. He noted that Japan was trying to acquire foreign exchange, possibly owing to a currency crisis: the war in China had exacted a heavy economic toll. He believed that Japan's air force was weak, its navy strong, its army mechanized, and its intelligence services quite poor. In terms of threats to Canada, Mullaly suggested that the BC coastline would probably only receive 'nuisance value raids' in the event of war with Japan. Mullaly seems to have benefited from his time in Tokyo: his assessment of Japan's motives and capabilities later proved remarkably correct, other than his underestimation of Japan's air power and intelligence capability.

Mullaly sensed a lowering of tensions in September. By this time, he was producing regular reports entitled 'Comments on Developments in the Far East'. On 15 September, he noted the increased 'prestige' of the Konoye cabinet over the militarists, as well as the increased moderation of the Japanese press during the ongoing US-Japanese talks.²⁴ Twelve days later, he reported that America, supported by the British Empire, would be likely to drive a hard bargain with Japan, although Japan had prohibited mass meetings of the extremist, pro-Axis *Tohokai* Party and had temporarily halted any southward moves in Southeast Asia.²⁵ But Mullaly cautioned that Japanese army divisions had been shifted to Manchuria (posing a threat to Russia) and that the Japanese were conducting 'manoeuvres' along the Thai-Indochina border and were

²⁴ Ibid., Col. B.R. Mullaly (Pacific Command), Report entitled 'Comments on Developments in the Far East', 15 Sep. 1941.

²⁵ Ibid., Mullaly, 'Comments', 27 Sep. 1941.

infiltrating Thailand using agents posing as ‘businessmen’ and ‘tourists’. He also warned that the Vichy French (for whom he had nothing but contempt) were protesting against Japanese breaches of the Vichy-Japanese joint defence agreement in French Indochina. On a more hopeful note, he noted that the Burma Road was once again in use and that the Chinese Air Force was being reinforced with US aircraft and aircrew, seemingly without an immediate Japanese response.

In October, Mullaly expressed more concern over developments in the Far East. In a report of 10 October, one shared with Canadian troopship HMCS *Prince Robert*, he explained how the German offensive in Russia, along with stalled US-Japanese talks, had encouraged Japanese extremists to lobby for an attack on Siberia.²⁶ He observed that the United States was against appeasement, but still hoping to avoid war with Japan. Mullaly believed that Japan’s future actions depended on the war in Russia, the US conversations and progress in China. On 16 October, he reported on the resignation of the Konoye cabinet and cautioned that the US-Japanese talks were now the only means of averting war: ‘we are faced with the greatest crisis in history in the relations between Japan and the British Empire and the United States, and the next few weeks, or even days, may mark the slide of another quarter of the world into the abyss of war.’²⁷ On 18 October, Mullaly reported on Lieutenant-General Tojo Hideki, the new Japanese Prime Minister who also retained the portfolios of War Ministry and Home Office.²⁸ According to Mullaly, Tojo was anti-British, pro-Axis, pledged to ending the China Incident, and desirous of completing the ‘Greater East-Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere’. Mullaly suggested that Tojo’s first actions might include terminating the US conversations and attacking Siberia: ‘His

²⁶ Ibid., Mullaly, ‘Comments’, 10 Oct. 1941.

²⁷ Ibid., Mullaly, ‘Comments’, 16 Oct. 1941.

²⁸ Ibid., Mullaly, ‘Comments’, 18 Oct. 1941.

character and pro-Axis sympathies make his accession to the Premiership a danger to the peace of the Far East and the future of Japan's relations with the Democracies.'²⁹

In his report of 21 October, Mullaly focused upon Japan's strategy.³⁰ In late October 1941, many Allied intelligence services predicted a Soviet-Japanese war, one that would be likely to draw the Allies into direct conflict with Japan. Mullaly began his report with a discussion of Tojo's 'encirclement' propaganda regarding the ABCD Powers: *Domei*, the official Japanese news agency, advertised the need to subdue China and to complete the Co-Prosperity Sphere. Furthermore, Japan was placing more pressure on Thailand. Mullaly also stated that Germany was pushing Japan to enter the war, a move that Japanese army militarists were only too keen to make. According to Mullaly, a southward move would involve the Allies in a war with Japan, but a move north into Siberia might not produce the same Allied response. However, he observed that the approaching winter season, the strength of the Soviet Far East Army, the 'weakness' of the Japanese Air Force and the 'hard diplomacy' of the United States and Britain would discourage Japanese attacks on Siberia. Mullaly also noted that the Australian government had declared, not surprisingly, that it would cooperate with the ABCD Powers in the event of a Pacific War. War with Japan appeared imminent.

War did not break out in late October as anticipated, but Mullaly continued to study the prospect throughout November. He reported on 4 and 12 November that the situation was tense, but unchanged, and that Japan might confine its operations to Yunnan and the Burma Road, as any advance in either the north or the south brought the risk of war with the ADB Powers.³¹ His report of 12 November also mentioned Churchill's statement concerning unequivocal British support for the United States in the event of war and emphasized the importance of the Kurusu

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., Mullaly, 'Comments', 21 Oct. 1941.

³¹ Ibid., Mullaly, 'Comments', 4 and 12 Nov. 1941.

mission in Washington. On 28 November, Mullaly explained that the 'veil of secrecy' over the US-Japanese talks was now lifted and that a 'rupture' appeared imminent.³² He observed that Cordell Hull's note to the Japanese reaffirmed American principles concerning the Far East, including Japan's withdrawal from China and Indochina, free trade in the region and Japan's departure from the Axis alliance, but was unlikely to be accepted by the Tojo government. According to Mullaly, Japan's ongoing preparations for war included the passage of several 'supply' bills by a special session of the Diet and increased mobilization in Indochina. In terms of naval strength, he explained that the Japanese Navy was now in a favourable position compared to the US Navy, although this advantage was undermined by both the war in China, which drained Japanese resources, and Britain's reinforcement of Singapore.

Mullaly, like most other intelligence analysts, now believed that war in the Pacific was inevitable:

We are, however, faced with the familiar situation of a nation armed to the teeth and ruled by a gang of arrogant and bellicose militarists and, what is more, a people who labour under a deep sense of injustice and resentment and who, in the final analysis, display all the dangerous symptoms of a deep-seated inferiority complex. . . . To throw such a machine into reverse is the most difficult thing in the world, especially for a highly nervous race like the Japanese and the factor of German pressure cannot be discounted in any consideration of probable Japanese action.³³

Mullaly expressed attitudes and prejudices that were common amongst many of his peers in 1941: Japan's 'warlike' nature, along with Germany's ample encouragement, made war a certainty lest Japan 'lose face'.

Throughout November, Mullaly also studied the Japanese-Canadian press, particularly *The New Canadian*, a newspaper published in British Columbia. On 3 November, he wrote that 'The New Canadian is, of course, the organ of the Second Generation and there is no doubt that

³² Ibid., Mullaly, 'Comments', 28 Nov. 1941.

³³ Ibid.

it expresses the sentiments of that community and is perfectly sincere in its declaration that the loyalty of the Canadian-born Japanese lies with Canada rather than with Japan.³⁴ On 28 November, Mullaly observed that one columnist with the newspaper feared 'a possible outburst of anti-Japanese feeling' from the public that would 'probably be far more serious and more injurious than any official government policy.'³⁵ Canada's Japanese internment policy of 1942 would soon prove Mullaly terribly wrong on that account.

All told, Mullaly's reports provided Canadian officials with a much more insightful commentary on Far East affairs than was provided in censorship, press and trade summaries. Mullaly not only considered recent information provided by Pacific Command, but also drew upon his many years of experience in the Far East. He harboured many prejudices of the period and overemphasized Germany's influence over Japan, but managed to convey the appropriate sense of urgency regarding the rapid decline in relations between Japan and the democracies. To build upon Mullaly's assessments, however, Canadian authorities needed more immediate contact with Japan.

Human Intelligence concerning Japan

From August to December 1941, Canadian intelligence services produced numerous reports based on interviews with Allied agents or informers resident in Japan. Human intelligence, known then as field observations or espionage, provided another perspective on the emerging crisis in the Far East. On 18 August, Pacific Command interviewed George B. Spain,

³⁴ DHH, 322.009 (D158), File: 'Japanese People, Notes on Characteristics, 1941/Nov 1944, DMI Files', Colonel B.R. Mullaly, 'Japanese Press', GSO 22, 3 Nov. 1941.

³⁵ Ibid., Mullaly, 'Japanese Press', GO 39, 28 Nov. 1941.

a businessman in Japan, and produced a secret report on 25 August.³⁶ The report discussed Japanese economics, defence preparations, politics and social outlook. According to Spain, the Japanese still received some oil shipments from the NEI and were using occupied China for agriculture (local Chinese industry was being destroyed). Surprisingly, Spain did not seem to think that the Allied embargo would affect Japan materially or financially, except in the silk industry. He also believed that the Japanese navy was inferior to Allied-American forces because modern naval improvements had not yet reached Japan and 'the Japanese were adept at copying but unable to make innovations on their own'.³⁷

Spain offered the following political assessment: 'The Japanese admire the Germans . . . and still believe that the Germans will eventually win. . . . Prince Konoye is the only man holding the country together at this time. There is every indication of dissention in political and Civil Service quarters, between the police and the militia, and between the Army and the Navy, who are constantly at loggerheads.'³⁸ Spain believed that the recent cabinet 'shake-up' had occurred because some politicians wanted to attack Russia, although there was 'never any hint in his presence, of an attack on the B.C. Coast.' Spain criticized the Japanese public: 'The civilians are like sheep. They have to be taught to be loyal and the lessons have to be repeated constantly or they will be forgotten. The man in the street does not dare to express himself.'³⁹ George Spain saw imperial Japan as a repressive, unimaginative regime, but one that seemed to be self-sufficient.

On 29 August, DND in Ottawa produced a secret report entitled 'Notes on the Japanese Army', which was circulated in Ottawa and Washington in early September. The report assessed

³⁶ DHH, 314.009 (D156), File: 'Japan, Memorandums dealing with Japan, Aug-Dec 1941', Intel Section, General Staff, 'Memorandum Re Japan', 25 Aug. 1941.

³⁷ Ibid., 2.

³⁸ Ibid., 3.

³⁹ Ibid.

Japanese military capability, supply strength, command and morale. The report explained that malnutrition contributed to poor Japanese physique and eyesight: 'The common diet of rice and raw fish is neither a bone nor a body-builder; and this physical weakness is common to large masses of the people. The Japanese as a whole have also poor eyesight, which probably derives from generations of unbalanced diet.'⁴⁰ The report deemed that Japanese training and morale were good, although corruption in the Japanese army in China affected morale on that front. The exact strength of Japan's 'Army Air Service' and 'Fleet Air Arm' was not known, but the report praised Japanese pilots: 'There is no reason to believe that the Japanese are not good fliers and good pilots. They are carefully selected from both the Army and the Navy, and the personnel who qualify are required to fulfil exacting standards.'⁴¹ This positive appraisal of Japanese pilots seems quite unusual in a report that generally subscribed to the racial stereotypes of the period.

On 18 September, DND received rather disturbing information that later formed the substance of a secret report entitled 'German Inducements to keep Japan loyal to the Tripartite Pact'. The report was based on a letter from Shanghai that had been intercepted in Hong Kong. The letter was believed to be the product of a 'Chungking Government Intelligence Officer' and outlined the German government's guarantees to Mr. Oshima, the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin:

1. Germany will support Japan with manpower and material resources.
2. Germany may send 1,000 planes and pilots to help Japan against China.
3. Germany may send a military delegation to Japan to give advice on how to carry out a 'lightning war'.
4. Germany is in agreement with and sympathetic towards the Japanese Co-Prosperity in Asia.
5. Japan should start military operations in Siberia when Moscow falls into German hands.⁴²

⁴⁰ DHH, 314.009 (D156), 'Notes on the Japanese Army', Secret 6-page Report, 29 Aug. 1941, 3.

⁴¹ Ibid., 6.

⁴² DHH, 314.009 (D156), DMO & I (Ottawa) to Canadian Legation (Washington), 'German Inducements to keep Japan loyal to the Tripartite Pact' (original dated 18 Sep. 1941), Secret Report, 13 Dec. 1941.

Unless the letter was simply an attempt on Chungking's part to attract more allies to its cause, it represented a serious challenge to Far East diplomacy. Seemingly, Germany offered complete military support to Japan, particularly in the event of a Japanese first strike against the Soviet Union. A war initiated by Japan might bring in Germany, just as diplomatic intelligence had suggested to the Allies in August. In any case, following the outbreak of the Pacific War, Ottawa took the report seriously enough to send it on to the Canadian Legation in Washington on 13 December.

By November 1941, Canadian intelligence authorities were processing a stream of human intelligence concerning the Far East crisis and its possible impact on the Allies. On 11 November, the Canadian army issued an RCMP report on Japanese 'vulnerable points' to the Canadian Legation in Washington and to British and US army authorities.⁴³ The report commented on the industry, resources, shipping and railways found at several 'vulnerable points', including Korea, Yokohama, Kobe-Osaka, Nagoya, Kamata, Kawasaki, Shinagawa, Moji, Yawata, Kasumigaura and Uno. Canadian authorities must have taken the information seriously, as they later reissued the report to the Allies in a Most Secret document dated 26 November.⁴⁴

On 17 and 18 November in Victoria, BC, Pacific Command interviewed an Allied agent 'recently arrived from Japan' and produced a lengthy Secret report for circulation to Canadian, British and US authorities. The interviewers, Lieutenant-Commander Day and R.B.C. Munday, explained the agent's background: 'Informant travelled from Singapore to San Francisco on the same clipper with [Japanese diplomat] Kurusu, whom he has known well for some eight years,

⁴³ Ibid., DMO & I (Ottawa) to Canadian Legation (Washington), 'Supplement to RCMP Memorandum: "Information Re Vulnerable Points In Japan"', 11 Nov. 1941.

⁴⁴ Ibid., see the 26 Nov. 1941 Most Secret report of the same title in this file collection.

and who he regards as a personal friend. He considers Kurusu to be sincere in his convictions and desire to find a way of avoiding war with the United States.’⁴⁵ The agent also told Day and Munday that Kurusu felt Communism would prevail in the Far East if Japan was destroyed by Britain and America. Furthermore, the agent stated that Kurusu wanted him to serve as an intermediary with the British ambassador in Washington. Perhaps the agent also reported to William Stephenson’s organization, considering the following passage from the BSC internal history: ‘BSC had contacts inside the Japanese Embassy in Washington and the Japanese Consulates in New York and San Francisco. Some success was also had in direct penetration of the Kurusu mission. . . . The agent employed in this instance was a British subject who had spent fifty years in Japan and spoke the language fluently.’⁴⁶

The agent, whatever his identity, had much to say about the Far East crisis. Day and Munday reported the agent’s concern that the situation in Russia was potentially dangerous for the Allies as Japan might be defeated in ‘the course of hostilities’, thereby allowing the spread of Communism throughout Asia and subsequently Europe.⁴⁷ The agent believed that the Russians had great air power concentrated near Vladivostok to threaten Japanese cities, but that the Japanese had organized ‘a special counter air force’ to meet that threat.⁴⁸ In fact, the Russians were in no position in late 1941 to concentrate much air power in the Far East so it is possible that the agent’s remarks resulted from a Russian attempt to bluff both the Japanese and the Allies.

⁴⁵ DHH, 314.009 (D156), Lt.-Cmdr. Day and R.B.C. Munday, ‘Joint Interview by Lieut. Commander Day of Canadian Navy and R.B.C. Munday at Victoria, B.C., with person recently arrived from Japan, name not disclosed herein’, Secret Report, 17–18 Nov. 1941, 5.

⁴⁶ Stephenson (ed.), *British Security Coordination*, 217–18.

⁴⁷ DHH, 314.009 (D156), Day and Munday, ‘Joint Interview’, 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

The agent also commented on Japan's naval strategy in the event of war: 'With regard to strategy, the Japanese particularly emphasise that it will not be a long accepted or orthodox naval warfare, but that it would be conducted along unexpected lines; exhibiting a pronounced element of surprise.'⁴⁹ According to the agent, Japanese policy might include allowing German submarines into the Pacific to attack Allied shipping as well as the British Columbia and California coasts; outfitting German merchant ships as commerce raiders; launching Japanese submarine hit-and-run attacks against surface vessels at US and Canadian ports; camouflaging Japanese merchant vessels as naval craft; controlling Vichy French possessions and ports; and destroying the Suez Canal with German support. He offered a further assessment to his interviewers:

Informant understands that the period between Nov. 15, 1941, and Feb. 15, 1942, will represent the time when parity is most favourable to Japan; after that date U.S. construction will begin to exceed that of Japan. Informant emphasized the remark that the Japanese Navy must by no means be underestimated. He says that the morale and training is good, and that the fleet is powerful.⁵⁰

Clearly, the agent saw Japan as a formidable naval power that had not only developed several innovative battle strategies, but also created a specific timeframe for hostilities.

The Canadians probably found the agent's remarks concerning Hong Kong even more disturbing: 'Informant definitely says that no troops should have been landed there. Rather he says that we should evacuate. He says it is not possible for us to conduct a defence for any length of time. He has learned from Japanese sources that no attempt will be made to capture H.K. by Naval action alone.'⁵¹ Seemingly, the Japanese might also consider air or land attacks against Hong Kong.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁵¹ Ibid., 4.

Day and Munday's joint interview drew comment from Colonel B.R. Mullaly, who issued a Secret memorandum on 27 November. Mullaly believed that 'The informant has clearly been badly infected with the Communist bug, a common complaint of those who have much to do with the Japanese. The bogey of communism has been played up by the Japanese'.⁵² Mullaly explained that Kurusu indeed wanted peace, but 'planted' in the informant's mind 'two of the most important arguments which Japan would like us to swallow – fear of Communism and distrust of the U.S.A.'⁵³ Mullaly questioned the viability of Japanese air power:

I very much doubt the "special counter-airforce". A striking force for attack on Russian bases, would obviously be part of the Japanese plan but the Japanese inferiority in the air is such that it is doubtful if it could effect very much against Russia. This is, perhaps, the main factor which will deter Japan from war – her vulnerability to air attack.⁵⁴

But Mullaly respected Japanese naval power: 'I agree with the remarks concerning Japanese Navy. . . . The Navy is the most efficient weapon which Japan possesses . . . it will prove a very redoubtable opponent. The views on Naval strategy are interesting and quite likely fairly accurate, assuming that German direction is largely accepted.'⁵⁵ Mullaly was resolute on the matter of Hong Kong: 'Informant may be right but we would never consider giving up Hong Kong without a fight.'⁵⁶ Apparently, Hong Kong was a matter of military honour.

The Day–Munday joint interview seemed to offer the Canadians an insightful assessment of the Japanese situation. On the eve of the Pacific War, their agent highlighted Kurusu's peace initiative and belief that Japan stood as a bulwark against Communist expansion. The agent considered the nature of Japanese air power, although many Allied analysts underestimated it, and he emphasized the sheer might of Japanese naval power. He also outlined several possible

⁵² DHH, 314.009 (D156), Col. B.R. Mullaly, 'Comments on Interview by Lt.-Cmdr. DAY and R.B.C. Munday with "a person recently arrived from Japan"', Secret Memorandum, 27 Nov. 1941, article 2.

⁵³ Ibid., article 18.

⁵⁴ Ibid., article 17.

⁵⁵ Ibid., articles 7 and 8.

⁵⁶ Ibid., article 15.

Japanese battle strategies, discussed the danger to US and Canadian coasts, and estimated when hostilities might commence. Moreover, he correctly assessed the weakness of Hong Kong's defences. Day and Munday had been wise to circulate the results of their joint interview to the Anglo-American intelligence community, even if those results only confirmed existing views.

Pacific Command circulated another insightful report on the eve of the Pacific War. In September 1941, it had interviewed W.P. Hasselman, a Dutchman who had lived in Japan for a number of years. In late November, Pacific Command attached enough importance to the Hasselman interview to send it as a Secret report to the army intelligence branches of the Canadian Legation and the British Embassy in Washington. Hasselman made several interesting observations. He believed that Japan had 'enormous oil storage sufficient for from 2–5 years of total war' (although the actual figure was two years or less).⁵⁷ He predicted that Japan's new military bases, constructed to secure its position in China and the Far East, would 'probably be ready in December' so that an attack could 'be launched any time after December', although he believed that such timing depended on developments in the German-Soviet war.⁵⁸ He noted that the Japanese did not trust the Germans as a result of their breach of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact. Hasselman saw three reasons for Japan's mobilization in June and July: to prevent Germany from getting Vladivostok; to expand to the south; and to strengthen its position in China in the event of an Anglo-German armistice, which Japan feared. He also predicted the downfall of the Konoye government, which Japanese militarists did not see as 'sufficiently aggressive': 'When this change in government takes place it will be the forerunner to war.'⁵⁹

⁵⁷ DHH, 314.009 (D156), Pacific Command, 'JAPAN, Information received from a reliable source', Secret Report, Nov. 1941. See also, the 5 Dec. 1941 copy that had been sent to the US War Dept. in Washington.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

In terms of possible battle locations, Hasselman considered the Burma Road to be the main objective, but he also considered the case of Singapore: 'If however the U.S. were to disclose the intention of declaring war if Japan were to move in any direction or if the Mediterranean were to be lost to the British the attack would immediately be directed against Singapore.'⁶⁰ He also considered Japanese and Allied air power:

[The Japanese air force] has been improved considerably, probably under German instructors. Fighter planes are definitely poor. There are huge bombers which look good but appear to be slow. The difference between the Japanese Air Force and the U.S. Air Force at Honolulu was most marked. The Japanese Air Force could not stand up against the U.S. or British.⁶¹

Like many of his contemporaries, Hasselman underestimated Japanese air power, but it is most significant that he compared such air power with US forces in Honolulu. Hasselman considered conflict not only in Southeast Asia, but also against the Americans in Hawaii.

In describing Japanese ability, Hasselman still subscribed to the prejudices of the period. On Japanese soldiering, he explained that 'The soldier is tough, with enormous powers of physical resistance. He is, however, very slow with no initiative. . . . Discipline is excellent.'⁶² On Japanese manufacturing, he stated that 'Japan has no inventive genius. Everything must be copied. If Japan were to be isolated for 5 years it would mean a serious setback. With the necessary plans and blueprints Japan is able to produce good material, as is evidenced by the quality of their ships'.⁶³ It may be said, however, that the later performance of Japanese Zeroes, aircraft carriers and army divisions throughout the Pacific suggests that the Japanese were highly innovative.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 2.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

The outbreak of the Pacific War on 7 December made further assessments an absolute necessity. In late December, RCAF intelligence staff carefully studied the Pearl Harbor attack and produced a comprehensive report.⁶⁴ On 20 December, MI2 Military Intelligence considered several field sources and produced a sixteen-page Secret report entitled 'The Powers of the Pacific: Their Territories and Bases'. The report, which was sent to RCN intelligence centres in Ottawa and Esquimalt, offered geographic data, military information, strategic analysis and a history of Japanese expansion since 1931. The report listed the Japanese Navy as then known: 3 seaplane carriers, 7 aircraft carriers, 10 battleships, 44 cruisers, 126 destroyers and 70–80 submarines. Japanese aircraft were estimated at about 3,500 planes with an unknown reserve. Such reports, though general in nature, seemed to give Canadian intelligence staff a framework for further study.

Human Intelligence complemented the information collected through domestic censorship, press and trade sources. Agents recently arrived from Japan provided Canadian officials with even more immediate insight into Far East affairs than the Mullaly reports. They predicted war in Southeast Asia including Japanese strikes against the Burma Road, the NEI and Singapore. One agent suggested an Allied catastrophe at Hong Kong. Another predicted Allied-American air supremacy over Japanese forces in the event of war, even if conflict occurred in Hawaii. But Canadian officials needed even more insight into Japan's intentions and that meant reading Japanese coded messages.

The Examination Unit and its Decryption of Japanese Diplomatic Messages

Certainly, decrypts of Japanese diplomatic messages allowed Canadian intelligence authorities to monitor Japan's concerns over a possible confrontation with the Allies. The

⁶⁴ DHH, 181.009 (D541), EAC File 22–2, Vol. 2, 'Intell Air'.

Examination Unit, however, took anywhere from a week to two months to issue translated decrypts following interception. Furthermore, many decrypts had limited intelligence value as they concerned Japanese reactions to Western press reports. Nevertheless, the Examination Unit produced a modest collection of useful intelligence prior to the outbreak of the Pacific War. In an intercepted message of 27 July, Yoshizawa Saijiro, Japanese Minister in Canada, wrote to his colleagues in Tokyo and London, expressing concern over Canada's termination of the Anglo-British Treaty of Commerce and Navigation; an action that would take effect twelve months later.⁶⁵ The treaty, which had been signed in London on 3 April 1911, was being renounced by the entire British Commonwealth in support of the US asset-freeze against Japan. On 19 August, Japanese Ambassador Nomura in Washington issued a report to his Foreign Office in Tokyo. According to the decrypted message, Nomura reported on Roosevelt's remarks to Congress following the 'meeting at sea' (Nomura's term for the Atlantic Conference): 'The chief danger of the early involvement of the United States in a "shooting war", as he [Roosevelt] saw it, lay in the situation in the Far East, where, he intimated, chances were about even that Japan would start new aggressions.'⁶⁶ On 18 September, an intercepted San Francisco–Tokyo message discussed American press reaction to the Far East situation: the newspapers claimed that Japan wanted to rule Far East territories without interference (even from Germany) and that 'it is becoming more and more a pressing question to Japan concerning her movements on the sea, both to the South and to the North.'⁶⁷ The Japanese seemed quite concerned over Western perceptions of Japan as a warmonger.

⁶⁵ NAC, RG 24, Examination Unit Records (CSE), Vol. 29173, WWII-40 (pt. 19), File: 'Second World War Decrypts – Japanese (1941/07–1945/10)', Yoshizawa (Ottawa) to Tokyo and London, D-59 (filed 8 Oct. 1941), 27 Jul. 1941.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Nomura (Washington) to Foreign Office (Tokyo), D-85 (filed 15 Oct. 1941), 19 Aug. 1941.

⁶⁷ Ibid., Muto (San Francisco) to Foreign Minister (Tokyo), D-58 (filed 8 Oct. 1941), 18 Sep. 1941.

Throughout October, the Examination Unit continued to process relevant messages. In early October, Yoshizawa in Ottawa sent a message to his Foreign Minister in Tokyo concerning Canada's support for the Soviet Union: 'Canada has agreed with England's proposal to deliver to the Soviet war materials, including "cruiser and infantry tanks", and to manufacture and deliver war materials indicated by the Soviet, including aluminum for airplanes. Canada desires to help the Soviet with all required war materials.'⁶⁸ Any aid to the Soviet Union would have troubled the Japanese in October, given that the outbreak of war along the Manchukuo-Soviet border was then a distinct possibility. On 20 October, Nomura in Washington sent a message to Tokyo and Ottawa regarding American press reaction to the new Tojo government: 'The stand of his cabinet on National Defense and his remarks concerning the recognition of Russia by the United States will be awaited with keen interest. . . . The new premier has a much stronger plan in working out the present negotiations between Japan and America. . . . Washington has made no official comment on the Premier's declaration.'⁶⁹ Nomura's report seemed to offer hope to his colleagues that the Americans might take Japanese negotiations more seriously.

On 24 October, the Japanese Legation in Chicago sent Tokyo a less welcome appraisal of American press reaction. The report expressed the renewed concerns of the American public:

The new Premier's policy of seizing with lightening speed the opportunity of expansion in all directions, without distinction between North and South, will be dangerous. If Japan wishes to maintain the "status quo" in the Far East, the situation will not be changed. Observations will be made and information gathered during the pending Japanese-U.S.A. negotiations. The policy of the new cabinet should avoid anything of a radical nature.⁷⁰

The Chicago report made it clear that some American editorials still portrayed Japan as an aggressive, expansionist power, despite the recent cabinet change.

⁶⁸ Ibid., Yoshizawa (Ottawa) to Foreign Minister (Tokyo), D-95 (filed 17 Oct. 1941), undated.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Nomura (Washington) to Foreign Minister (Tokyo), D-178 (filed 13 Nov. 1941), 20 Oct. 1941.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Japanese Legation (Chicago) to Foreign Minister (Tokyo), D-213 (filed 26 Nov. 1941), 24 Oct. 1941.

On 4 November, Yoshizawa in Ottawa offered the Foreign Minister in Tokyo a synthesis of Canadian press statements concerning the Far East crisis: 'Japan's present boast of military power is for the purpose of showing, rather than hiding, her intention of assuming control over matters pertaining to the Far East'; and regarding the Japanese-Soviet neutrality treaty, 'It is only a matter of time before this treaty of amity and commerce will be revoked, depending on whether Japan prepares to attack Siberia.'⁷¹ Yoshizawa also reported the following strategic assessment, which he had observed in the Canadian press:

If Japan increases her military grip on Siam, she will soon collide with England, the U.S.A., Canada (and other British Dominions), and also the Netherlands East Indies, all of which constitute a powerful bloc capable of exerting great economic pressure with promptness and fortitude. Japan must also consider the advantages and disadvantages of the occupation of French-Indo China if she is to be confronted by such powers as England, the U.S.A., and the Soviet Union.⁷²

Clearly, the Canadian press reinforced the Allied position that further Japanese encroachment in the Far East would bring a swift response from the ABCD Powers and possibly from the Soviet Union.

The Examination Unit also processed messages that focused on Canada's war capacity. On 5 November, Yoshizawa reported on Canadian arms production in a message sent from Ottawa to the Foreign Minister in Tokyo. He discussed a report made the day before to the Canadian House of Commons by 'Munitions Minister' C.D. Howe, in which Howe outlined 'figures of Arms and Ammunition produced in Canada since the outbreak of war as well as estimates of increased production'.⁷³ Yoshizawa also offered complete figures of Canadian

⁷¹ Ibid., Yoshizawa (Ottawa) to Foreign Minister (Tokyo), D-212 (filed 26 Nov. 1941), 4 Nov. 1941.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., Yoshizawa (Ottawa) to Foreign Minister (Tokyo), D-198 (filed 19 Nov. 1941), 5 Nov. 1941. Yoshizawa also reported on other Canadian parliamentary proceedings that related to the war. On 16 Nov., he reported to Tokyo that the Canadian parliament discussed conscription and that 'ARTHUR MEIGHEN, a former prime minister, accepted the appointment as head of the Conservative Party and declared himself as favoring the sending of soldiers anywhere.' See Ibid., Yoshizawa (Ottawa) to Foreign Minister (Tokyo), D-231 (filed 1 Dec. 1941), 16 Nov. 1941.

shipbuilding, aircraft, tanks, trucks, transport, guns and ammunition. It is noteworthy that Yoshizawa even considered Canadian arms production as suitable intelligence for the Japanese Foreign Office, given that Tokyo probably dismissed Canada as a minor player in the Pacific.

According to other intercepted messages, however, Canada's despatch of troops to Hong Kong raised more concern in Japanese diplomatic circles. On 17 November, Yoshizawa sent the following particulars to his colleagues in Tokyo, Washington, London and Hong Kong: 'Canada despatched BRIGADIER J.K. Lawson and an unknown number of soldiers under his command, mainly from the provinces of Manitoba and Quebec, including many experienced soldiers who served in the last war. They are chiefly artillery men. The course they took in crossing is a secret, but a telegram from Hong Kong advises us of their arrival.'⁷⁴ Yoshizawa also discussed Canada's policy with respect to that of its allies:

An editorial in the "Gazette" today . . . indicates that the Canadian policy of "isolationism" has ended. Perhaps the success of the British Navy in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean allows them now to enter the Pacific Ocean. The United States neutrality law, as in effect now, permits the release of British battleships to Far Eastern waters. Japan must know the reason for the presence of this Canadian Army at Hong Kong.⁷⁵

Yoshizawa wisely placed Canadian troop movements in the context of the greater Anglo-US threat to Japan's interests in the Far East. From the Canadian and Allied perspective, the Hong Kong troops might be regarded as a deterrent measure after all.

In a message of 18 November to the Foreign Minister in Tokyo, Yoshizawa continued his discussion of Canada's Hong Kong troops: 'On the 18th, every Canadian newspaper reported the

⁷⁴ Ibid., Yoshizawa (Ottawa) to Tokyo, Washington, London and Hong Kong, D-226 (filed 30 Nov. 1941), 17 Nov. 1941.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

arrival of soldiers at Hong Kong. Japanese-U.S. relations and arguments were published and commented on.⁷⁶ He summarized editorial comments in the Canadian press:

The outcome of the (Japanese) war party's policy will, in all likelihood, bring England and the U.S.A. into the war. As the "Citizen" states: The purport of sending soldiers to Hong Kong is to have the military situation on land decisively settled and not to wait on the combining of the British and U.S. navies at sea. The determined policy of Japan, while not voiced, is based on their firm belief in the power of their navy. Canada deems it necessary to arm itself in preparation for eventualities in the Pacific.⁷⁷

Yoshizawa's report probably offered Tokyo some insight into Canadian motives, given that Canada's controlled wartime press reflected, in part, the views of the Canadian government.

According to another decrypt, Japan took interest in Canada's representation in Washington. On 27 November, Yoshizawa informed the Foreign Minister in Tokyo that 'Canada was not represented at the last meeting of the A.B.C.D. powers in Washington', and that 'Certain people here are discontented over this fact.'⁷⁸ He also explained that the Canadian Legation in Washington 'made connections with the representatives of these powers and have issued an official announcement of their participation in the next meeting.' Yoshizawa's message would probably have been interesting to both Tokyo and the Examination Unit: it correctly noted that the Canadians had recently been marginalized in Washington and had taken corrective action.

In one of the last messages to be decrypted before the outbreak of the Pacific War, Canadian officials learned of Japan's naval movements in the Far East. On 6 December, the Examination Unit decrypted a message that had been sent on 3 December from Rio de Janeiro to Hamburg by the German 'Kempter spy network'. German agents had reported on Japan's naval activity: 'Our navy authority learned just now from an officer of the U.S.A. Navy Mission here

⁷⁶ Ibid., Yoshizawa (Ottawa) to Foreign Minister (Tokyo), D-240 (filed 4 Dec. 1941), 18 Nov. 1941.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Yoshizawa (Ottawa) to Foreign Minister (Tokyo), D-248 (filed 6 Dec. 1941), 27 Nov. 1941.

the following: . . . A Japanese Convoy, consisting of 70 transports and convoyed by 12 cruisers, with 300,000 men on board, are supposed to be on the way to Indo-China and that it can be counted upon that this convoy will be attacked by the U.S.A. navy.⁷⁹ The information was remarkable because it reputedly came from the USN, revealed that Japan was moving battle troops to the south, and promised US belligerency in the Far East. Apparently, the German message prompted Norman Robertson to hold a meeting the next day, in the morning of 7 December, so that a war declaration speech could be drafted.

For Canadian intelligence officers who were privy to Examination Unit decrypts, Japanese diplomatic messages not only showed the kind of information being passed on to Tokyo, but also revealed the relevance that local Japanese diplomats assigned to each intelligence item. Some messages had little intelligence value because they only contained Western press reports. Yet other messages indicated a Japanese interest in Canadian Far East policy, including support for the US-led asset-freeze, the Soviet Union and the defence of Hong Kong. At least one message demonstrated interest in Canadian war production and capacity. In the weeks before the outbreak of the Pacific War, the messages focused increasingly on Canada's relationship to other ABCD Powers. Furthermore, Canadian officials were able to learn on 6 December that a war in the Pacific, one including active US participation, was imminent. In summary, the Examination Unit decrypts of late 1941 served not only as a barometer of growing tensions between Japan and the Anglo-American Powers, but also as a means of determining when the Pacific War might begin.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Bryden, *Best-Kept Secret*, 93–4. Bryden cited Examination Unit decrypt no. 295, dated 6 December 1941, which concerned message nos. 423, 424 and 425.

⁸⁰ After 7 December 1941, Canadian intelligence staff continued to intercept Japanese diplomatic traffic sent from Tokyo to Washington and Los Angeles. See NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12147, COPC (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message nos. 2157Z/8 and 2155Z/8, 8 Dec. 1941.

Conclusions

Canada's domestic intelligence networks provided a variety of information about the Far East crisis in 1941. Censorship Intelligence allowed Canadian officials to monitor public reaction to Japan's growing influence in Southeast Asia, but did not provide timely reports on current affairs. Press and Trade Intelligence offered sound information on US war production and US attitudes to the international crisis, but provided only a brief survey of Far East affairs. It must be said that censorship, press and trade sources did not appear to provide much more information than an average citizen could obtain through a careful study of the better newspapers. More significantly, Mullaly's Pacific Command reports provided extended commentary on Japan's activities, particularly with respect to its war preparations and interests in both northern and southern objectives. Mullaly's information and insight seemed to go well beyond what was provided in mere press and trade studies. Of equal significance, Human Intelligence allowed Canadian officials to consider the views of informants that had more immediate contact with the Far East. Informants discussed Japan's preparations for war in Southeast Asia, predicting strikes against the Burma Road, Singapore and the NEI, and saw Hong Kong as highly vulnerable. Some believed that Japan might use unexpected strategies or surprise attacks, including nuisance raids in the North Pacific, although Japan was thought to be no match for US forces in Hawaii. One informant offered the prospect of penetrating the Kurusu Mission in November 1941.

Decrypts of Japanese diplomatic messages revealed Japan's anxieties over conflict with the Allies. From July to December, the Examination Unit furnished evidence of Japan's growing concern over American attitudes, as well as Canada's war production, support for Russia, and reinforcement of Hong Kong. The decrypts also revealed Japan's hope that Canada might

remain 'neutral' with respect to actions of the ABCD Powers. From cryptanalysis, Canada also learned in early December 1941 that the USN might attack Japanese naval forces heading to Indochina: war seemed imminent.

All told, Canada produced sufficient intelligence with its own domestic networks to understand that war was imminent in the Far East. It is significant that Canada's sources also suggested that such conflict might spread to the North Pacific, given that Allied strategists often focused on Southeast Asia. As we will later see, Canada monitored North Pacific shipping in anticipation of hostilities in that region. Even without intelligence from external networks, Canadian authorities had learned enough from their postal, press, trade and wireless sources, as well as from agents reporting to Pacific Command, to make informed decisions. But Canada, as a co-belligerent in total war, was part of a global Allied intelligence network, one that had recently developed strong ties to the US intelligence community. External networks could only enhance Canada's domestic supply of information. We will now examine what Canada learned from its friends in London, Washington and Tokyo.

Chapter 4

Exchanging Secrets: Intelligence shared with Canada concerning the Far East Crisis

As Britain's senior ally in 1941, Canada was privy to a wide range of intelligence reports, which were sent daily, weekly or monthly, as needs dictated. British intelligence authorities in Hong Kong sent their Canadian counterparts monthly reports on Far East affairs, as assessed by naval, military and air service groups. The British Army produced weekly intelligence reports, which it distributed to Canada and the other Dominions. British Naval Intelligence, which included Admiralty 'basegrams' and Singapore despatches, offered immediate commentary on wartime activities and Japanese naval operations. Canada also received, on a delayed basis, 'Political Intelligence' summaries from the Foreign Office in London, as well as 'Weekly Resumes' from the British War Cabinet. Most significantly, Canada received immediate intelligence through diplomatic sources in London, Washington and Tokyo. Principal amongst those sources were the Dominions Office and Canadian High Commission in London, as well as the Canadian Legations in Washington and Tokyo. Through its numerous external sources, Canada not only learned of every principal event concerning the Far East crisis, but also received advance warning of Japan's move into southern French Indochina and Japan's attack on Malaya, the first action of the Pacific War.

Intelligence Reports from Hong Kong

Canadian military authorities benefited from British Intelligence reports produced in Hong Kong. Ottawa received the 'Hong Kong Naval, Military & Air Force Intelligence Report (H.K.I.R.)' on a monthly basis from the colony's local Staff Officer (Intelligence). These reports

offered a summary of Far East events along with a brief analysis. In January, the report indicated that Japanese naval forces had moved from the Hong Kong area down towards Saigon as Tokyo took more interest in French Indochina 'under the pretext of mediation in the Franco-Thai war.'¹ The report hinted at a possible war between Japan and the Anglo-American Powers owing to Matsuoka's 'verbal bellicosity', Allied aid to Chiang Kai Shek, steady German pressure, and Prince Konoye's lack of control over Japanese extremists. In February, however, it was reported that British reinforcements in Singapore and Malaya, US reinforcements in Guam, and NEI resistance to Japanese diplomatic overtures, had collectively dissuaded Tokyo from advancing its 'Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere'.² As a result, Tokyo focused more upon Thailand and Indochina. It was thought that Chungking would continue to warn against Tokyo's southward drive as China could only benefit from Anglo-American military intervention. The March report focused on Matsuoka's diplomatic initiatives in Berlin, Rome and Moscow.³ It was noted that a Soviet-Japanese non-aggression pact would harm British interests because it would leave Japan free to drive south. Yet British commentators emphasized how Britain's military successes in northeast Africa coupled with US support through the new Lend-Lease Bill would give Japan pause for thought.

In April, the Hong Kong report not only surveyed politics, but also offered an interesting assessment of Japanese air power. The report confirmed the signing of the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact in Moscow and lamented the fact that Japan was now free to expand southwards. But readers were reminded that Japan could not 'safely' conduct operations against Burma, Malaya or the NEI until it could 'liquidate' its China campaign. Chinese resistance tied

¹ DHH, 593.023 (D1), Major R.M., Staff Officer (Intelligence), Hong Kong, 'Hong Kong Naval, Military & Air Force Intelligence Report (H.K.I.R.)', No. 1/41, 31 Jan. 1941, 1-3. The author had these reports declassified through a Canadian 'Access to Information' request (ATIPS).

² Ibid., No. 2/41, 28 Feb. 1941, 1-2.

³ Ibid., No. 3/41, 1 Apr. 1941, 1-2.

down Japanese troops and drained Japan's economy. It was in Britain's interests to see that the war in China continued: 'anything we can do to convince CHIANG KAI SHEK that we regard ourselves in honour bound to help China after defeating Germany, will be amply repaid in ensuring that China will fight on.'⁴ Furthermore, the threat of US support for Britain in the event of war might still deter Japan. In terms of Japan's ability to wage modern war, the report discussed Japanese air power in somewhat condescending terms: 'The Japanese air staff, unless advised by German experts, is not competent to deal with prolonged or efficient air opposition.'⁵ It was thought that Allied aircraft would outclass the Japanese types, which had only succeeded in China because there had been minimal opposition. Nonetheless, British commentators believed that Japan would rely on concentrated attacks against Allied aerodromes with 'hordes of light aircraft' in the event of war in the Far East.

In May, British commentators continued to emphasize that Japan could not successfully drive southward until it finished its war in China. It was believed, however, that Japan might initiate a 'suicidal war' against the ADB Powers if extremists had their way. It was noted that the Japanese press had expressed displeasure over Roosevelt's recent 'fireside chat', in which he 'reaffirmed his support of Britain and China in their struggle against the Axis.'⁶ Readers were reminded that Tokyo revolutionaries might commit political assassinations just as they had on 26 February 1936. The May report seemed to offer much speculation in the absence of any major news.

But news reporting picked up in June when Germany invaded Russia. The Hong Kong report informed readers that it was in Russia's interests to continue supporting China as the war there tied down many Japanese troops that might otherwise be unleashed against Russia's Far

⁴ Ibid., No. 4/41, 1 May 1941, 1.

⁵ Ibid., A7.

⁶ Ibid., No. 5/41, 1 Jun. 1941, 1.

East provinces. It speculated that the German-Soviet war might 'facilitate a rapprochement between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang' in China.⁷ Also, it was thought that the German-Soviet war now gave Japan three options: join Germany and take Russia's Far East provinces; push southward and take the NEI and Indochina; or cut Axis ties and reach an understanding with Britain and America. This final option was considered the least likely.⁸ In terms of Japanese naval movements, it was reported that much activity had occurred in the waters north of Hong Kong following the breakdown of NEI-Japanese trade negotiations, and a Japanese convoy was sighted heading towards the Pescadores.⁹ It seemed as though Tokyo was 'sabre rattling' in the face of ABCD encirclement.

In July, Hong Kong noted that 'the political spotlight in the Far East' had shifted to Indochina, where Japanese forces had occupied southern bases.¹⁰ Once again, British commentators speculated as to whether Japan would strike north or south, but now it seemed to be moving towards its decisions with more urgency in light of the recent US-led asset-freeze. It was difficult to guess Japan's intentions as more troop movements had occurred in both Manchuria and Indochina, but commentators noted that Japanese strategists would be likely to await the outcome of the German-Soviet conflict before choosing which forces to deploy. Just like a month earlier, Hong Kong faced renewed Japanese naval activity: regular Japanese submarine patrols were operating nearby.¹¹ It seemed that the ADB Powers had to play a waiting game in the Far East, and it was hoped that naval forces at Singapore, Manila and Pearl Harbor would deter Japan from striking south.

⁷ Ibid., No. 6/41, 1 Jul. 1941, 1.

⁸ Ibid., Appendix II, 1-2.

⁹ Ibid., N2.

¹⁰ Ibid., No. 7/41, 1 Aug. 1941, 1-2.

¹¹ Ibid., N4.

By September, the Far East situation had stabilized and reports from Hong Kong could only speculate over the outcome of the Washington conversations and the progress of the German-Soviet war. It was reported that Japanese naval movements had subsided and that 'the Combined Fleet remains in Japanese waters.'¹² Activity around Hong Kong had also decreased: 'Things have remained very quiet on the HONG KONG border, where it is believed that the Japanese total about 5,000 men'.¹³ The waiting game continued.

In October, British commentators reported on the new Tojo government and offered renewed speculations over the prospect of a Far East war. Not surprisingly, readers were informed that General Tojo, now serving as Prime Minister, Minister of War and Home Minister, was in a strong position to mobilize 'Japan's military, economic and political resources.'¹⁴ It was noted that the Japanese Navy was now 'fully mobilized and on a war footing.' Despite these changes, commentators believed that Japan would not act until either Russia collapsed, or Britain suffered reverses in the Middle East, or the United States backed down in its diplomacy; this latter prospect appeared the most unlikely. The report offered readers the comforting assurance that Japan had spread its army out too much in China and Manchuria, that it would face a debilitating winter in Siberia if it moved north, and that its sea communications would be intercepted by strong Allied submarine forces if it moved south. It seemed as though the anticipated war was already an Allied victory. Furthermore, readers were provided with a Russian estimate of Japanese troop strength in the north. It was claimed that Japan had 30 to 33 divisions in Manchuria, Korea and Sakhalin: 'This is considered insufficient for more than a

¹² Ibid., No. 9/41, 1 Oct. 1941, 1. Researchers should note that HKIR No. 8/41, which contains intelligence collected in August 1941, is missing from this file collection.

¹³ Ibid., Appendix II, 2.

¹⁴ Ibid., No. 10/41, 1 Nov. 1941, 1-2.

localised attack on VLADIVOSTOCK.’¹⁵ The confidence expressed in that report was surprising, to say the least. If Japan had committed that number of divisions to an assault on Siberia, then the Soviet Far Eastern Army would probably have collapsed. It is possible that British commentators took comfort in Stalin’s inflated estimates of Soviet strength in the Far East.

In November, Hong Kong produced the its last intelligence report before the outbreak of war in the Pacific, stating that Japan had finally abandoned plans for a northern strike: ‘It is clear that Japan has no immediate intentions of moving North against RUSSIA. . . . There are no signs that major operations are in contemplation either in North, Central or South China’.¹⁶ Furthermore, it was not believed that Japan would mount an attack on the Burma Road. That left southern objectives, and amongst these Thailand was considered the most likely prospect. As usual, British commentators applied disclaimers to their analysis. It was noted that divisions in Japanese leadership might avert an immediate attack on Thailand, although in any case Japan was likely to drift into war with ‘the Democratic Powers’. Despite the vagueness of some of its statements, the Hong Kong report for November had at least taken a position on Japan’s intention to strike southward.

Canadian authorities who received the ‘Hong Kong Naval, Military & Air Force Intelligence Reports’ throughout 1941 benefited from a ‘bird’s eye view’ of Far East events and a decent appraisal of Japanese movements near Hong Kong, a place they were later entrusted with defending, if only for political reasons. The reports echoed British concerns over American-Japanese diplomacy, Allied deterrence in the Far East, the war in China and the fate of

¹⁵ Ibid., Appendix II, 4.

¹⁶ Ibid., No. 11/41, 1 Dec. 1941, 1. Researchers should note that this report does not appear to be an original copy because it uses different paper and typeface. It may have been retyped after the outbreak of the Pacific War because ‘V’ victory signs are printed throughout.

Russia. Chinese resistance was seen as critical because it diverted Japanese military resources that might otherwise threaten Siberia or European colonial regimes in the Far East. British commentators had attempted to divine Japan's intentions throughout several war scares, but it was only in their final report before the outbreak of hostilities that they decided that Japan would strike south, rather than north. Ultimately, Canadian officials could combine these reports with their own copies of the Foreign Office's 'Political Intelligence' summaries, as well as the British War Cabinet's 'Weekly Resumes', to understand Britain's perception of Far East events.

British Army Intelligence Notes

In late 1941, the Canadian Legation in Washington received weekly 'Intelligence Notes' from British Army Staff in London. These secret notes surveyed international affairs, but with an emphasis on military strategy. In October, it was noted that Japan's 'attitude keeps pace with the fortunes of RUSSIA.'¹⁷ The new Tojo government was seen as being only superficially moderate in terms of its commitment to continue negotiations with Washington.¹⁸ Despite Tojo's declared support for the Axis nations, some reports suggested that German-Japanese relations had deteriorated. British analysts saw Thailand as the object of Japanese interest because of its proximity to the Burma Road: 'It may perhaps be significant that JAPAN refused to make a Non-Aggression Pact with THAILAND, as we did and as she did with RUSSIA'.¹⁹ It was also reported that Japan sought to increase its Hanoi garrison, although Vichy France refused to permit this. When considering Soviet-Japanese relations, one report offered this explanation: 'Although General TOJO is said to be an ardent Russophobe, it is hardly likely that Japan will attack Russia, except the latter collapses

¹⁷ DHH, 314.009 (D151), 'British Army Staff, Intelligence Notes', No. 4, Week ending 11 Oct. 1941, 2.

¹⁸ Ibid., No. 5, Week ending 18 Oct. 1941, 2.

¹⁹ Ibid.

completely under Germany's invasion, until the China "incident" has been ended.'²⁰ In essence, British analysts focused upon the threat facing China and British possessions in the Far East.

In November, reports concerned ongoing threats to the Burma Road, the Kurusu Mission and the decline in US-Japanese relations.²¹ Early in the month, it was reported that Japan might soon advance on the Burma Road through north French Indochina, where Japanese forces had concentrated. By mid-month, reports indicated that flooding and poor weather conditions might forestall an advance on Thailand and the Burma Road for two months. Moreover, the Chinese had sent 'considerable reinforcements' into southeast Yunnan. Late in the month, it was reported that Japanese forces were moving southwards in Indochina, and it was suggested that Japan might be 'contemplating an early move against THAILAND or the KRA Isthmus.'²² On the Kurusu Mission, one commentator explained that: 'It seems hardly possible that Japan, least of all a Government of the present complexion, can adjust her Chinese policy to meet the minimum requirements of the U.S.'²³ The Japanese press reportedly accused the United States and Britain of 'encirclement' and interference in 'the peace of the Pacific'. Furthermore, Von Ribbentrop's speech to representatives of the Anti-Comintern Pact in Berlin drew comment: 'After devoting most of his speech to an attack on President Roosevelt, he said that U.S. intervention could not possibly finally prevent an Axis victory'.²⁴ At the end of November, it was noted that US-Japanese relations were tense and that no reply had been made to Cordell Hull's proposals.

²⁰ Ibid., No. 6, Week ending 25 Oct. 1941, 3.

²¹ Ibid., No. 7, Week ending 1 Nov. 1941, 3; No. 8, Week ending 8 Nov. 1941, 3; No. 9, Week ending 15 Nov. 1941, 2; No. 10, Week ending 22 Nov. 1941, 3-4; and No. 11, Week ending 30 Nov. 1941, 1-2.

²² Ibid., No. 11, Week ending 30 Nov. 1941, 2.

²³ Ibid., No. 8, Week ending 8 Nov. 1941, 3.

²⁴ Ibid., No. 11, Week ending 30 Nov. 1941, 1.

The 'Intelligence Notes' for the week ending 6 December informed readers of Japanese and Soviet military strength in the Far East. British analysts reported on Japanese divisions in north French Indochina, Japanese control of coastal railways and the naval base in Camranh Bay, and the fact that Calcutta was 'just within extreme bombing range' of Japanese aircraft. However, Soviet Far East forces were overestimated, to say the least: 'It is estimated that the Russian Far Eastern Armies now amount to 21 Infantry divisions, 11 Cavalry divisions, and 11 armoured divisions, with about 1,000 planes'.²⁵ Clearly, Stalin's agents had performed a miracle of propaganda, given the modest nature of the Soviet forces facing Japan. All in all, the British Army 'Intelligence Notes' gave the Canadian Legation some insight into the disposition of Japanese forces in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indochina, and provided a survey of diplomacy, although the notes also demonstrated a British preoccupation with the Burma Road and China.

British Naval Intelligence

British naval authorities also kept Canada informed through Admiralty 'basegrams', which were sent to naval bases throughout the British Commonwealth, and through despatches from British diplomatic missions as well as FECB Singapore. For example, in July 1941, as Japanese forces occupied bases in southern French Indochina, NSHQ learned about certain Japanese tactics through Admiralty reports and shipping intelligence. An Admiralty basegram reported on the northern movement of Japanese troops in Manchukuo.²⁶ Another message reported that the Japanese ship *Heiyo Maru* carried spare engine parts for a disabled German

²⁵ Ibid., No. 12, Week ending 6 Dec, 1941, 3.

²⁶ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12085, Admiralty (Basegram) to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 1923B/25, 25 Jul. 1941.

raider anchored at Easter Island.²⁷ Other incoming messages showed that Japanese authorities had ordered Japanese ships to observe radio silence and to avoid US ports.²⁸ In response to incoming British Naval Intelligence, Canadian authorities were able to study Japan's approach to radio silence. The Gordon Head station near Esquimalt reported that some Japanese merchant vessels used the 500 kHz distress frequency as a communications channel, despite the radio silence order.²⁹ Japanese war preparations seemed to include rapid troop movements, a recall of ships and the imposition of radio silence, although some vessels used reserved maritime frequencies for clandestine communications.

Admiralty basegrams, along with despatches from Singapore, informed NSHQ of last-minute developments in the Far East crisis. On 25 November, Singapore reported on Japan's reinforcement of troops and aircraft in French Indochina.³⁰ On 28 November, the Admiralty reported that the Japanese Minister in Bangkok had assured Thai officials that 'Japan would never invade THAILAND and that if she attacked Malaya it would not be via THAILAND.'³¹ The same report mentioned Japan's promise of aircraft to the Thai government, although it appeared that the Thai Prime Minister was hedging his bets: he not only requested aircraft from the British and the Americans, but also asked the Allies to inform Japan that any invasion of Thailand would result in an Allied declaration of war against Japan. It was also reported that Japanese troops were being reinforced in northern Indochina. On 29 November, the Admiralty reported that Japan had steadily increased its armaments and had organized a 'large expansion of

²⁷ Ibid., Consul (Los Angeles) to DNI Ottawa, Message no. 1411/25, 25 Jul. 1941.

²⁸ Ibid., Seattle to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 0032Z/25, 25 Jul. 1941; COPC (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa), Singapore, Admiralty, Kingston, Message no. 0411Z/25, 25 Jul. 1941; Consul General (San Francisco) to Foreign Office (London), Washington, Tokyo, DNI Ottawa, Message no. 1951Z/25, 25 Jul. 1941.

²⁹ Ibid., COPC (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa) and Captain on the Staff (FECB Singapore), Message no. 1953Z/25, 25 Jul. 1941.

³⁰ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12142, C/S Singapore to FEW 58, Message no. 1007Z/25, 25 Nov. 1941.

³¹ Ibid., Vol. 12152, Admiralty Basegram to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 1902A/28, 28 Nov. 1941.

currency and reorganized her economy along totalitarian lines.’³² The report highlighted the ‘deadlock’ in US-Japanese conversations and explained that the US government anticipated the possibility of a ‘Japanese military move’ within the next few days.

Admiralty basegrams and Singapore despatches reported on Japanese movements over the following week. On 2 December, Singapore offered information on Japanese troops and heavy bombers based in French Indochina, and stated that the majority of Japan’s Second Fleet was now located in the ‘Formosa – South China area.’³³ The same report commented on US-Japanese diplomacy: ‘In spite of apparent deadlock Japanese cabinet decided on 1st December to continue Washington conversations.’ On 6 December, it was reported that Japan, in reply to President Roosevelt, justified its reinforcement of Indochina: ‘they had been obliged to increase strength in Indo-China in view of Chinese reinforcements opposite.’³⁴ On 7 December, the Admiralty reported that Allied aircraft reconnaissance on 6 December had revealed two Japanese convoys operating off Cambodia Point in French Indochina: ‘this may be general display of force to induce THAI government to accept peaceful Japanese occupation.’³⁵ Finally, on 8 December, the Admiralty offered a brief summary of the Japanese attacks against Malaya, Pearl Harbor and Singapore: ‘At 2143 7th hostilities against Japan commenced. At 1846 7th Japanese attempted to land troops KOTA BAHRU Northeast Malaya. . . . Pearl Harbour Honolulu heavily attacked 1830 7th by large numbers of aircraft. . . . At 2130 7th 18 aircraft attacked Singapore Island; no damage H.M. ships or establishments.’³⁶ According to that summary, Japan attacked British possessions sixteen minutes *after* the attack on US forces at Pearl Harbor, although

³² Ibid., Vol. 12151, Admiralty Basegram GR131 to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 1829A/29, 29 Nov. 1941.

³³ Ibid., Vol. 12147, Captain in Charge (Singapore) to FEW 59, Message no. 0951Z/2, 2 Dec. 1941.

³⁴ Ibid., Vol. 12149, Admiralty Basegram GM079 to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 1913A/6, 6 Dec. 1941.

³⁵ Ibid., Vol. 12149 Admiralty Basegram to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 2022A/7, 7 Dec. 1941.

³⁶ Ibid., Vol. 12147, Admiralty Basegram GR189 to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 1948A/8, 8 Dec. 1941.

Britain only commenced hostilities against Japan about three hours later. As we will later see, the Canadians learned that the Admiralty's timekeeping was more political than factual; Japan actually attacked Malaya before Pearl Harbor.

Ultimately, British Naval Intelligence added depth to Canada's understanding of Japanese naval procedures and movements. Admiralty reports were sent only occasionally, but offered important information concerning Japanese tactics and strategy. Canada could combine incoming Admiralty reports and FECB despatches with its growing supply of British military intelligence to gain a more comprehensive view of Japan's intentions and actions.

Diplomatic Intelligence collected in London, Washington and Tokyo

Diplomatic staff in London, Washington and Tokyo sent strategic assessments and diplomatic intelligence to Ottawa's Department of External Affairs, which then formed its own opinions and policy concerning the Far East situation. The Dominions Office in London and the Canadian Legations in both Washington and Tokyo provided most of the information that informed Canadian decision-makers. Ottawa also received, on a delayed basis, 'Weekly Political Intelligence' summaries from the British Foreign Office as well as 'Weekly Resumes' of the war situation from the British Cabinet, but benefited more from daily diplomatic traffic.³⁷ Strictly speaking, diplomatic correspondence in itself is not usually considered as 'intelligence'. Yet our present purpose is not to examine the medium, but rather the content of the messages. Many reports included observations and subjective assessments made by local diplomatic staff, whereas others included intelligence derived from decrypts of foreign

³⁷ Copies of the 'Weekly Political Intelligence' summaries, numbers 51 to 125 (25 Sep. 1940 to 25 Feb. 1942) are found in NAC, RG 25, F7e, Vols. 2511 and 2512. The appendix of this study includes a survey of 'Political Intelligence' concerning the Far East crisis in 1941. Researchers may inspect the original British War Cabinet 'Weekly Resumes', numbers 67 to 121 (12 Dec. 1940 to 25 Dec. 1941), in PRO, CAB 66/14-20.

diplomatic traffic. Diplomatic Intelligence, arguably Canada's most important external source, provided Ottawa officials with a timely summary of current affairs in the Far East.

Many reports explored the nature of Far East alliances and Allied deterrence. On 11 December 1940, O.D. Skelton received one such report from H.F. Feaver of the Canadian Legation in Tokyo.³⁸ Feaver reported on Sir Robert Craigie's conversations with Foreign Minister Matsuoka, who had offered assurances that Japan would not go to war with the British Commonwealth. Craigie reminded Matsuoka that Japan's assistance to the Axis made Britain free to offer similar assistance to Japan's own enemy, China. In that regard, Feaver reported that Britain had provided a £10,000,000 loan to Chungking. He also said that Craigie had recently changed from the 'appeasement school' to a more firm position against Japanese militarism, and now seemed closer to the views of Joseph Grew, US Ambassador to Japan.³⁹ Feaver pointed out two schools of thought within the diplomatic community: if the Axis Powers prevailed in Europe, then Japan would rely on US apathy and take the NEI before Germany could; but if the Axis failed, then Japan would still drive south in a final attempt to gain resources, driven on by Japanese militarists. Feaver continued: 'It is highly probable that the armed forces would prefer to risk national "hara-kiri".'⁴⁰ Finally, he suggested that Japan was seeking a rapprochement with Russia in order to achieve its aims.

Throughout December and January, Ottawa officials considered other important information. On 13 December, Mackenzie King received a London telegram that revealed how British officials in Washington were trying to convince the Americans to reinforce the

³⁸ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), H.F. Feaver (Tokyo) to O.D. Skelton (Ottawa), Letter, 11 Dec. 1940.

³⁹ Both men published memoirs on their respective experiences in Japan. See Sir Robert Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask* (London, New York: Hutchinson, 1945); and Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1944).

⁴⁰ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), H.F. Feaver (Tokyo) to O.D. Skelton (Ottawa), Letter, 11 Dec. 1940.

Philippines since no US forces were being sent to Singapore.⁴¹ Reportedly, Dr. Hornbeck of the US State Department had informed Lord Lothian that the Philippines were receiving 23 USN submarines and several naval bombers, and had stressed that Britain should reinforce Singapore with fighter planes. Anglo-American reinforcements in the Far East might deter Japan. On 19 December, London informed Ottawa about Far East alliances: the Soviets intended to adhere to the 1937 Sino-Soviet non-aggression pact, but a Japanese delegation (possibly a naval team) had visited Germany under the terms of the Tripartite Pact.⁴² According to a message of 15 January, Japan was also shipping petroleum and mechanical transport to ports in Italian Somaliland.⁴³ On 30 January 1941, a message from London reported that a Far East crisis might soon break out and that a Japanese advance might be synchronized with a German attempt to invade Britain.⁴⁴ Craigie believed that Germany was exerting great influence over Japanese policy.

More indications came during the February war scare. On 7 February, London informed Ottawa that a Japanese advance into British territories and the NEI might occur within two weeks.⁴⁵ That intelligence was based on Craigie's reports, intercepted telephone conversations, and observations regarding the cancellation of certain Japanese ship sailings. On 10 February, E. d'Arcy McGreer, Canadian Charge d'Affaires in Tokyo, informed Ottawa of Japan's Axis connections, desire for Malaya and the NEI, and attempts to establish an authoritarian system through institutions such as the 'Imperial Rule Assistance Association',

⁴¹ Ibid., W.C. Hankinson, British High Commission (Ottawa) to W.L.M. King (Ottawa), Most Secret and Personal letter, 13 Dec. 1940. Includes an attached memorandum (Most Secret Circular Z408).

⁴² QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Ministerial Files C, Box 52, File: 'USSR, 1940-1941', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Secret telegram, Circular D620, 19 Dec. 1940.

⁴³ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #5', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW565, 15 Jan. 1941.

⁴⁴ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Secret telegram, Circular D46, 30 Jan. 1941.

⁴⁵ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1793, Vol. 777, File 365 (pt. 4), W.C. Hankinson, British High Commission (Ottawa) to W.L.M. King (Ottawa), Secret letter, Circular Z38, 7 Feb. 1941.

headed by Count Arima.⁴⁶ On the same day, London informed Ottawa that the *Asaka Maru*, a Japanese vessel under naval ensign bound for Lisbon, carrying a Japanese naval mission bound for Berlin, was due to pass through the Panama canal next month.⁴⁷

On 12 February, London sent Ottawa more of Craigie's reports along with information regarding US naval activity. Craigie reported that Japanese press statements suggested troop movements near Hong Kong.⁴⁸ He surmised that Japan might demand an early surrender of the port as a prelude to a southward drive, a move that might be less provocative to the Americans than immediate threats to Singapore. Craigie also mentioned the possibility of a German-brokered Soviet-Japanese agreement, which would free up Japanese troops for other operations. Meanwhile, the Americans maintained a presence in the Pacific: London informed Ottawa that the USN Pacific Fleet had been based at Hawaii since 31 January, whilst the USN Asiatic Fleet remained at Manila.⁴⁹ US naval deterrence might be necessary, as it was rumoured that Japan had recalled its ships to harbour. Ottawa also learned that Craigie wanted to use Argentina as an agent to protect British interests in Japan and Manchuria if war broke out between Britain and Japan.

The war scare continued over the next two weeks. On 14 February, London reported on Lord Halifax's conversation with Roosevelt just eight days earlier.⁵⁰ Roosevelt made it clear that US public opinion would prevent him from declaring war if Japan attacked Anglo-Dutch

⁴⁶ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261304–13, McGreer (Tokyo) to H.L. Keenleyside (Ottawa), Letter, 10 Feb. 1941; and 261314–16, McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Letter no. 31, 10 Feb. 1941. This file contains McGreer's correspondence with Mackenzie King throughout 1941.

⁴⁷ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #6', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW601, 10 Feb. 1941.

⁴⁸ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel 1793, Vol. 777, File 365 (pt. 4), Hankinson to King, Most Secret and Personal letter, 12 Feb. 1941. Includes attached Most Secret Circular Z43.

⁴⁹ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #6', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW604, 12 Feb. 1941.

⁵⁰ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1793, Vol. 777, File 365 (pt. 4), Hankinson to King, Circular Z46, 14 Feb. 1941.

possessions. A US declaration of war would only result from an attack against US possessions. The President discussed reinforcing the Philippines with submarines as a deterrent measure: Japan must be made to believe that US neutrality was not assured if the NEI was attacked. Finally, he suggested that US involvement in a Pacific conflict would be a 'holding war' because the main emphasis was on Europe and the Atlantic. On 17 February, London informed Ottawa that Japan might increase its hold on French Indochina to secure 'strategic facilities' in Thailand.⁵¹ As a result, it would be able to launch air attacks against Singapore and the Malacca Straits, as well as land attacks against Malaya. Accordingly, an Australian brigade was being sent to Malaya, and the commitment of Indian troops was also being considered. On 19 February, another report outlined Craigie's conversations with Matsuoka, who argued that the US Lend-Lease Bill might constitute an 'attack' within the meaning of the Tripartite Pact.⁵² Three days later, London informed Ottawa that Matsuoka proposed a March visit to Moscow, where he would conclude the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact, followed by a visit to Berlin.⁵³ Reportedly, Chungking believed that Japan, in the aftermath of its success in securing the Soviet-Japanese Fishing Treaty, was seeking Soviet permission to transport goods to Europe via Siberia.

On 25 February, London also reported on Churchill's interview with the Japanese Ambassador in London.⁵⁴ Churchill had stated that Britain disapproved of Japan's actions in China, but would remain neutral. He reminded the Ambassador that it was not in Japan's interests to enter a war against the United States and Britain, and argued also that the Tripartite Pact was not to Japan's advantage. The Ambassador assured Churchill that Japan would not

⁵¹ Ibid., Hankinson to King, Circular Z47, 14. Feb. 1941.

⁵² NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M25, 19 Feb. 1941.

⁵³ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular D85, 22 Feb. 1941.

⁵⁴ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular D91, 25 Feb. 1941.

attack British, Dutch or Australian territory, and that it had signed the Tripartite Pact to limit the possibility of conflict.⁵⁵

Throughout the war scare in early 1941, diplomatic sources had provided Ottawa with a survey of possibilities in the Far East. In terms of possible Japanese moves, the war scare brought on rumours of southern advances, ship recalls, tightening Axis alliances and rapprochement with Russia. In terms of Allied deterrence, the war scare prompted talks in Washington over US reinforcements, Allied troop movements within the Far East, and increased intelligence reporting. As we will later see, this incoming intelligence about potential Japanese expansionism compelled Canadian strategists to plan for a withdrawal from the Far East. But Japan did not act in February: Canada would continue to monitor Japan's intentions in the Pacific.

In March and April, External Affairs received several Far East reports from McGreer in Tokyo. On 1 March, McGreer reported on Japan's new 'National Defence Security Act', which was imposed to tighten security.⁵⁶ On 11 March, he informed Ottawa that Matsuoka was leaving for talks in Moscow, Berlin and Rome.⁵⁷ Japan had tightened domestic security, and now it was tightening its alliances. Three days later, he passed on a letter from Craigie, who enquired about the arrangements to be made for Japanese and Canadian officials in Tokyo and Ottawa in the event of war: perhaps the war scare was not quite over.⁵⁸ On 15 March, McGreer reported that a German mission was due to arrive in Tokyo to lay new economic foundations.⁵⁹ In McGreer's view, Japan was continuing to develop its Axis associations. On

⁵⁵ Even so, on 28 February, Massey informed Mackenzie King that British sources indicated Japanese interest or designs on the BC coastline. See Johnson, 'North Pacific Triangle', note 123, 192-3.

⁵⁶ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261324, McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Letter, 1 Mar. 1941.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 261331, McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Letter no. 36, 11 Mar. 1941.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 261334, McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Letter no. 63, 14 Mar. 1941.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 261346, McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Letter no. 68, 15 Mar. 1941.

April 1, he informed Ottawa of Japan's crackdown on missionary activities.⁶⁰ Thirteen missionaries had been arrested for alleged 'anti-Japanese' activities in Korea, where the Governor General believed that Episcopal and Presbyterian missionaries were highly culpable in terms of espionage. McGreer also reported on the Japanese press, which (not surprisingly) expressed right-wing views of Japan's 'divine mission' and criticized the Allies for 'encirclement'. He noted that recent appointments of Conservatives to the Japanese Cabinet might elicit strong reactions from aggressive Tokyo lobby groups.⁶¹ On 14 April, McGreer reported on Matsuoka's mission to Moscow: 'Local press interprets Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Agreement signed yesterday as being in substance a Non-Aggression Pact and virtually amounting to Soviet recognition of Manchoukuo.'⁶² Japan now had more freedom to operate in the Far East.

On 24 April, External Affairs received one curious report from London that warned of possible Japanese surprise attacks against Singapore and Malaya, which might coincide with a German attack against the Suez Canal.⁶³ The report was unusual because most diplomatic intelligence reports during the spring focused on Far East politics, rather than the prospect of imminent war. The report writers, however, deemed such intelligence as questionable, suggesting that it might have resulted from Axis deception. But they could not resist speculating: 'Any marked German successes in Europe or Africa are however likely to encourage sudden Japanese move southward'. The report writers noted that the Soviet-Japanese Pact might also encourage such a move.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 261358-9, McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Letter no. 78, 1 Apr. 1941.

⁶¹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 54, 5 Apr. 1941.

⁶² Ibid., McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 59, 14 Apr. 1941.

⁶³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular Z147, 24 Apr. 1941.

In late May, External Affairs received reports concerning Far East alliances and Japanese reactions. On 26 May, McGreer reported on Craigie's views about the Hull–Nomura Washington talks and related issues.⁶⁴ Craigie agreed with the US State Department view that if Japan were not entangled in China, it would be able to act elsewhere; in essence, ADB regimes in Southeast Asia might benefit from a protracted war in China. He noted that Matsuoka's presence as Foreign Minister ensured pro-Axis sympathies, and warned against the proposed visit to Japan of US Republican statesman Wendell Wilkie, given that the Japanese might see it as appeasement. On 28 May, London offered Ottawa its own assessment.⁶⁵ Matsuoka had ensured Japan's ongoing commitment to the Tripartite Pact whilst securing a détente with Russia. Japan wished to divide the United States and Britain, prevent Britain from receiving USN assistance, and withdraw honourably from China whilst retaining influence in Manchukuo, Indochina and Thailand. It was noted that Japan did not want war with America, but was unlikely to settle its affairs in China to the United States' satisfaction. Finally, on 31 May, McGreer reported that Matsuoka might strengthen his own position through private knowledge of the Hull–Nomura talks, although not without opposition: the 'Black Dragon Society' threatened to assassinate him should he 'embroil Japan with the United States.'⁶⁶ All told, these messages gave the impression that Japanese society was divided along several ideological lines including authoritarianism, expansionism and détente.

Intelligence received from diplomatic sources from March until May provided Canadian strategists with a renewed understanding of Japan's intentions. Awareness of

⁶⁴ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261411–13, McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Letter no. 166, 26 May 1941.

⁶⁵ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, SSDA (London) to W.L.M. King (Ottawa), Circular Z187, 28 May 1941.

⁶⁶ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261417, McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Secret telegram no. 89, 31 May 1941.

Matsuoka's diplomatic manoeuvres, which resulted in a Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact, allowed strategists to reconsider Russia's role in containing Japan and to reassess the potential threat to ADB possessions in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, intelligence concerning Japan's Axis associations compelled strategists to consider the possibility of joint German-Japanese assaults in the Pacific. Finally, incoming reports alerted the Canadians to the divisions that still existed within Japan's political spectrum. Some Japanese political activists wanted to avoid war with America; perhaps the Allies could still deter Japan from further encroachment in the Far East.

In June, anticipation of a German attack on Russia put a new focus on Far East affairs. Some diplomatic reports attempted to fathom Japan's next move, whilst others spoke of Allied preparations. On 5 June, McGreer reported that US Ambassador Grew in Tokyo advised caution in dealing with Japan.⁶⁷ Grew explained that the 'delicacy of Washington conversations' made the present moment inopportune for denouncing commercial treaties with Japan or blacklisting Japanese firms. Viewed with hindsight, it is possible that Grew anticipated German-Soviet conflict and was trying to keep Tokyo on the Anglo-American side. In terms of deterrent measures, Ottawa learned on 11 June that the Americans were creating an 'international air force' for service in China.⁶⁸ That air force would include 100 US Tomahawk fighters, which had originally been promised to Britain, along with aircrew and maintenance staff. On 17 June, Vincent Massey wrote to Mackenzie King from London, reporting that Chungking sources indicated a southward movement of Japanese warships.⁶⁹ He

⁶⁷ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 94, 5 Jun. 1941.

⁶⁸ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular Z209, 11 Jun. 1941.

⁶⁹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Secret telegram no. 1124, 17 Jun. 1941.

also said that Lord Halifax would inform Washington of any British diplomatic moves in Tokyo; the situation was critical. On 26 June, McGreer reported on meetings of 'extremist elements' in Japan.⁷⁰ These meetings were about the way Japan should respond to the German-Soviet conflict, which had started some days before, although McGreer himself believed that Japan would stay neutral. A few days later, McGreer summarized Japanese press reaction to the German-Soviet war.⁷¹ The editorials expressed surprise at Germany's move, but stated that Germany would probably defeat Russia within one to two months; Tokyo would have to take time to decide its position.

In July, several messages pointed to Japanese expansionism and a renewed war scare. The Soviet Embassy in Tokyo evacuated its women and children, and on 4 July McGreer reported that Japan was considering an 'extension of territorial waters.'⁷² On 12 July, Norman Robertson sent Mackenzie King a report derived from USN intelligence sources: all Japanese ships were recalled west of the Panama Canal, and Japan might declare war on Russia after 1 August.⁷³ Robertson attached credence to the first item only. He also informed Mackenzie King that London had reported a week earlier that USN Intelligence thought that 20 July was a probable deadline for Japanese aggression. It was thought that Japan might move north against Siberia, south against the NEI, or southwest through Indochina, the last prospect being the most likely. On 14 July, the Canadian High Commission in Canberra reported that Japan would drive southwards on 20 July and that Japan had cancelled shipments of goods to

⁷⁰ Ibid., CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 104, 26 Jun. 1941.

⁷¹ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261444-6, CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Letter no. 217, 2 Jul. 1941.

⁷² NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 109, 4 Jul. 1941.

⁷³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Vol. 2960, File 10, N.A. Robertson, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister', 12 Jul. 1941.

Australia.⁷⁴ On the same day, London informed Ottawa that Japanese troopships and warships were operating in the South China Sea.⁷⁵ On 15 July, Robertson sent Mackenzie King a 'Far Eastern Situation' report, in which he indicated that messages from Washington, London, Tokyo and Canberra all pointed to an imminent Japanese move, probably southward: 'A most likely immediate objective would be the seizure of naval bases in French Indo China, followed very promptly by the establishment of a protectorate over Thailand.'⁷⁶ On 17 July, McGreer informed Ottawa that the Japanese Cabinet had resigned the night before and that the Japanese forces had begun a large-scale mobilization.⁷⁷

Incoming reports now focused almost exclusively on the prospect of a Japanese advance to the south. On 22 July, for example, Massey reported from London that the British War Cabinet believed a Japanese southward strike was imminent.⁷⁸ The next day, London sent Ottawa a complete assessment on current affairs that included the following information: Germany was expected to reach Moscow in three weeks and take control of western Russia in six to eight weeks, whereas Japan was expected to move southward into Indochina, although Japanese action against Russia was still a possibility.⁷⁹ On 25 July, London offered an update: Japanese troop movements and naval activity suggested a movement towards southern Indochina, particularly Saigon and Camranh Bay.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), HCCA (Canberra) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 54, 14 Jul. 1941.

⁷⁵ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #7', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW816, 14 Jul. 1941.

⁷⁶ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, N.A. Robertson, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister', 15 Jul. 1941.

⁷⁷ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), McGreer (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 117, 17 Jul. 1941.

⁷⁸ Ibid., HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 1309, 22 Jul. 1941.

⁷⁹ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #8', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW826, 23 Jul. 1941.

⁸⁰ Ibid., Circular DW829, 25 Jul. 1941.

Diplomatic reports now commented on the implications of Japan's southward advance, a move that had been predicted to occur on 20 July, but that finally occurred on 27 July. Between 27 and 31 July, London issued several reports on the military aspects of Japan's advance into southern French Indochina.⁸¹ On 30 July, Vincent Massey sent Mackenzie King a telegram from London, in which he reported Japan's new demands to other Far East Powers: it wanted Russia to demilitarise Vladivostok and Thailand to become a closer ally.⁸² The next day, Massey sent Mackenzie King another telegram, in which he reported further evidence of intrigue between Thailand and Japan.⁸³ Massey also expressed London's disappointment with Washington's mild application of the asset-freeze order against Japan at a time when Britain was cutting all trade. At the end of July, Canadian officials could take comfort in the knowledge that Canada had always imposed the strictest trade sanctions against Japan and would continue to do so whilst London and Washington quibbled.

All told, intelligence received in June and July made it abundantly clear to Canadian strategists that they would have to reconsider their response to Japan. As we will later see, Germany's assault on Russia prompted strategists to consider how Japan might exploit the situation. Advance warning of Japan's advance into southern French Indochina prompted strategists to plan ahead for a full asset-freeze and to reconsider their deterrence policies. Decision-makers depended on accurate intelligence during the crucial period when Japan chose to advance southward.

Throughout August, External Affairs received a series of 'Circular' reports from the Dominions Office in London that confirmed Japan's military build-up in Southeast Asia. From

⁸¹ Ibid., Circular DW831, 27 Jul. 1941; and Circular DW836, 31 Jul. 1941.

⁸² NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 1357, 30 Jul. 1941.

⁸³ Ibid., HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 1372, 31 Jul. 1941.

2 to 10 August, several reports offered information on Japan's troop movements, which included two divisions in southern French Indochina and troop concentrations along the Manchukuo-Soviet border.⁸⁴ Furthermore, Japanese heavy bombers were moved into Saigon. On 19 August, one report confirmed that additional Japanese aircraft had moved into Manchukuo and that Japanese forces had occupied more aerodromes in Indochina.⁸⁵ A report sent the next day assessed the strength of Chinese and Soviet opposition to a potential Japanese assault.⁸⁶ It was noted that the Chinese had strengthened their forces on along the Indochina border 'presumably in anticipation of a Japanese attack on Burma Road at Kunming.' Japan's land forces were considered to be 'inferior in numbers to Russia's Far East armies.' The Dominions Office believed that Japan could not succeed against Russia unless that country collapsed or 'withdrew a portion of its Far East armies.' On 27 August, it was reported that Japan was continuing to reinforce air and naval bases in French Indochina with troops in accordance with its 'agreement' with the Vichy government.⁸⁷ Through all these reports, Canadian officials learned that Japan was consolidating its position in Southeast Asia at a time when Russia was suffering from German advances along the Eastern Front. It was still difficult to decide whether Japan would strike north or south.

In September, incoming diplomatic reports discussed Far East troop movements and wrestled with the problem of Japan's intentions. On 3 September, the Dominions Office reported that the Shah of Persia had ordered an end to all resistance against the combined

⁸⁴ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #8', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW838, 2 Aug. 1941; Circular DW839, 3 Aug. 1941; Circular DW842, 6 Aug. 1941; and Circular DW847, 10 Aug. 1941.

⁸⁵ Ibid., Circular DW857, 19 Aug. 1941.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Circular DW858, 20 Aug. 1941. For a report on Japanese strength in Manchukuo and northeast Korea, see Circular DW860, 21 Aug. 1941.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Circular DW866, 27 Aug. 1941.

British and Soviet invasion of his country.⁸⁸ The Allies were going to secure oil supplies there in anticipation of a possible German breakthrough into the Caucasus. Diplomatic reports sometimes noted that affairs in Persia or Central Asia might interest Japanese authorities because they were attempting to assess Soviet strength. In terms of Japanese troop disposition, the Dominions Office estimated that Japan had 61 divisions throughout Southeast Asia, with about a third of these in Manchukuo, so it might still move north. On 9 September, H.H. Wrong, who served at the Canadian Legation in Washington and had contacted the British Embassy for information, sent Norman Robertson a Most Secret letter concerning Far East affairs.⁸⁹ Reportedly, Japan wanted to renew negotiations, but Cordell Hull was resistant, believing that China would rather fight Japan to the finish than accept a negotiated settlement through US intervention. It was also noted that Japan was still moving troops to Manchukuo. In terms of Tokyo politics, Prince Konoye was believed to be reluctant to make official protests about US shipments to Vladivostok because prompt opposition from Washington might cause him to 'lose face' to Japanese militarists. From the Anglo-American perspective, Japan's intentions were difficult to fathom whilst the Tokyo government remained so divided.

As shown, intelligence received in Ottawa throughout August and September demonstrated that Japan continued its build-up of forces in Southeast Asia, but still considered the possibility of a rapprochement with the West. It is true that the asset-freeze ran the risk of war with Japan, but it now appeared that the embargo might still bring Japan to diplomatic terms. Apart from assessing Japan's intentions, Canadian strategists had to consider the implications of Washington's apparent refusal to negotiate with the Konoye government. It was possible that Washington sought further concessions from Tokyo. Alternatively,

⁸⁸ Ibid., Circular DW874, 3 Sep. 1941.

⁸⁹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, H.H. Wrong (Washington) to Norman Robertson (Ottawa), Most Secret letter, 9 Sep. 1941.

Washington may have been playing for time in anticipation of an inevitable showdown with Japan.

October brought renewed concerns over war in the Far East. On 12 October, the Dominions Office informed Ottawa that Japanese shipping activity revealed the effects of Allied-American economic sanctions: since July, the number of Japanese merchant ships outside 'Japanese waters' had fallen from 172 to 40.⁹⁰ On 18 October, McGreer in Tokyo reported on the new Tojo cabinet, which appeared to be a 'stop-gap' rather than a war cabinet.⁹¹ Even so, Japanese militarists now had a greater voice in the Tokyo Diet. On 22 October, the Dominions Office expressed concerns over Japan's ability to strike north: 'Japanese army is holding its own in China without great difficulty. . . . Japan is now in position to attack Russia on land with some prospect of success if she decides to do so.'⁹² A week later, the Dominions Office reported on Japan's troop strength in Manchukuo and the north, now believed to be 28 divisions, and on Japan's naval preparedness: 'it is reliably reported that the navy is now fully mobilized and on a complete war footing.'⁹³ Japan's strategy was thought to depend on the German-Soviet conflict: 'Japan's policy appears to be one of watchfulness, and will probably be considerably influenced by the outcome of military operations in Moscow and southern areas of the Russian front.' Other reports warned that conflict along the Manchukuo-Soviet border might result in a Japanese-Soviet war. On 31 October, however, London informed Ottawa that Craigie and the British Military Attaché in

⁹⁰ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #9', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW920, 12 Oct. 1941.

⁹¹ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261540, CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 196, 18 Oct. 1941.

⁹² NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #9', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW931, 22 Oct. 1941.

⁹³ Ibid., Circular DW939, 29 Oct. 1941.

Tokyo now believed that 'indications of a Japanese attack' on the Russian line had decreased since August.⁹⁴ Siberia might not be an object of Japan's grand design for the Far East.

Intelligence gathered in October was important to Canadian strategists for at least two reasons. First, the prospect of war between Japan and the Soviet Union compelled strategists to consider important defensive measures for Pacific shipping. Those measures, once conceived, could readily be applied to any subsequent Pacific emergency. Second, at the end of the month, strategists could focus more upon Japan's interest in southern objectives because the crisis along the Manchukuo-Soviet border had been averted. Japan had not only suffered defeat during its earlier encounter with Soviet forces in 1939, but also stood down during its recent encounter. A southward advance now seemed more likely.

In November, External Affairs received diplomatic reports that focused on Japan's preparations for war in Southeast Asia. On 5 November, the Dominions Office reported that Japan had moved more divisions into Manchukuo, but that 'further reinforcement southwards' suggested an operation to cut the Burma Road at Kunming.⁹⁵ It was noted that the Allies had strengthened their position in Asia by protecting valuable resources in Persia: 'Our troops are now disposed to protect oilfields and main supply routes to Russia.'⁹⁶ Three days later, reports indicated that all Japanese ships had returned to Japanese waters, apart from four merchant vessels on trade assignments in South American waters.⁹⁷ On 12 November, the Dominions Office expressed the view that Japan would not be likely to attack Russia, unless that nation collapsed completely.⁹⁸ Furthermore, it did not appear that attacks on the Burma Road or

⁹⁴ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M343, 31 Oct. 1941.

⁹⁵ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #9', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW947, 5 Nov. 1941.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Circular DW951, 8 Nov. 1941.

⁹⁸ Ibid., Circular DW955, 12 Nov. 1941.

Thailand were imminent. It was believed that Japan would have to move more troops south to threaten the Burma Road and that this could be accomplished within a month. On 17 November, McGreer sent a report from Tokyo: 'The Diet session opened today in a tense political atmosphere. Both Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs reiterated the usual complaints against encirclement, being misunderstood and interference of third powers in China. The tone of speeches was far from conciliatory.'⁹⁹ Tokyo's political rhetoric matched its troop movements.

More incoming reports indicated a Japanese southward drive. On 19 November, the Dominions Office reported on Japanese divisions operating in the south and speculated on the relative merits to Japan in striking either Thailand or the Burma Road.¹⁰⁰ Two days later, it was reported that all Japanese ships were homeward bound, excepting a few local trade vessels operating in Indochina, Thailand and South America.¹⁰¹ On 25 November, the Dominions Office reinforced the view that Japan was now interested in southern targets: 'Troop movements from north to south Indo China indicate an increased probability of operations against Thailand rather than against the Burma Road.'¹⁰² The same report confirmed that two Canadian infantry battalions, the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles, had arrived with 'ancillary troops' in Hong Kong on 16 November. Japan was threatening targets in Southeast Asia and the Canadians were now committed to defending Hong Kong. Only one ominous question remained: if Allied deterrence failed to prevent Japan from striking southward, would Allied forces be sufficient to repulse Japanese attacks? Not surprisingly, diplomatic reports

⁹⁹ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261544, CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 211, 17 Nov. 1941.

¹⁰⁰ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #9', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW964, 19 Nov. 1941.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Circular DW968, 21 Nov. 1941.

¹⁰² Ibid., Circular DW978, 25 Nov. 1941.

circulated within the British Commonwealth usually assumed some form of Allied supremacy, but they invariably pointed to an ongoing Japanese build-up.

Following the Kra Isthmus war scare of 30 November to 1 December, diplomatic reports simply confirmed that Japan would soon strike at southern targets. On 2 December, the Dominions Office informed Ottawa of Japanese troop dispositions throughout Southeast Asia and of Thailand's vulnerability: 'Japan is in a position to invade Thailand whenever she wishes to do so.'¹⁰³ On the same day, the Dominions Office reported on Lord Halifax's own account of his recent conversation with Roosevelt, who had shared intelligence regarding Japan's interest in Malaya:

In this connection he [Roosevelt] told me that they had information that somebody in the Japanese Embassy at Bangkok had advised Tokyo to make the first attack on British territory just south of Malay-Thailand boundary, argument being that this would immediately oblige us to occupy positions on the Isthmus in Thai territory and give the Japanese advantage of making us the first to commit aggression against Thailand.¹⁰⁴

If Roosevelt's intelligence sources were correct and the Japanese followed the reported advice, then the Allies could expect a Malayan campaign with a possible spill over, in both political and military terms, into the Kra Isthmus.

And that is just what happened, although British forces were in no position to occupy the Kra Isthmus. On 7 December, Ottawa learned that Allied air reconnaissance on 6 December had spotted two Japanese convoys, escorted by cruisers and destroyers, heading

¹⁰³ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #9', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW995, 2 Dec. 1941.

¹⁰⁴ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M412, 2 Dec. 1941. According to the memoirs of Sir Julian Ridsdale, who in 1941 had served as an intelligence officer with the War Cabinet, SIS and JIC, the British also predicted that Japan would strike near the Thai-Malay border, specifically at Kota Bharu: 'On the 5th December 1941 I was Night Duty Officer in the War Office, when a telegram marked Top Secret was placed in front of me. The telegram read "The Japanese will be landing at Kota Baharu, North Malaya, in the early hours of 7th/8th December for an attack on the Malayan Peninsula". See CAC, RIDS, Box 1, Sir Julian E. Ridsdale, 'The Unpublished Memoirs of Sir Julian Ridsdale', Chapter One – Part Four, 42.

west from Indochina.¹⁰⁵ Later in the day, the Dominions Office informed Mackenzie King that Japan had launched an assault on British Malaya, just south of the Malay-Thai border: 'Report timed 5:40 p.m., G.M.T. today received from Commander-in-Chief of China that Japanese were attempting to land from five ships at Kota Bharu (on the east coast of Malaya immediately south of Siam-Malayan frontier).'¹⁰⁶ That message was most significant for Canada and the British Commonwealth: Japan had attacked a British possession at least 45 minutes *before* it attacked Pearl Harbor. The Pearl Harbor attack occurred at about 7:55 AM, Honolulu time, which was 1:25 PM, Ottawa-Washington time, and 6:25 PM, Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) in London. According to Allied thinking, under no circumstances could the British Commonwealth be at war with Japan until the United States was involved. Therefore, British hostilities could not be declared against Japan until after the United States was attacked, which was exactly what occurred. On 8 December, External Affairs received a Most Secret telegram from London that reported on Japan's attacks against Pearl Harbor and Singapore the day before.¹⁰⁷ It was noted that Singapore was attacked at 8:30 PM, GMT, 7 December, with eighteen aircraft, although no damage was done. The United States and the British Commonwealth were finally at war with Japan.

Intelligence received in November and December was crucial to strategic planning. Ottawa officials who monitored the breach in US-Japanese relations could make several preparations for the eventuality of war, including the invocation of Allied defence agreements, the improvement of coastal defences, and increased surveillance in the Pacific. Intelligence pointing to conflict in the Kra Isthmus allowed strategists to consider the implications of a 'pre-emptive' British occupation of that region. Reports received in early December

¹⁰⁵ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #10', Circular DW1004, 7 Dec. 1941.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Circular DW1005, 7 Dec. 1941.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Circular DW1006, 8 Dec. 1941.

concerning the imminence of war allowed strategists to convene emergency meetings and to plan Canada's entry into a new theatre of operations. In summary, Canada received enough intelligence from its diplomatic sources in London, Washington and Tokyo to make informed decisions about how it would respond to the Far East crisis, develop its role within the emerging Anglo-American alliance, and prepare for war with Japan.

Conclusions

In 1941, Canada received an enormous amount of intelligence about Far East affairs from its external sources. Monthly reports from Hong Kong and weekly reports from the British Army discussed Japan's war preparations, speculated as to Japan's intentions in the north or south, noted the decline in US-Japanese relations, and confirmed in November that Japan had decided upon southern targets. Admiralty reports reinforced those views and also offered insight into Japan's naval activities, allowing the Canadians to recognize that ship recalls, radio silence and clandestine communications on reserved maritime frequencies all preceded a war footing. Foreign Office 'Political Intelligence' summaries and War Cabinet 'Weekly Resumes' complemented incoming military and naval assessments, but had limited value in Ottawa where they were only received on a delayed basis from London. More significantly, Canadian officials benefited from daily correspondence with London, Washington and Tokyo. Canada received timely and relevant Diplomatic Intelligence from its allies and its overseas Legations. Canadian strategists could benefit from diplomatic sources that revealed the extent of concern over the war scare of early 1941 and the significance of the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact. Diplomatic reports discussed China's resistance to Japanese occupation, Germany's attack on Russia, Japan's invasion of southern French Indochina, and the Soviet-Japanese war scare of

October. Other reports looked critically at the new Tojo government and the deterioration in US-Japanese relations. Finally, diplomatic sources revealed that war in Southeast Asia was imminent and that Malaya was a definite target.

It is significant that Canada's external sources not only discussed each event that occurred during the Far East crisis, but also predicted two significant actions. Diplomatic sources had provided advance warning of Japan's move into southern French Indochina and its attack on Malaya. Clearly, Canada benefited from its worldwide diplomatic contacts and its full membership in the Allied intelligence community. Allied intelligence reports combined with Canadian intelligence gathering gave Canadian strategists an enormous advantage in their deliberations over Far East policy. Canada and its allies fully understood Japan's interest in Southeast Asia and its desire to acquire local resources in the face of the US-led asset-freeze. But what were Japan's intentions in the North Pacific? There seems to be little mention of that subject in the available historical records, although this might be only an appearance because several gaps appear in relevant archival collections. Let us now examine sources suggesting that Canada and its allies suspected a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Chapter 5

Prediction or Foreknowledge? Allied Intelligence concerning Pearl Harbor

Some documents released recently suggest that in 1941 Canadian officials had to consider the question of Pearl Harbor. In 2001, the St. Catharines Museum in Ontario released the 1967 sworn affidavit of Colonel Murton A. Seymour, OBE, QC, who claimed to have been informed on 1 December 1941 that British Intelligence had told Ottawa that a Japanese air attack against Pearl Harbor might occur on 8 December.¹ According to Seymour, on the basis of that intelligence he had been instructed to shut down his covert air force recruitment programme in the United States. The St. Catharines Museum also released a 1972 letter from Lester B. Pearson to Seymour, in which Pearson suggested that British and US intelligence authorities in 1941 had believed that a Pearl Harbor attack might occur in early December, although they had no firm intelligence about the exact date.² These documents are extraordinary, to say the least. Seymour, a Canadian lawyer, aviation pioneer and war veteran, along with Pearson, a former Prime Minister of Canada and veteran of wartime intelligence, have left us with post-war accounts suggesting that Canada and its allies had forewarning of the Pearl Harbor attack.

The purpose of this chapter is to consider a wide range of primary and anecdotal sources to test the plausibility of the accounts offered by Seymour and Pearson. First, Allied concerns over Pearl Harbor in the period March–November 1941 will be discussed using a range of

¹ St. Catharines Museum (SCM), St. Catharines, Ontario, Accession No. 1997.168 (donated by Elizabeth Seymour), The Statutory Declaration of Murton Adams Seymour, 7 December 1967, 'IN THE MATTER OF the Attack on Pearl Harbour, Hawaii on 7th December, 1941', 12 pages with 9 attached exhibits. The attached exhibits include minutes of meetings of the Dominion Aeronautical Association, a covert air force recruiting operation, as well as correspondence with Stanley M. Clark, QC, former Secretary of the Association. The museum received the affidavit from Elizabeth Seymour on 10 Oct. 1997, but publicly released it in May 2001. The donated collection also includes a fascinating biographical file concerning the life and times of Murton Seymour (1892–1976).

² SCM, Accession No. 1997.168 (donated by Elizabeth Seymour), Right Honourable L.B. Pearson to Colonel Murton A. Seymour, OBE, QC, Letter, 31 Jan. 1972.

primary sources. Second, evidence suggesting that the Allies made predictions in late November about a Pearl Harbor attack will be examined. Third, evidence suggesting that the Allies may have had foreknowledge of the attack through D/F tracking will be assessed. Finally, a discussion of radio silence policy and intercepted transmissions will lend support to the evidence already presented. Primary evidence suggests that predictions of a Pearl Harbor attack were quite possible after late November 1941, whereas post-war accounts from veterans of wartime intelligence and covert operations suggest that the Allies may have had specific foreknowledge of the Pearl Harbor attack by 6 December 1941. All told, both primary and anecdotal evidence lend credence to the accounts offered by Seymour and Pearson.

Concerns over Pearl Harbor, March–November 1941

In terms of strategic planning in 1941, it is clear that some US strategists considered the possibility of a Pearl Harbor attack. On 31 March, a joint report by Rear-Admiral P. Bellinger and Major General F. Martin predicted that, in the event of war between Japan and America, Japan would strike Pearl Harbor at dawn without warning, using aircraft launched from one or more carriers.³ The USN Rainbow-5 War Plan, published on 25 July under the official title ‘WPPac-46’, predicted that Japan’s initial actions in the event of war would include possible ‘raids or stronger attacks on Wake, Midway and other outlying United States possessions’ as well as the deployment of raiding and observation forces throughout the Pacific, with submarines in the Hawaii area.⁴ Accordingly, several intelligence services monitored the North Pacific.

In August 1941, British Intelligence revealed that Germany had not only attempted to collect intelligence on Pearl Harbor, but also promised to support Japan in the event of war

³ Layton, et al., *And I Was There*, 246–8.

⁴ *Hearings*, part 26, Hart Inquiry exhibit no. 16, Navy Plan O-1 (WPPac-46), 25 Jul. 1941, 500.

between Japan and America. In terms of human intelligence, both Britain and the United States enjoyed a potential intelligence coup that month when Germany sent agent Dusko Popov, known as Agent Tricycle, to the United States on an espionage mission. Popov, who also worked for the British as a double-agent on deception duties, carried a German microdot questionnaire, one-third of which concerned US defence installations at Hawaii and Pearl Harbor.⁵ Both British and US intelligence staff made copies of Popov's questionnaire. MI6 performed that task in London and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which had interviewed Popov, later did the same in Washington. Popov's questionnaire demonstrated that Pearl Harbor was an object of Axis interest, and that Germany went to great lengths to collect intelligence for Japan, its Tripartite partner. The Americans, however, did not seem to consider the Popov questionnaire to be important intelligence at that time. On 25 August, the Allies intercepted a Berlin–Tokyo message that revealed German overtures of support for Japan, with Germany offering to declare war on the United States if war broke out between it and Japan.⁶ From the Allied perspective, it was not inconceivable that Japanese attacks on US targets, whether in Southeast Asia or the Pacific, might bring the United States into the war in both the Pacific and Europe.

Meanwhile, the British continued to display some anxiety over the security of Pearl Harbor. During his visit there in October 1941, Lord Louis Mountbatten warned Admiral Harold Stark that the USN Pacific fleet was vulnerable to aerial attack and should be better defended.⁷ In the same month, Lieutenant-Commander C.C. Martell, a British naval attaché in

⁵ J.C. Masterman, *The Double-Cross System in the War of 1939 to 1945* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale UP, 1972), 79–81, 196–8.

⁶ PRO, ADM 223/321, John Godfrey, Special Intelligence no. 313, 25 Aug. 1941.

⁷ Richard Hough, *Mountbatten*, c. 1980 (New York: Random House, 1981), 135, 142–3.

Pearl Harbor, wrote a secret report on USN communications and security.⁸ Martell commented on US D/F operations and noted that the USN had successfully decrypted Japanese consular codes and weather reports. He was also relieved that the USN had begun using British encoding books for secure USN–RN communications. Martell remarked that USN officials took the threat of sabotage very seriously, but felt nonetheless that Pearl Harbor suffered from many security leaks, including unofficial ship signalling, careless talk and even ‘deductions by salesmen’. On the other hand, he reported quite favourably upon the state of USN radar, which even then was quite advanced, and was installed on several battleships, heavy cruisers and aircraft carriers, including the USS *Enterprise* and the USS *Lexington*.⁹ Such radar had a range of about 100 miles and operated at 200 MHz, 15 kW peak power. In addition, the USN used fire-control radar on some ships to control surface fire, and was also developing anti-aircraft fire-control radar along with ship/aircraft recognition equipment. Despite certain misgivings over the state of security at Pearl Harbor, it would seem that the British admired US innovations in the field of electronic surveillance.

In mid-November, Allied authorities learned about Japanese interest in Hawaii. On 14 November, the Australian Legation in Washington sent Canberra some reports it had received from BSC concerning Japanese activities in the Pacific, particularly in Hawaii.¹⁰ Historian Antony Best noted that BSC had seemingly received its information from an unidentified American source, and in its cover letter to the Australian Legation, BSC specifically requested that the FBI not be informed of the matter. It is possible that BSC had received information

⁸ PRO, ADM 223/505, Lt.-Cmdr. C.C. Martell, Assistant Naval Attaché (Pearl Harbor), ‘Report on U.S.N. Communications including Notes on Security’, Secret, October 1941.

⁹ Ibid. pp. 12–14, 17.

¹⁰ Best, *British Intelligence and the Japanese Challenge*, 186. Best cited National Archives of Australia, A3300/7/197A, Macmillan (Washington) to External Affairs (Canberra), Message no. 363/41, 14 Nov. 1941; and Ellis to Casey, 21 Oct. 1941.

derived from decrypts of Japanese diplomatic messages exchanged between Honolulu and Tokyo. It is known that the Americans were decrypting messages that revealed Japanese espionage in Hawaii. For example, the USN decrypted a message sent on 15 November from Tokyo to Honolulu, which made the following request: 'As relations between Japan and the United States are most critical, make your "ships in harbor report" irregular, but at a rate of twice a week.'¹¹ The USN also learned that Tokyo sent further instructions to Honolulu on 29 November: 'We have been receiving reports from you on ship movements, but in future will you also report even *when there are no movements*.'¹² Whatever the source of BSC's information, Allied authorities had to consider Japan's intentions in North Pacific.

Possible Predictions of a Pearl Harbor Attack, November–December 1941

In late November, according to some sources, British Intelligence seriously considered the possibility of a surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. British Intelligence knew that Japan's history of surprise attacks meant that *all* British and US possessions needed to be on full alert.¹³ A Japanese strike could occur anywhere, particularly as the Japanese fleet was operating under nominal radio silence. Sir Julian E. Ridsdale, MP, is perhaps one of the most important witnesses. In late 1941, he served as a MI2 intelligence officer within the War Office Directorate of Military Intelligence in London. His tasks included liaising with the SIS Far East section, the JIC and the War Cabinet. He has offered the following account of his experiences in his unpublished post-war memoirs:

Ten days before the attack on Malaya [i.e., 27 November 1941], there was a

¹¹ NARA, MMRB, RG 457, 190/36/9/2, Entry 9002, Box 9, SRH-012, 158.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ PRO, ADM 223/494, 'Pearl Harbor & the loss of Prince of Wales & Repulse', Top Secret ten-page handwritten report (c. 1945), 1. The report offers examples of previous Japanese surprise attacks: Port Arthur (1904), Mukden (1931), Shanghai (1932), and Peking (1937).

meeting of the Joint Intelligence Committee at 10 Downing Street. I attended the meeting, standing in for Dennys Chapman as the representative of MI2. The meeting was chaired by Bill Cavendish-Bentinck. . . . The Joint Intelligence Committee produced a number of estimates of the Japanese order of battle and capabilities through the second half of 1941. A constant factor in all of these was the assumption that 'the Main Fleet is likely to remain based in Japanese Waters'.

However, at the meeting it was reported that radio monitoring in Britain and the U.S.A. had begun losing track of the movements of the combined fleet units from the middle of November. . . . Because of this radio silence we concluded that the Japanese Fleet was now in a position to be considered a major threat to the American Fleet in Pearl Harbour. It was agreed we should alert the President of the United States, and Bill Cavendish-Bentinck agreed to act on the committee's decision. Indeed we agreed that a warning should go out that all Allied ports in the Pacific were liable to attack.¹⁴

Ridsdale certainly believed that Roosevelt was directly informed. His account also suggests the possibility that Churchill was privy to such intelligence, given that steps were taken to warn the Americans, and that Churchill took an interest in what was being passed to the Americans, but this cannot be certain.

Many years later, Ridsdale spoke to Victor (Bill) Cavendish-Bentinck about the JIC meeting and discussed whether or not the Americans had been informed:

It was inconceivable to us how the Americans had been taken by surprise at Pearl Harbour, especially after we had alerted the President of the United States. In 1987, when I met Bill Cavendish-Bentinck, by then the Duke of Portland, he assured me that he had passed the message on. The only valid reason that Bill and I could find was that Roosevelt had used this as an opportunity to bring the Americans into the War. In his defence, the President could not have possibly known that the Americans based at Pearl Harbour would be caught off guard.¹⁵

Clearly, both Ridsdale and Cavendish-Bentinck carefully considered the implications of the warning that they claimed Britain offered to the United States on the eve of the Pacific War. Ridsdale's recollections are confirmed by an independent source. Cavenish-Bentick gave extensive assistance to his close friend, writer Constantine Fitzgibbon, during the preparation

¹⁴ CAC, RIDS, Box 1, Memoirs of Sir Julian Ridsdale, Chapter One – Part Four, p. 42.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 43.

of Fitzgibbon's book, *Secret Intelligence in the Twentieth Century*. Fitzgibbon offered much the same account and attributed this to Cavendish-Bentinck.¹⁶

How would such information have been collected? The logical assumption would be some kind of D/F activity, on which, as we have seen, the British and Commonwealth networks were strong. However, there are indications that some of it may have come from inside the United States. The JIC strategic estimate of 27 November 1941 regarding a possible attack on Pearl Harbor, as reported by Ridsdale, seemingly agrees with one produced on the same date by British Security Coordination (BSC) in New York. Grace Garner, who in 1941 had served as secretary to William Stephenson, head of BSC, commented in 1998 on pre-Pearl Harbor intelligence. Her remarks merit careful consideration; she was privy to some of the most secret intelligence produced by the BSC throughout the Second World War. Garner explained that on 27 November BSC sent a telegram to London that contained the following text: 'Japanese negotiations off. Services expect action within two weeks.'¹⁷ The BSC internal history confirms that Stephenson sent such a telegram on the date in question.¹⁸ Yet Garner also explained that BSC shared information with the Americans and the British concerning Japanese plans for a 'massive' attack on Pearl Harbor. She stated that such intelligence came from 'various sources and observations, and actually watching what was happening in the Japanese embassy in Washington,' and from 'code intercepts' that conveyed instructions to the Japanese Fleet.¹⁹ Garner believed that by 27 November both human and communications intelligence allowed BSC to estimate the likelihood of a Pearl Harbor attack.

¹⁶ C. Fitzgibbon, *Secret Intelligence in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Stein and Day, 1976), 255.

¹⁷ Quoted in Macdonald, *The True Intrepid*, 288–9.

¹⁸ Stephenson (ed.), *British Security Coordination*, 217–8. See also Montgomery H. Hyde, *The Quiet Canadian: The Secret Service Story of Sir William Stephenson* (London: H. Hamilton, 1962), 213–14.

¹⁹ Quoted, Macdonald, *The True Intrepid*, 288–9.

Certainly, the BSC internal history states that Stephenson's team had penetrated Japanese diplomatic missions in the United States: 'BSC had contacts inside the Japanese Embassy in Washington and the Japanese Consulates in New York and San Francisco. Some success was also had in direct penetration of the Kurusu mission. . . . The agent employed in this instance was a British subject who had spent fifty years in Japan and spoke the language fluently.'²⁰ Reportedly, the British agent received information from Kurusu's secretary:

He contacted Mr. Yuki, Kurusu's secretary, and held with him a series of conversations in a Washington flat which had been previously wired for recording. . . . Yuki was convinced of his sincerity and spoke freely, telling him in so many words that Japan's attitude was an unalterable one and that the United States must either give way or face the consequences. The information obtained from the transcripts of the recordings . . . was conveyed each day to President Roosevelt. For the President it provided confirmation of Japan's attitude and of her future intentions which were becoming clearer and more alarming as each day went by.²¹

At the very least, the clandestine recordings suggested that Japan would wage war before accepting the United States' demands for a withdrawal from occupied territories in the Far East.

Whilst information from the transcripts was still arriving at the White House, President Roosevelt, through his son James, sent Stephenson a message containing intelligence unknown to either the British Embassy in Washington or the Foreign Office in London.²² That message prompted Stephenson to send his telegram to Menzies on 27 November, in which he warned of conflict with Japan within two weeks. According to H. Montgomery Hyde, an urgent telegram from London requested Stephenson to confirm the source of his information and he replied 'the President of the U.S.A.'²³ Apart from anticipating that war with Japan in early December was a likely prospect, it is possible that BSC's activities in Washington, combined with British

²⁰ Stephenson (ed.), *British Security Coordination*, 217.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 217–18.

²² *Ibid.*, 218.

²³ Hyde, *The Quiet Canadian*, 213.

communications intelligence, were a source of accurate speculation about an imminent Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Whatever the source of the information, other documents offer corroboration of some degree of British warning. They corroborate not only the idea of a British awareness about Pearl Harbor, but also the time frame and the conviction that such estimates were passed to Washington. The diary of British newspaper proprietor Cecil King also suggests that British warnings were shared with the Americans. King's diary entry for 17 December 1941 reports a conversation that he had with fellow newspaperman Hugh Cudlipp at a press luncheon held that day in London: 'Hugh [Cudlipp's] most sensational item was that we had given the American's five days warning on Pearl Harbor, but he did not know whether the message was ignored in Washington or further along the line.'²⁴ King's diary entry is worthy of consideration, given that both King and Cudlipp had excellent access in Whitehall at the highest level and regularly saw members of Churchill's cabinet. The report by King seems entirely compatible with the remarks made by Ridsdale, Fitzgibbon and Garner.

Canadian sources provide further confirmation of British strategic estimates seemingly made in the last week of November 1941. As noted, Murton Seymour described in his sworn affidavit how he learned of the Pearl Harbor attack during a private meeting in Ottawa on 1 December 1941. Seymour ran a covert air force recruitment programme in the United States throughout 1941 on behalf of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). As President of the Dominion Aeronautical Association Limited, a Canadian Crown corporation formed in January 1941, Seymour recruited US pilots and aircrew for service in Britain and Canada. This recruitment programme fell under the broad jurisdiction of the British Commonwealth Air

²⁴ Quoted in David Irving, *Churchill's War: Triumph in Adversity* (London: Focal Point, 2001), 215, note 50. King's diary is held at the Boston University Library and is currently closed to researchers owing to a change in trusteeship. The author awaits an opportunity to inspect the diary.

Training Plan (BCATP), which operated in Canada. On 30 November, Joseph L. Apedaile, a staff member of the Department of National Defence for Air, who served as both Civil Contracts Officer and Treasurer in the Dominion Aeronautical Association, requested that Seymour meet him the next day in Ottawa.

In his sworn affidavit, Seymour offered the following account of his meeting with Apedaile at the Chateau Laurier Hotel in Ottawa on 1 December 1941:

Mr. Apedaile informed me that British Military Intelligence had informed Ottawa that it was suspected that the Japanese would make a surprise air attack on Pearl Harbor on December 8th, 1941, and asked me what was the earliest date that we could hold a special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Association. . . . Mr. Apedaile then explained to me that if the attack did take place it obviously meant that the United States immediately would be involved in War with Japan, would probably become involved in the War with Germany and Italy and, therefore, they would require all the pilots that they could train and would probably, as did happen, ask Canada to return as many American pilots who were with the B.C.A.T.P. as could be spared. If this were to eventuate Mr. Apedaile said we should be prepared to immediately proceed to close out our activities in the United States and wind up the Canadian Aviation Bureau.²⁵

Apedaile requested that Seymour hold a special meeting as early as possible to advise the directors that the Association would close out its activities; no reason was to be given.

Seymour held such a meeting with members of the Canadian Aviation Bureau in New York on 6 December. When Seymour explained the purpose of the meeting, Apedaile, who was also present, 'professed complete ignorance'²⁶ Seymour later surmised that Apedaile's information came from either Major C.G. Power, Minister of National Defence for Air, or S.L. DeCarteret,

²⁵ SCM, Accession no. 1997.168, Seymour Affidavit, *In the Matter of the Attack on Pearl Harbour*, 6–7. Regarding the anticipated date of attack, 8 December 1941, Seymour offered the following explanation to Stanley M. Clark in a letter of 9 August 1963: 'British Military Intelligence had informed Ottawa that the Japanese would attack Pearl Harbour on December 8th which, because of the International Date Line, turned out to be December 7th.' See Exhibit 7 of Seymour's affidavit.

²⁶ Ibid., 7.

Deputy Minister of National Defence for Air.²⁷ Ultimately, the Dominion Aeronautical Association ended its US recruiting programme in early 1942.

After the war, Seymour made enquiries into Apedaile's information, although discretion and security prevailed over open discussion. Stanley M. Clark, QC, former Secretary of the Dominion Aeronautical Association, agreed to send the Association's 'Minute Book' to Seymour, but strongly urged him not to publish 'because of the then delicate political situation existing between Ottawa and Washington.'²⁸ No minutes of the 6 December meeting in New York were available: they had not been recorded, according to Clark. At an RCAF banquet in 1964, C.G. Power seemed to avoid a direct discussion of the matter with Seymour. In 1968, Seymour consulted his friend Lester Pearson, then Prime Minister of Canada, about his affidavit, but received no immediate answer. Finally, in a letter of 31 January 1972, Pearson confirmed what his intelligence sources in 'official quarters' had to say on the matter:

As for the truth of the story that 'British Military Intelligence' were able to state on December 1, 1941 that Pearl Harbour would be attacked on December 8, there is nothing that I have been able to find in the records of anyone having firm intelligence about the date. But the British (and the Americans) seem to have had enough communications and other intelligence at hand at that time to expect that an attack would be made in the near future on Pearl Harbour, quite possibly in early December.²⁹

Pearson could not say whether or not Roosevelt or the USN Chief received such intelligence. Moreover, he rejected revisionist ideas about Roosevelt and implied that the affidavit might best be left unpublished. Nonetheless, Pearson's sources suggested that both British and US

²⁷ Ibid., 5, 10.

²⁸ Ibid., 9.

²⁹ SCM, Accession no. 1997.168 (donated by Elizabeth Seymour), Right Honourable L.B. Pearson to Colonel Murton A. Seymour, OBE, QC, Letter, 31 Jan. 1972. The letter is not mentioned in Pearson's memoirs. See Lester B. Pearson, with John A. Munro and Alex I. Inglis (eds.), *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson*, 3 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972–75).

intelligence were beginning to point to a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in early December 1941.

The Canadian evidence merits some discussion. Seymour's affidavit appears quite credible when checked against archival sources. Primary evidence shows that it correctly describes the responsibilities of every cited person and institution, as well as his own position of responsibility in 1941.³⁰ Moreover, Joseph L. Apedaile, S.L. DeCarteret and C.G. Power had been close friends before the war and later served together in the Department of National Defence for Air. It is possible that Power trusted his wartime colleagues with intelligence that he received from the Canadian Legation in Washington, BSC in New York or British Intelligence in London. Linkages existed between Washington, London and Ottawa through the Canadian Legation, the BSC, External Affairs in Ottawa, and finally the BCATP, for which Power and his department were responsible.³¹ For example, in June 1941, the Canadian Legation informed BSC that US citizens serving in Canada's armed services would be released for US service in the event of the United States' entry into the war.³² That information may have inspired BSC to inform Power's Air Ministry, which was recruiting in the States, that a Pearl Harbor attack was anticipated. As another example, intelligence was sometimes passed through the Canadian Legation under the 'cover' of the British Purchasing Commission, which sometimes fronted BSC operations. A record book entitled 'Legation Despatches to External

³⁰ DHH, 181.003 (D3639), RCAF File no. 10, *Dominion Aeronautical Association, Ltd.*, 6–10; and DHH, 74/7, RCAF Personnel History III, *Recruiting in the United States of America*, 545–7, 572–4.

³¹ Canadian officials running the BCATP were also linked to Donovan and his COI staff. Donovan offered great assistance to the Canadian Aviation Bureau in New York, which recruited Americans for the Allied air services. The Bureau, which had originally been known as the 'Clayton Knight Committee', a clandestine recruiting centre operating out of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, had commenced official operations on 16 Aug. 1941. At that time, the former 'cover' of the 'Clayton Knight Committee' was dropped because American neutrality had become 'a mere nominal factor'. See, DHH, 181.009 (D3639), File 10: 'Dominion Aeronautical Association, Ltd.', 7–9.

³² QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Archive no. 2150, Ministerial Files C, Box 65, D1097, Canadian Legation (Washington) to Canadian Consulates, et al., Circular no. 3, June 1941.

Affairs, 1941' shows that about three despatches a month were sent from Washington to Ottawa under the heading 'British Purchasing Commission'.³³ One of those despatches was sent on 28 November, a date that is quite compatible with Apedaile's 30 November request for Seymour's Ottawa visit, but this is speculation.³⁴ In any case, it is not unreasonable to assume that important intelligence was shared with C.G. Power, who was responsible for so much strategic planning in Canada in 1941.

Furthermore, Seymour was wise to consult with Lester Pearson, because in 1941 Pearson enjoyed numerous contacts within the Allied intelligence community. As a member of External Affairs, he had contacts within the Canadian High Commission in London, the Canadian Legation in Washington, the BSC in New York and all three Canadian armed forces. He helped staff the BSC, created reporting structures for intelligence, and assisted with the creation of the Examination Unit.³⁵ Quite apart from the official sources that Pearson consulted on Seymour's behalf in 1972, Pearson's informed opinion may also have been based on his own experiences.

It is possible that the Allies derived some details concerning the Pearl Harbor attack from decrypted Japanese naval messages, but we cannot be certain of what was read, considering the primary evidence that is currently available. It is known that Station Cast, a USN communications intelligence unit based in Corregidor, Philippines, could partially read JN-25B traffic on a current basis in November 1941. On 16 November, Lieutenant John

³³ NAC, RG 25, B3, Vol. 2456, Canadian Legation (Washington), Record Book: 'Legation Despatches to External Affairs, 1941', Jan.-Dec. 1941.

³⁴ Ibid, Entry for despatch no. 3575, 28 Nov. 1941, 120. The record book also shows an interesting entry for 5 Dec. 1941 when the Legation sent External Affairs a despatch listed under the topic heading of US 'Coordination of Information'. Perhaps Donovan and COI had something important to pass on to the Canadians. The topic heading was subsequently stroked out and replaced with the heading 'Strategic Materials'. See Ibid., Entry for despatch no. 3636, 5 Dec. 1941, 122.

³⁵ Macdonald, *The True Intrepid*, p. 269; Bryden, *Best-Kept Secret*, 40-1, 77-80, 85-9, 91-2; Elliot, *Scarlet to Green*, 86, 91; DHH2, Little, C.H., Biographical File, 5; Wark, 'Cryptographic Innocence', 639-65.

Lietweiler, co-commander of Station Cast, confirmed current reading ability in a letter sent to OP-20-GY in Washington: 'We are reading enough current traffic to keep two translators very busy, i.e., with their code recovery efforts, etc. included.'³⁶ It is known that the Royal Navy could partially read JN-25B traffic with some intelligence value in November 1941. On 10 July 1942, Lieutenant-Commander C.N.R. Barham wrote a Most Secret report about JN-25B decryption: 'This was the book from which, as is now known, intelligence covering a wide field was produced in November 1941 and from March 1942 until its' supercession in June 1942.'³⁷

It is also known that US intelligence authorities used safecracking as a means to appropriate and photograph Japanese codebooks. According to Captain Laurance F. Safford, head of OP-20-G, in 1939 USN agents entered the safe of the Japanese Consulate in New York and over time photographed the Japanese diplomatic codebook kept within (in 1922, the same location had yielded a Japanese naval codebook).³⁸ According to Lee Strobel, an expert locksmith who in 1940 serviced safes for the Japanese Consulate in Los Angeles, an officer working with ONI convinced him in December 1940 to crack the Consulate's safe so that the Japanese naval codebook within could be examined.³⁹ On 28 May 1941, George Muller, a US

³⁶ NARA, MMRB, RG 38, Crane – Inactive Stations, 370/27/23/7, Box 15, 3200/1 – *NSRS Philippines, Operations Summaries*, Lt. John Lietwiler (Fort Mills, P.I.) to Lt. L.W. Parke (Navy Dept., Washington), Letter, 16 Nov. 1941, 1. The author originally found the Parke-Lietwiler letters at the National Archives II during his visit from 29 February to 3 March 2000. Lietwiler's letter to Parke is also discussed in a USN official history of the Philippines found in RG 38, 5750/4 – *NSRS Philippines, History, General*, 54. Historians continue to debate USN code-reading ability. Historian Stephen Budiansky assessed OP-20-GY status reports, concluding that only 3,800 JN-25B code groups, along with 2,500 additives (Additive 7), had been recovered by November 1941: 'It was far less than 10 percent of the total, nowhere near enough to read current traffic.' See Stephen Budiansky, *Battle of Wits: The Complete Story of Codebreaking in World War II* (New York: Free Press, 2000), 8. Yet Lietwiler's letter of 16 November to Parke clearly states that Station Cast was reading current traffic.

³⁷ PRO, ADM 223/496, Lt.-Cmdr. C.N.R. Barham, 'Japanese Cyphers – Notes', 10 Jul. 1942, 3.

³⁸ NARA, MMRB, RG 457, SRH Series, Entry 9002, SRH-149.

³⁹ Ladislav Farago, "POSTSCRIPT: New Lights on the Pearl Harbor Attack," *The Broken Seal: "Operation Magic" and the Secret Road to Pearl Harbor* (New York: Bantam, 1968), 392. Farago, explaining the lack of official American records on this matter, suggested that the officer working for ONI, whom Strobel named as Captain Webb, was a British agent and that if the British received the code, then they failed to inform the

Customs Service agent cooperating with the USN 12th Naval District in San Francisco, boarded the Japanese merchant vessel *Nisshin Maru II* and seized its codebooks, which were later sent to Washington.⁴⁰ In 1941, Lieutenant-Commander Alwin Kramer, a naval intelligence officer with OP-20-G, stole and made photo-prints of Japanese code books located in New York consulates.⁴¹ There is no evidence currently available proving that the Americans or their Allied counterparts stole the JN-25B codebook in 1941, although recovery of merchant codes or earlier naval codes may have assisted them with some Japanese terminology or code-structure.

Furthermore, in 1941 the USN intercepted a number of Japanese naval messages that some historians believe pointed to a Pearl Harbor attack. From September to December 1941, the USN intercepted over 26,000 Japanese naval messages of which about 90 percent were encrypted in JN-25B.⁴² It is not unreasonable to assume that British authorities also intercepted a sizable number of these messages, given Britain's position in the Far East and the ongoing intelligence exchanges with the Americans. NSA historian Frederick Parker observed that a number of these intercepted messages revealed Japanese plans and training exercises concerning the North Pacific. Parker believed that the USN could not read these messages when intercepted in 1941, but nevertheless summarized the intelligence value of the intercepts: "An objective extraordinarily far from Japan, the ambush of anchored capital ships, shallow-running torpedoes,

Americans. It seems more likely, however, that the Americans did not wish to disclose their sources for security reasons.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 393–5.

⁴¹ Layton, et al., *And I Was There*, 284.

⁴² USN document SRH-406, entitled *Pre-Pearl Harbor Japanese Naval Despatches*, states that out of 26,581 decrypts of messages intercepted between September and December 1941, 23,778 used JN-25B, 819 used JN-20-C, 631 used JN-39, 426 used JN-161, and 927 used JNA-20. These figures show that 89.5% of all decrypts had originally been encrypted in JN-25B. SRH-406 includes 188 Japanese despatches from 1941 that the USN decrypted and translated in 1945–46. The USN had selected these 188 despatches from a group of 2,413 translated despatches that, in turn, had been selected from the main collection of 26,581 decrypted despatches. The SRH-406 collection, in its final form, dates from 1945–46 and proves which messages the USN intercepted in 1941, but does not prove which messages or message-fragments were decrypted and translated in 1941. The author is grateful to Professor Brian Villa for locating an original copy of SRH-406. See NARA, MMRB, RG38, Crane Naval Support Group, 370/44/18/1, Box 183, 5830/115 – CNSG, *Pre-Pearl Harbor Japanese Naval Despatches*.

six major carriers in a strike force, carrier fuel stored on deck, and a demonstrated interest in the waters of the northern Pacific – all these pointed inexorably to Pearl Harbor.”⁴³ As a further example, on 25 November 1941, Admiral Yamamoto sent a message ordering the Strike Force to a mid-North Pacific rendezvous point. Seemingly, the Japanese offered important clues concerning their intentions in the North Pacific throughout late 1941. It is possible that decrypted message-fragments from Japanese fleet instructions or training exercises alerted the Allies, although this is speculation.

It is also possible that the estimated attack date, which the Allies seemingly produced before 27 November 1941, did not result from Allied decryption of a particular Japanese naval instruction. Admiral Yamamoto himself did not transmit the Strike Force attack date, which was 8 December, Tokyo time (known also as ‘X day), until 2 December.⁴⁴ Strategic estimates made before then, such as the one Seymour claimed to have received, may have based the attack date upon an assumed departure date from the Japanese Islands, as well as an average ship speed. Even after 2 December, the intercepted attack-date message would not have necessarily been decrypted and translated by Allied cryptanalysts, who only had partial reading ability in JN-25B, and a rather small Japanese language staff.

British estimates made before the *Kido Butai* had reached its North Pacific rendezvous point on 2 and 3 December, a pause in the voyage deemed necessary for both refuelling and awaiting Tokyo’s final attack decision,⁴⁵ were probably based on a variety of criteria. In terms of strategic analysis, it was clear that Japan would require a secure route to transport oil from

⁴³ Parker, “The Unsolved Messages,” 312.

⁴⁴ NARA, MMRB, RG 457, 190/36/26/4, Entry 9014, Box 144, SRN-115376.

⁴⁵ Combined Fleet Operational Order No. 5, issued by Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto on 25 November 1941, ordered the Strike Force to ‘advance to the standby point (42N, 170W) by the evening of 3 December,’ Tokyo time. See Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon (eds.), *The Pearl Harbor Papers: Inside the Japanese Plans*, c. 1993 (Dulles, VA: Brassey’s, 2000), 105.

the NEI if war came, and that the fleets at Singapore and Pearl Harbor posed a direct threat to such a route: these fleets might become the object of unannounced Japanese naval attacks, particularly as the Japanese aircraft carriers were under nominal radio silence.

Human intelligence may have revealed certain plans, such as the movement of a Japanese flotilla to Hitokappu Bay in the Kurile Islands, a likely point of departure for a trans-Pacific raid. For example, according to war veteran Peter Shepherd, who in 1941 had served as an RAF technician at Sungei Patani in northern Malaya, on 4 December 1941 he learned from a Japanese aviation engineer that the Strike Force was based in Hitokappu Bay and bound for Pearl Harbor.⁴⁶ On that day, Shepherd was ordered to stand-in for a crew member aboard an NEI civilian flight bound for Thailand, but the aircraft stopped in French Indochina for a layover. In a restaurant there, a drunken Japanese aviation engineer, a civilian, mistook Shepherd, who was in civilian clothes, for a Vichy French engineer and boasted to Shepherd that he had served until 24 November as a technical representative on a Japanese carrier which was part of a task force assembled in Hitokappu Bay. He told Shepherd that the task force would strike Pearl Harbor on 8 December, which would coincide with a Japanese attack on Malaya. He also produced a notebook and showed Shepherd some sketches he had made of the task force at anchorage in Hitokappu Bay, but when he left for the washroom, Shepherd took the sketches and went back immediately to the airfield. Shepherd returned to Malaya that evening and reported his findings to a British intelligence officer. On 5 December, he was flown to Kuala Lumpur, where he repeated his story to another British intelligence officer. After that, nothing more was said about the matter.

⁴⁶ John Hughes-Wilson, *Military Intelligence Blunders* (Carol & Graf, 1999), 117–20; and Peter J. Shepherd, *Three Days to Pearl: Incredible Encounter on the Eve of War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2000), 118–27.

Alternatively, radio intelligence may have revealed such ship movements. Prior to 26 November 1941, Station Cast in Corregidor, Philippines, reported bearings on the Japanese flagship carrier *Akagi* that were compatible with its voyage to the Kuriles, although there appears to be no record that cross bearings were taken to provide an exact 'fix' on the *Akagi*'s location.⁴⁷ In 1960, Captain J.W. Henning, a Dutch intelligence officer who in 1941 had served in *Kamer* 14 at Bandung, Java, wrote a report on the matter for the Military Historical Archive of The Hague, the Netherlands. Henning stated that 'from analysis of Japanese radio traffic, it was possible to conclude from the last week of November 1941, that there were large fleet concentrations near the Kuriles.'⁴⁸

Furthermore, the British may have intercepted diplomatic messages exchanged between Japan, Germany and Italy. British historian Stephen Roskill, drawing upon later JIC records, claimed that Germany and Italy had been informed of Japan's intentions. Roskill explained that Japan gave Germany and Italy several days warning of the impending attack on Pearl Harbor, and that on 28 November, German foreign minister Ribbentrop told the Japanese ambassador in Berlin that Japan should 'silently attack' the United States.⁴⁹ A combination of strategic analysis, human intelligence, traffic analysis and diplomatic intelligence may have led to meaningful estimates of Japanese intentions in the North Pacific.

⁴⁷ For example, see NARA II, MMRB, RG 38, 2000/1: NSRS Philippines, SI Genser, Msg Files, TESTM no. 141522, 14 Nov. 1941.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Layton, et al., *And I Was There*, 206. The original report is entitled 'Report of Captain J.W. Henning dated 18 July 1960'.

⁴⁹ CAC, ROSKILL 4/56, *Japan – Entry into War*. Roskill's remarks, based on information drawn from JIC 46/33, paragraph 83, are found on the second page of his handwritten draft entitled *Entry of Japan*. I am grateful to Brian Villa for suggesting an examination of Roskill's papers.

Possible Foreknowledge of a Pearl Harbor Attack, December 1941

British W/T intelligence in the first week of December 1941 seems to have made some even more specific estimates. Cavendish-Bentinck, JIC chairman in 1941, later declared that the possibility of a Japanese attack on Hawaii was discussed at a JIC meeting of 5 December: ‘We knew that they changed course. I remember presiding over a J.I.C. meeting and being told that a Japanese fleet was sailing in the direction of Hawaii, asking “Have we informed our transatlantic brethren?” and receiving an affirmative reply.’⁵⁰ Gil Murray, a Canadian wartime wireless operator, later lent credence to Cavendish-Bentinck’s remarks, but added that a radio blackout occurring after 6 December prevented further tracking of the Japanese vessels in the mid-Pacific: no one could be certain of naval movements after that date.⁵¹ William Casey, an US wartime intelligence officer who later became Director of Central Intelligence, confirmed that ‘The British had sent word that a Japanese fleet was steaming east towards Hawaii.’⁵² These statements, made by responsible members of the Allied intelligence community, concern reports made in early December 1941 and are more specific than the strategic estimates that had apparently been made by 27 November 1941. Both Cavendish-Bentinck and Casey discuss Japanese naval movements toward Hawaii, and Cavendish-Bentinck notes that the Japanese fleet had changed course by 5 December. It is indeed a fact that by 5 December the *Kido Butai* had changed its course from due east along the forty-second parallel to south by southeast toward Hawaii.⁵³ These statements seemingly point to the *tracking* of the *Kido Butai* across the North Pacific.

⁵⁰ Fitzgibbon, *Secret Intelligence in the Twentieth Century*, 255.

⁵¹ Murray, *The Invisible War*, 24–5, 44–5.

⁵² William Casey, *The Secret War against Hitler* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1989), 7.

⁵³ See the position reports of the 3rd Battleship Division in Goldstein and Dillon (eds.), *The Pearl Harbor Papers*, 258–9.

According to the war diary of Captain Johan E.M. Ranneft, Netherlands Naval Attaché in Washington in 1941, the Americans were also tracking Japanese vessels heading east across the Pacific. Ranneft was no ordinary Naval Attaché: he had provided the Americans with plans for the coveted Bofors Gun and later received a US Legion of Merit.⁵⁴ As a respected Naval Attaché, he had free access to the US Navy Department, including ONI. Apart from his credentials as a witness, his war diary constitutes contemporaneous primary evidence. In 1980, Ranneft translated a page of his war diary for historian John Toland. The diary entry for 2 December 1941 states that during an ONI conference at the Navy Department he was shown on a map the location of two Japanese carriers that had left Japan on an easterly course.⁵⁵

Ranneft's diary entry for 6 December states that the position of the Japanese carriers was now referenced to Honolulu:

At 1400 to the Navy Department, closed, except the O.N.I., where also night duty will take place. Everyone present on O.N.I. I speak to Director Admiral Wilkinson, Captain MacCollum, Lt. Cdr. Kramer. . . . They show me – on my request – the place of the 2 carriers (see 2–12–41) West of Honolulu. I ask what the idea is of these carriers on that place. The answer was: “perhaps in connection with Japanese rapports [sic] on eventual American actions.” There is not one of ours who speaks about a possible air attack on Honolulu. I myself did not think of it because I believed everyone on Honolulu to be 100% on the alert, as everyone here on O.N.I. There prevails a tense state of mind at O.N.I.⁵⁶

The significance of Ranneft's diary entry cannot be overestimated. ONI referenced the position of two Japanese carriers to Honolulu, not to the Aleutians, Mandates or Wake Island. The possibility of a Japanese strike on Honolulu was crystal clear, although Ranneft could not conceive that such an action was probable because of his belief in American preparedness.

⁵⁴ For example, see NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12147, BAD Washington to CinC A&WI (West Indies), Message no. 1255P/8, 8 Dec. 1941.

⁵⁵ FDRL, John Toland Papers, Series V: Infamy, Box 122, File: ‘Ranneft, Johan E.M.’, Ranneft War Diary, 2 Dec. 1941 (English translation by Ranneft).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 6 Dec. 1941. According to Toland's 1980 interview with Ranneft, on 6 December 1941, when Ranneft asked ONI staff about the current location of the Japanese carriers, they pointed on the map to a position less than 300 miles from Honolulu. Some historians may reject Ranneft's post-war remarks, but his contemporaneous diary entry clearly references the carrier positions to Honolulu.

The two ‘carriers’ may have been select vessels responsible for *Kido Butai* (Strike Force) communications, such as the flagship carrier *Akagi* and the battleship *Hiei*. To explore that prospect, we need to look at the communications techniques of the period.

But before indulging in such an analysis, it is useful to examine both wartime and post-war accounts suggesting that the intelligence community had not been surprised by any action that Japan took on 7 December 1941. In 1943, Captain Laurance F. Safford, head of OP-20-G, the USN’s principal intelligence unit in Washington, wrote that his organization had anticipated Japan’s intentions through to 7 December 1941:

The Navy Department had been given almost complete information and warning of the Japanese intentions through the Navy’s Radio Intelligence Organization (R.I.O.), which was directly under my command from 6 May 1936 until 14 February 1942. From 1 September 1941 through 7 December 1941 we were in a solid position. The Navy’s high-frequency direction-finder stations at Corregidor, Guam, Pearl Harbor, Dutch Harbor, Samoa, and Midway were keeping us informed as to the general locations and compositions of Japanese naval forces. . . . The Navy had solved the primary Japanese Fleet system [JN-25] to a partially readable extent, after being “out” for several months, and was also reading the “minor” Navy systems.⁵⁷

Safford stated that USN radio intelligence was in a ‘solid’ position and provided warning of Japan’s intentions. It is difficult to see why Safford would have made such positive claims if he had regarded any Japanese action, including the Pearl Harbor attack, as a complete surprise. Unfortunately, we are unable to inspect all the relevant D/F logs for the period 1–6 December 1941 because several appear to be either missing or still classified.⁵⁸

In 1944, Captain Jock de Marbois, who in 1941 had served in the RCN Foreign Intelligence Section, which after 1942 was known as the Operational Intelligence Centre

⁵⁷ NARA, MMRB, RG 38, CNSG, Box 196, 370/44/18/3, 5750/576, SRH-305, Capt. L.F. Safford, ‘The Undeclared War: History of R.I.’, 15 Nov. 1943, 20.

⁵⁸ For example, Station H, a USN D/F station at Oahu, Hawaii, kept an intercept log during the period in question, but pages 43 to 48, which cover 1–3 December 1941, have not been released by the security authorities. See Wilford, *Pearl Harbor Redefined*, 73. Some USN station records were destroyed when Japanese forces occupied American bases, notably Guam and Wake Island.

(OIC), wrote the following account: ‘This section of O.I.C. was fully prepared for eventualities in December, 1941, at the outbreak of the Japanese War. Such was far from being the case (in “Y” work and D/F) with regard to the U.S.N., who had F.C.C., Army, F.B.I., and Navy trying to carry out “Y” and D/F work on their Pacific Coast, all independently.’⁵⁹ It is possible that de Marbois simply meant that the RCN had been fully prepared to collect intelligence upon the outbreak of the Pacific War. Like Safford, however, he boasted that his intelligence organization was fully prepared at the time and he made no mention of being caught off guard by Japan’s actions. Again, we are unable to inspect the relevant D/F logs for the period in question: these logs do not appear in either Canadian or British archival collections.

In 1960, General Hein Ter Poorten, a Dutch army officer who in 1941 had served in the NEI, deposited a note with the Royal Netherlands Army Archives in Amsterdam. Ter Poorten stated that on 4 December 1941 he had sent several reports to Washington concerning possible attacks on both Pearl Harbor and the Philippines.⁶⁰ Historian John Toland, who discussed Ter Poorten’s account in his book *Infamy*, also provided the following testimony from another Dutch official: ‘during a meeting in 1943 Vice Admiral Conrad E.L. Helfrich of the Royal Netherlands Navy expressed wonder that the Americans had been surprised at Pearl Harbor. The Dutch, Helfrich said, had broken the code and knew that the Japanese were going to strike Pearl Harbor.’⁶¹ Helfrich also asserted that the Dutch government had forewarned the US government. Perhaps NEI intelligence staff had used cryptanalysis, D/F and submarine patrols to gather important intelligence on the eve of the Pacific War.

⁵⁹ NAC, RG 24, D1b, Vol. 3807, File 1008–75–44 (vol. 2), Capt. J.M. de Marbois to Asst. Chief of Naval Staff, Most Secret memorandum: ‘Orange “Y” in Canada’, 18 Feb. 1944.

⁶⁰ Ter Poorten’s note, dated 23 July 1960, is discussed in Toland, *Infamy*, 290–1; and John Costello, *Days of Infamy* (New York: Pocket Books, 1994), 316, and notes 57–8, 416–7.

⁶¹ Toland, *Infamy*, 317–8.

In 1985, a Canadian veteran of the Pacific War suggested during an interview that US intelligence staff had suspected that Pearl Harbor might be attacked. Lieutenant Edward A. MacFayden, RCN, had served in late 1941 aboard HMCS *Prince Robert* during its voyage from Hong Kong to Esquimalt via Manila and Pearl Harbor. MacFayden claimed that two US intelligence officers joined the *Prince Robert* in Manila and later went ashore at Pearl Harbor, only to be the last people to rejoin the ship when it left just days before the attack: the Americans said they were not staying at Pearl Harbor as they had an idea of what might happen.⁶² MacFayden's comments, if accurate, raise the question of whether or not the two Americans acted on personal intuition or on information received in either Manila or Pearl Harbor.⁶³ But historians must approach MacFayden's anecdotal evidence with caution, as he made at least two suspect claims during his interview. He believed that the *Prince Robert* used radar to detect Japanese vessels during the voyage from Manila to Pearl Harbor, even though his ship was probably many hundreds of miles away from such vessels. He also believed that a Japanese aircraft carrier shadowed the *Prince Robert* across the North Pacific, which is clearly untrue.

In 1995, Helen E. Hamman, daughter of Don C. Smith, who in 1941 had directed the War Service for the American Red Cross, wrote a letter to US President Bill Clinton in which she claimed that her father had received forewarning of the Pearl Harbor attack from Roosevelt.⁶⁴ That year, Hamman's anecdotal evidence was also included in the Dorn Report, which dealt with a proposal to advance posthumously the wartime ranks of Rear-Admiral

⁶² DHH, MacFayden, E.A., Lt., Biographical File, 'Report of Interview with Lieutenant Edward Arnold MacFayden, Royal Canadian Navy (Retired) in Victoria, British Columbia', 31 Jul. 1985.

⁶³ Considering intelligence available in the Philippines, Dwayne Whitlock, who in 1941 had served as a USN radioman and traffic analyst at Station Cast, asserts that neither traffic analysis nor cryptanalysis provided any foreknowledge of the Pearl Harbor attack. See Dwayne Whitlock, 'Station "C" and Fleet Radio Unit Melbourne (Frummel) Revisited', *Cryptolog* 14.2 (Spring 1993): 1–19.

⁶⁴ Daryl S. Borquist, 'Advance Warning? The RED CROSS Connection', *Naval History* 13.3 (May/June 1999).

Husband E. Kimmel and Lieutenant-General Walter C. Short, the Hawaiian commanders who had been blamed for the Pearl Harbor disaster.

Hamman recalled her father's remarks about his meeting with Roosevelt at the White House shortly before the Pearl Harbor attack. Allegedly, Roosevelt told Smith that his intelligence staff had informed him of an impending Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt anticipated many casualties and wanted Smith to organize shipments of Red Cross medical supplies to Hawaii, but emphasized that no naval, military or Red Cross officials there were to be informed. According to Hamman, when Smith protested these actions, Roosevelt told him that 'the American people would never agree to enter the war in Europe unless they were attack[ed] within their own borders.' Hamman explained that her father followed Roosevelt's orders, but spent many years 'contemplating this action which he considered ethically and morally wrong.' In support of Hamman's account, a 1941–42 Red Cross financial report states that before 7 December 1941, 'unbeknown save to very few', Hawaii received \$50,000 of 'vital medical supplies and drugs' and \$25,000 of first aid equipment from the Washington Red Cross headquarters.⁶⁵ Needless to say, Hamman's account is one of the most controversial yet to appear in Pearl Harbor studies.

More recently, post-war interviews with some veterans of communications intelligence suggest that Pearl Harbor was seen as a possible target on the eve of the Pacific War. According to historian Richard Aldrich, some British veterans claim that the FECB shared a pre-Pearl Harbor estimate with London.⁶⁶ The author is aware of other post-war interviews which suggest that by 3 December the Esquimalt station believed a Pearl Harbor attack was possible, and that

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Aldrich, *Intelligence*, 88.

by 5 December it believed such an attack was imminent and so informed London.⁶⁷ Perhaps Esquimalt D/F staff, working with British or US stations, detected Japanese vessels changing course in the North Pacific during that week. Once again, such claims are beyond verification because the relevant archival records appear to be classified.

Radio Silence and Intercepted Transmissions

The question of radio silence must now be addressed to explain whether such tracking was possible.⁶⁸ To begin with, in 1941, periods of nominal radio silence did not prevent either the Japanese or the Allies from transmitting on certain frequencies at low-power levels considered inaudible to the enemy. The Japanese Navy sometimes used low-power, low-frequency (LF) transmissions when in harbour, as these were considered inaudible over great distance.⁶⁹ Moreover, the Japanese Navy ordered the 6th Fleet, a submarine unit that served with the *Kido Butai*, to maintain ‘wartime radio silence on shortwave’ (high frequency or HF) from 11 November 1941.⁷⁰ The 6th Fleet submarines were not prohibited from using LF during their period of nominal radio silence. For their part, US forces sometimes used HF ship-to-air voice communications, believing that such transmissions were short-range or limited to the

⁶⁷ For examples of direct communications from Esquimalt to the Admiralty, see NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12151, SO(I) Esquimalt to Admiralty, Message no. 0401Z/30, 30 Nov. 1941; and NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12152, Esquimalt to Admiralty, Message no. 0401Z/5, 5 Dec. 1941. Message no. 0401Z/30, dated 30 November, reports the route of the merchant vessel *Salabangka* across the North Pacific to Hong Kong. That route crossed the track of the *Kido Butai*, but it is unclear from the message what dates the *Salabangka* was sailing.

⁶⁸ The assessment of Japanese radio silence and communications procedures presented in this study draws upon the following accounts: Wilford, *Pearl Harbor Redefined*, 68–83; and Brian Villa and Timothy Wilford, ‘Warning at Pearl Harbor: Leslie Grogan and the Tracking of the *Kido Butai*,’ *The Northern Mariner* 11.2 (April 2001): 1–17.

⁶⁹ NARA, MMRB, RG 80, PHLO Records, 370/21/17/5, Entry 167F, Box 41, Lt. Cmdr. Edwin T. Layton, *Memorandum for the Commission*, 5 Jan. 1942. Layton, as USN Pacific Fleet Intelligence Officer, explained to the Roberts Commission how the Japanese Navy, whilst in port, successfully used low-power LF harbour frequencies to prevent long-range interception. Layton, however, was not entirely correct. Sometimes, low-power LF transmissions propagate great distances, especially at night.

⁷⁰ NARA, MMRB, RG 457, 190/36/26/4, Entry 9014, Box 147, SRN-117687.

horizon.⁷¹ On occasion, the Japanese, upon intercepting these transmissions well beyond their intended range, ordered military alerts in the belief that the Americans were close at hand. Furthermore, a USN despatch of 17 December 1941 permitted the 13th Naval District to use HF frequencies above 5 MHz during periods of radio silence.⁷² Clearly, for both sides, certain transmissions were allowed during periods of nominal radio silence.

We should also note that radio propagation was exceptionally good in 1941. Ionospheric propagation characteristics were excellent according to reports produced by the United States National Bureau of Standards (NBS) in that year.⁷³ The ionosphere allowed radio signals to ‘skip’ great distances.⁷⁴ It is not surprising that Captain Fuchida Mitsuo, commanding the air groups of Carrier Division 1 during the Pearl Harbor attack, learned that a message he had transmitted from his fighter aircraft to his carrier, with the request that it be relayed to Tokyo, was heard both by Admiral Yamamoto aboard the *Nagato* and by the Naval General Staff in

⁷¹ Layton, et al, *And I Was There*, 369.

⁷² National Archives and Records Administration – Pacific Alaska Region (NARA-PAR), Seattle, Washington, RG 181, 13th Naval District Commandant’s Office, Regular Navy Files, 1941, 13/12/7, Entry 1, Box 9, A6–2, COM13 to RDO Puget Sound and other naval sections, Memorandum, 17 Dec. 1941.

⁷³ For example, see National Bureau of Standards (NBS), ‘Predictions of Useful Distances for Amateur Radio Communications in January, February and March, 1941,’ *QST* 25.1 (Jan. 1941): 32–3; NBS, ‘Predictions of Useful Distances for Amateur Radio Communications in April, May and June, 1941,’ *QST* 25.4 (Apr. 1941): 46–7; NBS, ‘Predictions of Useful Distances for Amateur Radio Communications in July, August and September, 1941,’ *QST* 25.7 (Jul. 1941): 24–5; and NBS, ‘Predictions of Useful Distances for Amateur Radio Communications in October, November and December, 1941,’ *QST* 25.10 (Oct. 1941): 41–2.

⁷⁴ LF, also known as long wave, usually denotes frequencies from about 30 to 300 kHz (kilohertz or kilocycles). MF, also known as medium wave, usually denotes frequencies from about 300 to 3,000 kHz. HF, also known as short wave, usually denotes frequencies from about 3,000 to 30,000 kHz (or 3 to 30 MHz, one megahertz representing 1,000 kilohertz). In 1941, different distinctions sometimes applied to radio frequencies. For example, LF was sometimes considered to extend up to 500 kHz. See NAC, RG 24, D11, Vol. 11764, File PC 010–9–2, COPC (Esquimalt) to Air Officer Commanding, Western Air Command (Victoria), Secret letter, 12 Mar. 1941. Lower frequencies propagate well along the earth’s surface, particularly when high power is used. At night, lower frequencies sometimes propagate as sky waves or ‘skip,’ refracting between the earth’s surface and the ionosphere. Higher frequencies, even at low power, propagate exceptionally well as ‘skip’ if the time of day is correct for the frequency in use. For example, 3,000 to 5,000 kHz HF signals ‘skip’ better at night, whereas 12,000 to 18,000 kHz HF signals ‘skip’ better during daylight hours.

Tokyo *before* the long-distance retransmission of the message. Fuchida later commented that this was ‘surely a long distance record for such a low-powered transmission from an airplane.’⁷⁵

Furthermore, the Japanese Navy allowed a number of exceptions to complete radio silence during clandestine operations. A naval despatch of 24 October 1941 addressed to the 1st Air Fleet, which led the *Kido Butai*, emphasized the use of broadcasts to hide fleet activity during communications tests, but provided for radio communications *from* the Strike Force *to* other forces; such transmissions were to be sent through the *Hiei*, flagship of Battleship Division 3.⁷⁶ On 5 November, Admiral Yamamoto issued his *Combined Fleet Top Secret Operation Order No. 1* (revised on 17 November), which outlined procedures for the entire Combined Fleet, including operational task forces. In terms of broadcasting strategies, Yamamoto’s order directed the Tokyo Communications Unit (TOTSU), which the 1st Air Fleet communicated with directly and exclusively, to broadcast constantly on 4.175 MHz, 8.350 MHz and 16.7 MHz, and at 30 minute intervals on 1.744 MHz from 0100 to 1800 hours daily.⁷⁷ The same order outlined the following strategy for operational task forces: ‘Broadcasting will be the principal means of communicating with an operational force. Acknowledgement will be required when there is uncertainty concerning receipt of the message or when confirmation is required because the message is especially important.’⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Fuchida Mitsuo, ‘The Attack on Pearl Harbor,’ in Raymond O’Connor (ed.), *The Japanese Navy in World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1971), 24. See also Villa and Wilford, ‘Warning at Pearl Harbor,’ 10.

⁷⁶ NARA, MMRB, RG 457, 190/36/11/4, Entry 9002, Box 120, SRH-406, *Pre-Pearl Harbor Japanese Naval Despatches*, Despatch no. 436, 24 Oct. 1941, 39.

⁷⁷ MacArthur Memorial Library (MML), The MacArthur Archives, Reel 547, CA *Nachi* Papers, *Combined Fleet Top Secret Operation Order No. 1, Revision of 17 November 1941*, 2/46–49, 2/63, 19, 26. I am grateful to Brian Villa for locating and sharing these documents.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 2/43, 17. Another excerpt from *Yamamoto’s Combined Fleet Secret Order Number One* shows that even the Strike Force followed radio silence at the discretion of its commander: ‘The STRIKING FORCE, in accordance with provisions to be decided by its Commander, will maintain strict radio silence from the time of their departure from the INLAND SEA. Their communications will be handled entirely on the general broadcast communications net.’ See NARA, MMRB, RG 38, CNSG, 370/44/16/2, Box 94, 5750/37, ‘Exempts from Capt. Layton Files’.

A despatch of 25 November confirmed that emergency communications were possible during radio silence: ‘From 26 November, ships of Combined Fleet will observe radio communications procedure as follows. . . . 1. Except in extreme emergency the Main Force and its attached force will cease communicating. 2. Other forces are at the discretion of their respective commanders. 3. Supply ships, etc., will report directly to parties concerned.’⁷⁹ All three points contained provisions for ships to break radio silence. All told, during periods of nominal radio silence, the Japanese Navy permitted transmissions during extreme emergencies, during situations demanding the acknowledgement of especially important messages, or at the discretion of commanding officers.

The *Kido Butai* faced those circumstances as it sailed under storm conditions to its rendezvous point in the North Pacific. Spread out over 360 square miles of ocean by day and 90 square miles by night during its voyage, it coped with fog, storms and a ban on night illumination.⁸⁰ Under these conditions, the force had to refuel and to await Admiral Yamamoto’s message concerning the attack date. Low-power radio, considered inaudible to the enemy, may have provided a means to regroup for refuelling and to acknowledge Yamamoto’s most important operational message. That is not to say that the ships’ main transmitters were necessarily in use: post-war interviews with *Kido Butai* veterans indicate that such principal transmitters were disabled and sealed during the voyage.⁸¹ If the main transmitters were not reactivated during the voyage, then it is possible that low-power units, or receiver-keyer-

⁷⁹ NARA, MMRB, RG 457, 190/36/26/4, Entry 9014, Box 146, SRN-116866; Quoted in Frederick D. Parker, *Pearl Harbor Revisited: United States Navy Communications Intelligence, 1924–1941*, United States Cryptologic History, Series IV, World War II, Vol. 6 (Washington, DC: Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency, 1994), 62.

⁸⁰ I am grateful to Brian Villa, who originally made this observation. Villa examined a seemingly authoritative convoy-map of the *Kido Butai* found in Goldstein and Dillon (eds.), *The Pearl Harbor Papers*, 187.

⁸¹ Prange, et al., *At Dawn We Slept*, 427–8, and endnote 32, 772.

transmitter units for automatic repeat-back of mainland operational broadcasts, were used for a limited number of absolutely essential transmissions.

Some USN intercepts suggest that the *Kido Butai* and associated support vessels may have transmitted some radio messages during the voyage to Hawaii.⁸² Arguably, the most important intercept concerned the flagship carrier *Akagi*. On 30 November 1941, Station Hypo, a USN communications intelligence centre in Hawaii, reported that the *Akagi* conversed with its *Marus*: 'The only tactical circuit heard today was one with AKAGI and several MARUS.'⁸³

The Pearl Harbor Congressional Hearings later commented on the meaning of such traffic:

The significance of the term, "tactical circuit" is that the vessel itself, that is, the AKAGI, was using its own radio to call up and work directly the other vessels rather than work them through shore stations via the broadcast method which was the common practice in Japanese communications. The working of the AKAGI with the Marus, indicated that she was making arrangements for fuel or some administrative function, since a carrier would rarely address a Maru.⁸⁴

The intercepted *Akagi* traffic is perhaps the most important indication that the Strike Force may have made a few necessary transmissions during a period of nominal radio silence.

It is unlikely that *all* the USN intercepts represented Japanese radio deception. In the case of the *Akagi*, 'tactical' traffic with its *Marus* seemed to reflect operations far away from home, rather than stationary anchorage in homeports as Japanese deception was trying to convey using routine call signs.⁸⁵ As the Congressional Hearings suggest, oil tankers were the type of *Marus* supporting an aircraft carrier like the *Akagi*. The Japanese would not be likely to have

⁸² For several examples, see Wilford, *Pearl Harbor Redefined*, 72–3.

⁸³ NARA, MMRB, RG 38, Crane – Inactive Stations, 370/27/23/5, Box 3, 5510/4 – NAVSECGRU, *Fourteenth Naval District Combat Intelligence Unit – Traffic Intelligence Summaries: 16 July to 31 Dec 1941*, Communications Intelligence Summary, 30 Nov. 1941.

⁸⁴ *Hearings*, Proceedings of the Hewitt Inquiry (206), 515.

⁸⁵ For examples of such radio deception, see Wilford, *Pearl Harbor Redefined*, 68–9. From 14 November to 5 December 1941, Station Cast, a USN intercept station in Corregidor, Philippines, reported that its bearings on the flagship carrier *Akagi* ranged from 026 to 030: these bearings passed through both Kyushu and the Kuriles, but after 26 November the *Akagi* was sailing across the North Pacific. Rear-Admiral Ryunosuke Kusaka, Chief of Staff of the 1st Air Fleet in 1941, later explained that he had ordered false radio transmissions to be sent so as to pretend that the Strike Force had never left Japan.

sent a false message indicating that the *Akagi* was conversing on a ‘tactical circuit’ with *Marus* when previous false messages were trying to convince Allied naval intelligence that the carriers were in home waters. Furthermore, Joseph J. Rochefort, commanding officer of Station Hypo at Pearl Harbor in 1941, later claimed that his staff had not been deceived by Japanese radio deception prior to the Pearl Harbor attack.

Provision had also been made for the *Kido Butai* to both send and receive alert broadcasts on low frequency (LF). As early as 6 November, Tokyo D/F Control had explained to the 2nd Fleet that it had transmitted inappropriately on 92 kHz, an LF transmitting frequency that had already been reserved for the Strike Force.⁸⁶ On 16 November 1941, the Combined Fleet issued ‘Striking Force Operation Order # 1,’ which defined communication bands: ‘Commencing 0000 on 19 November, “Battle Control” effective for short wave frequencies and “Alert Control” for long wave.’⁸⁷ LF was reserved for alerts because it could reach most ships and submarines around the clock, provided sufficient power was used.⁸⁸ ‘Striking Force Operation Order #1’ was the only Strike Force order copied to Tokyo D/F Control, which needed to monitor Strike Force communications and positions. In 1941, the Japanese armed forces also used automatic re-transmission equipment to ‘repeat-back’ radio messages originating from Japanese shore stations.⁸⁹ The *Kido Butai* probably had the capability to receive important radio messages from

⁸⁶ NARA, MMRB, RG 457, 190/36/11/4, Entry 9002, Box 120, SRH-406, Message No. 259, 6 Nov. 1941, 41.

⁸⁷ NARA, MMRB, RG 457, 190/36/26/4, Entry 9014, Box 144, SRN-115397.

⁸⁸ For examples of how Japanese shore stations broadcast LF naval messages in 1941, see *Hearings*, part 18, 3340–1; Station H Chronology, 5 Dec. 1941, 32–3, quoted in Wilford, *Pearl Harbor Redefined*, 79; and Station H Supervisor’s Report, Day Watch, 6 Dec. 1941, 39, quoted in Wilford, *Pearl Harbor Redefined*, 79. For examples of how Japanese shore stations broadcast HF naval messages in 1941, see Goldstein and Dillon (eds.), *The Pearl Harbor Papers*, 297; and Parker, *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, 63.

⁸⁹ NARA, MMRB, RG 38, Crane – Inactive Stations, 370/27/23/5, Box 3, 5510/4, Communications Intelligence Summary, 29 Nov. 1941; and Station H Supervisor’s Report, Eve Watch, 2 Dec. 1941, 15, quoted in Wilford, *Pearl Harbor Redefined*, 79. In 1941, the Japanese were not alone in their use of automatic ‘repeat-back’ equipment for simultaneous re-transmission of radio messages. USN Pacific Coast stations also employed the technique to great advantage. See NARA-PAR, RG 181, 13th Naval District Commandant’s Office, Regular Navy Files, 1941, Entry 1, Box 9, A6–1/A1–1, COM11 to COM12, Mailgram no. 080037, 10 Jul. 1941. As well, British

Japanese shore stations (whether on HF or LF) and to ‘repeat-back’ these messages simultaneously on a local low-power LF frequency: such a technique would ensure that submarines and smaller craft received the original mainland broadcasts. In terms of historical verification, the radio logs of the flagship carrier *Akagi* and the battleship *Hiei*, the only two vessels responsible for *Kido Butai* communications, would definitely merit examination, but these logs did not survive the Pacific War.

However, several days before the Pearl Harbor attack, radio officers aboard an American ocean liner claimed to have intercepted Japanese ‘repeat-back’ transmissions originating from the North Pacific and documented the incident. According to Leslie Grogan, 2nd Radio Officer aboard the SS *Lurline*, a passenger liner that left Los Angeles on 28 November bound for Honolulu, arriving there on 3 December, ‘repeat-back’ transmissions in Japanese code were detected in the North Pacific from 30 November to 2 December.⁹⁰ Grogan and Chief Radio Officer Rudy Apslund copied Japanese coded signals during three consecutive evenings on 375 kHz and took bearings using their ship’s direction-finding equipment. These low-power LF signals were a simultaneous ‘repeat-back’ of signals originating from high-power HF Japanese

naval authorities made use of portable 12-Volt transmitter-receiver sets on certain ships. See NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12152, CinC A&WI (West Indies) to BATM Ottawa, Message no. 1027Q/5, 5 Dec. 1941.

⁹⁰ The officers of the SS *Lurline* made two reports. The first report, composed by radio officers Leslie Grogan and Rudy Apslund, was presented to the Office of Naval Intelligence in Honolulu on 3 December 1941. The National Archives in San Bruno, California, later held one copy of the 3 December report, but a withdrawal slip there indicates that it was removed some time ago. In 1967, Leslie Grogan showed historian Ladislav Farago a copy of the 3 December report. In summary, the *Lurline* report of 3 December 1941 is a true historical document, but is not available at present, although its principal author later described its contents. The second report, a ‘Record for Posterity’ composed by Leslie Grogan using notes made during the voyage to Honolulu, was submitted to the Matson Navigation Company in San Francisco on 10 December 1941, after a USN boarding party removed the *Lurline*’s ship logs. Grogan’s 10 December report is less detailed than the 3 December report, judging by Grogan’s remarks to Ladislav Farago, but is available in certain archival collections. See FDRL, John Toland Papers, SS *Lurline* File no. 2. Reportedly, the Matson Navigation Company has the original 10 December report. Historians have offered various assessments of Grogan’s reports: Ladislav Farago, ‘POSTSCRIPT,’ *The Broken Seal*, 379–402; A.J. Barker, *Pearl Harbor* (New York: Ballantine, 1969), 81; Toland, *Infamy*, 278–80, 285; Layton, et al., *And I Was There*, 261–2; Gordon W. Prange, with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1986), 52–3; John Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded: The Secret History of American Intelligence and the Japanese Navy in World War II* (New York: Random House, 1995), 172; Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, 196–8; Wilford, *Pearl Harbor Redefined*, 75–83; and Villa and Wilford, ‘Warning at Pearl Harbor,’ 1–17.

shore stations. The ‘repeat-back’ signals emanated from the North Pacific, northwest of Honolulu, but Grogan knew that they were not from Japan. The 375 kHz low-power LF signals could only propagate at night, and Tokyo was in daylight when Grogan and Apslund copied the signals each night from 8 PM to 9 PM, ship’s time. The signals had to originate from a more nearby North Pacific location that was also under darkness, just like the SS *Lurline*.⁹¹

Using direction-finding equipment, Grogan detected the eastward progression of these 375 kHz ‘repeat-back’ signals, noting that the movement stopped by the evening of 2 December, which is when the *Kido Butai* paused for refuelling and awaited Yamamoto’s attack-date message.⁹² 375 kHz was an excellent choice for a clandestine LF alert-broadcast frequency: it had been reserved by international agreement for maritime direction-finding.⁹³ Shore stations and ships used 375 kHz as a beacon frequency for direction finding and navigation.⁹⁴ From the Japanese perspective, the *Kido Butai* ‘repeat-back’ alerts on 375 kHz, if intercepted, would likely be mistaken for direction-finding beacon signals. That might have been the case if the *Kido Butai* ‘repeat-back’ alerts had been sent a few hours later each evening when Japan was also under darkness; anyone intercepting the 375 kHz signals at that time of night might have mistaken them as originating from Japan rather than from the North Pacific. On 3 December 1941, Grogan and Apslund gave a report on these transmissions to USN intelligence staff in Honolulu, although the original report is not available for inspection at present because it was

⁹¹ Villa and Wilford, ‘Warning at Pearl Harbor,’ 5–6.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Dale Pollack, ‘High-Frequency Transmission and Reception,’ in Keith Henney (ed.), *The Radio Engineering Handbook*, 3rd ed. (New York, London: McGraw-Hill, 1941), Table II, 535.

⁹⁴ In 1941, the USN also exchanged and collected radio intelligence on 375 kHz. See NARA, MMRB, RG38, Crane – Inactive Stations, 370/27/23/7, Box 15, 1300/1 – *NSRS Philippines, Assignment & Distribution*, Letter dated 6 October 1941, from Lt. John Lietwiler, Fort Mills, Philippines, to Lt. Robert Densford, Navy Dept., Washington; and W.J. Holmes, *Double-Edged Secrets: U.S. Naval Intelligence Operations in the Pacific during World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press 1979) pp. 19–20. Furthermore, in late 1941, British and Canadian intelligence staff monitored German U-Boats that used the nearby frequency of 384 kHz as a homing signal. See NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12151, SSO to DNI Ottawa, Message no. 1944Z/3, 3 December 1941; and Vol. 12149, NSHQ (Ottawa) to Halifax W/T, Message no. 2128Z/7, 7 December 1941.

withdrawn from the United States archives some years ago. On 10 December, Grogan submitted a 'Record for Posterity', which he had begun writing before the Pearl Harbor attack, to his employers in San Francisco. In that report, which is still available in some archival collections, Grogan outlined some of his observations concerning the 'repeat-back' transmissions, thereby providing at least some record of what happened: on 10 December, a USN boarding party removed the *Lurline*'s logs, which were never returned.

In 1967–68, Grogan and his lifelong friend, H.W. Dickow, a US electronics specialist, shared information about the Japanese transmissions with historian Ladislav Farago. Grogan noted that 'It was only because the 375-kilocycle signals, transmitted from one or more Japanese ships of the Striking Force, were heard on *successive* nights that the *Lurline*'s Radio Officer was able to confirm his original belief to the extent that he had discovered a group of moving objects.'⁹⁵ In a letter to Farago, Dickow emphasized how the timing of the Japanese signals had assisted Grogan in his deductions:

He was on watch between 8 P.M. until midnight, and from 8 A.M. until noon. *It was only because he heard the Japanese signals between 8 P.M. and 9 P.M.* that he was able to evaluate, *with absolute certainty*, that the Japanese had perpetuated a hoax. Signals transmitted from Japan during the daylight hours there *can not* be picked up by a ship at sea during the hours of 8 P.M. and 9 P.M. (ship's time) in the Pacific. . . . Grogan instinctively knew that he could not pick up a signal from the Japanese homeland between 8 P.M. and 9 P.M. *Lurline* time, *and this aroused him to action*. Then he went to his direction finder, and located the Japanese ships. It was only on the second and third nights of his continued search with the D-F that he found he was receiving signals from a *moving target*, and that the movement was *away from Japan* and towards the *east* (Hawaii).⁹⁶

Apparently, Grogan's long experience as a radio officer in the Pacific had served him well on the eve of the Pearl Harbor attack.

⁹⁵ Farago, 'POSTSCRIPT,' *The Broken Seal*, 379–402.

⁹⁶ Boston University (Mass., USA), Special Collections, Farago Papers, Box 50, Folder 2, H.W. Dickow to Ladislav Farago, Letter, 24 Jul. 1968. The author is grateful to Brian Villa for locating and sharing this letter.

If historians accept the Grogan reports as valid evidence, then the remarks of Cavendish-Bentinck and Casey are even more credible. Seemingly, during a period of nominal radio silence, the *Kido Butai* transmitted certain signals, as it was permitted to do in extreme emergencies, situations demanding acknowledgement of important orders, or cases subject to the provisions of its commander, and these signals were intercepted. British estimates concerning the movements of a Japanese naval fleet in the North Pacific during the first week of December 1941 appear to be based on radio direction finding.

Conclusions

Multiple sources suggest that the Pearl Harbor attack did not surprise the entire Allied and US intelligence community. As early as August 1941, the Popov questionnaire demonstrated Axis interest in Pearl Harbor. In October, the British were clearly engaged in making security estimates of the base, and in November, the intelligence community became aware of Japanese interest in the Hawaii area. According to post-war accounts from former participants in wartime intelligence and covert operations, British Intelligence offered two kinds of estimates regarding Japan's naval operations in the North Pacific. Those issued around 27 November, before the *Kido Butai* reached its North Pacific rendezvous point on 2 to 3 December, indicated that a Pearl Harbor attack might occur by 8 December. These estimates were probably based on a combination of strategic analysis, human intelligence, traffic analysis and possibly the decryption of diplomatic or naval messages. The Canadians appear to have acted upon one such estimate and considered shutting down their air force recruiting programme in America.

Yet British estimates issued after 4 December, following what may have been three consecutive days of LF alert 'repeat-back' transmissions from the *Kido Butai*, indicated that a Japanese naval force had moved east, but then changed course toward Hawaii. These estimates were seemingly based on D/F tracking. Allied interception was possible because Japanese communications procedures permitted task forces operating under radio silence to transmit in certain circumstances, as described above. The British appear to have warned the Americans about the possibility or likelihood of an attack, although Ranneft's war diary entries for 2 and 6 December, as well as Grogan's account of 10 December, strongly suggest that the Americans were already aware of Japanese naval activity in the North Pacific. Moreover, several post-war anecdotal sources suggest that the Americans anticipated an attack on Pearl Harbor.

The foregoing assessment, however, must be qualified by due consideration for the kind of sources that have been consulted. Primary sources from 1941, including decrypts of diplomatic messages, intercepts of Japanese naval traffic (notably the *Akagi*), and accounts provided by Cecil King, Leslie Grogan and Johan Ranneft, show that the intelligence community could have made predications about an attack on Pearl Harbor. But would such predictions be the same as foreknowledge? Cryptanalysis may have revealed some aspects of Japan's intentions, but even so, final confirmation could only have come from monitoring Japan's actions. To answer this question calls for knowledge of Allied and US D/F activity in 1941. As a later chapter will show, Canadian and Allied networks placed great emphasis on tracking vessels in the Pacific. But where are the complete D/F logs for North Pacific operations in 1941? The relevant American records are rather incomplete, whereas the relevant Canadian and British records have not been released at all in any form. Historians are not yet in a position to use archival records to verify or refute claims that D/F activity revealed the presence of the *Kido*

Butai in the North Pacific. At present, the case for Allied and US foreknowledge of the Pearl Harbor attack is based mainly upon post-war testimonials from individuals who were directly involved in either intelligence or covert operations during the Second World War. Historians must judge the veracity of these testimonials for themselves, but it seems unwise to simply ignore an entire class of primary evidence. Sophisticated historians will have to consider such evidence, even if only to refute it in support of a stronger traditionalist thesis.

Even if this awkward issue can be resolved, other questions will remain. If Allied and US intelligence authorities predicted an attack on Pearl Harbor, does this suggest that the US government chose not to act upon that warning? Or were such warnings simply discounted as improbable? Hawaii was under a war alert, but not one that specified Pearl Harbor as a possible target: the Hawaiian commanders were entirely unprepared for the Japanese onslaught. Historians of the Pacific War will continue to debate why an intelligence failure occurred at Pearl Harbor.

Quite apart from intelligence that Canada and its allies may have received concerning Pearl Harbor, Canada possessed sufficient information on the Far East crisis to make informed decisions about a course of action to take against Japan. In essence, intelligence only served as a means to enhance the quality of decision-making in the corridors of power. What did Canada decide to do as a Pacific Power? What strategies resulted from Canada's awareness of Japan's designs in Southeast Asia and the Pacific? The next four chapters address the complex question of how Canada formed an effective Far East strategy as a member of the Anglo-American community.

Chapter 6

Deterrence or Encirclement? Canadian Involvement in Allied Strategies to Contain Japan

As early as October 1940, the Mackenzie King government planned for a possible confrontation with Japan. The Tripartite Pact had compelled the government to consider economic sanctions, Pacific Coast defences, the treatment of Japanese Canadians, and the withdrawal of the Canadian Legation in Tokyo. But planning intensified after December, when Britain proposed economic and naval conferences with participation from the Commonwealth and America. This chapter considers three phases of planning that occurred throughout 1941. First, we will discuss Canada's involvement in Allied-American conferences that addressed the prospect of deterrence or even war against Japan. In particular, we will look at the Princeton Conference of December 1940 and the Anglo-American Pacific Naval Conference that became ABC-1 in January–March 1941. Secondly, we will discuss how Canada avoided confrontation with Japan in early 1941, before the United States' intentions were clear. We will show how Canada responded to Britain's request for neutral ship inspections in the Pacific and to Japanese charges of Canadian espionage. Thirdly, we will study how Canada participated in Allied strategies to deter Japan later in 1941. We will discuss how Canada participated in economic sanctions against Japan and why Canada met Britain's request for Hong Kong troop reinforcements. Throughout these three phases of planning, Canada's adhered to its fundamental strategy with respect to the Far East crisis: it sought to avoid confrontation with Japan until active US support was assured, but met its commitment to Britain through participation in all measures against Japan that it regarded as deterrence, rather than encirclement.

The Princeton Conference

Canada participated in discussions concerning Far East strategy at quite an early date. On 7 and 8 December 1940, unofficial representatives from Canada, Australia, Britain, the NEI and the United States attended a confidential 'Far Eastern policy' conference held in Princeton, New Jersey. Notable amongst US representatives was Charles A. Lindbergh, the celebrated aviator and isolationist.¹ Brooke Claxton, MP for St. Lawrence-St. George, attended the conference as a Canadian representative and in February 1941 sent a report on the matter to Norman Robertson and Mackenzie King. Claxton, who often participated in wartime intelligence assessments, described the conference as 'off-the-record' and enclosed a fourteen-page conference report entitled 'Anglo-American Cooperation in the Pacific'.² According to that report, the conference considered the following problem: 'The purpose was to explore and clarify the possibility of a positive, coordinated policy in the Far East representing a united front of the United States, the British Commonwealth, and their *de facto* allies.'³ These allies included the NEI, China and the Soviet Union. Other facets of the main problem were also considered: the effect of the Far East on Britain's position in Europe; the extent to which Britain and the United States had common interests in the Far East; and whether or not Allied action could oppose Japanese aggression to 'pave the way for a genuine New Order' in the Far East.

¹ Brooke Claxton later wrote to Mackenzie King that 'Lindbergh was only there for the first day, unfortunately, as the discussion on policy the second day would have done him good.' See NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4861, Vol. 302, Brooke Claxton to Mackenzie King, Letter, 25 Feb. 1941.

² NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571: 'Japan-Canada-Relations', Brooke Claxton to Norman Robertson, Letter and attached report entitled 'Anglo-American Cooperation in the Pacific', 25 Feb. 1941. The following people attended the Princeton conference: (Canada) Brooke Claxton, Percy E. Corbett, George Ferguson, J.M. Macdonnell, Edgar J. Tarr; (Australia) Fred. Alexander, David W. Bailey; (Britain) Aubrey Morgan, Major C.B. Omerod, Sir George Sansom, John W. Wheeler-Bennett; (NEI) A. Pelt, Edward V. Saher; (United States) Frank Aydelotte, Raymond Leslie Buell, Edward C. Carter, John C. Cooper, Jr., Edward M. Earle, George Fielding Eliot, Frederick V. Field, Huntington Gilchrist, Tracy B. Kittredge, Philip C. Jessup, Charles A. Lindbergh, W.W. Waymack. The recorders were Ruth D. Carter, Charles Dollard and William W. Lockwood.

³ *Ibid.*, 1.

Conference representatives summarized the vital interests of the Pacific Powers. Japan wanted to occupy French Indochina bases, gain influence in Thailand, impose economic demands on the NEI, and bolster puppet regimes in China.⁴ It was also wary of Germany's objectives in the Far East. Australia, New Zealand and the NEI wanted territorial security. Canada had no vital interests, but stood with the Commonwealth as a belligerent and supported the United States in terms of continental defence. Britain saw conflict with Japan as a threat to success in the European war, which was the primary objective. The United States sought security for the Philippines, independence for China and free trade in the Far East, although American isolationism limited the attainment of these goals: 'public opinion is not prepared in advance to fight for anything. Most people are supporting embargoes against Japan and credits in China in the belief that this does not mean war.'⁵

Several conclusions were recorded in the conference report. Conference representatives hotly debated the concept of appeasement as a way of buying time, but concluded that this was not a viable option with Japan.⁶ It was noted that a complete Allied embargo against Japan would probably lead to war, rather than bringing Japan to terms.⁷ Yet an economic blockade would be likely to defeat Japan as it only had sufficient resources for one to two years of war, providing it did not seize the NEI, which it was unlikely to do because of strong US-NEI air power and submarine forces. Nor could Japan seize Singapore by land, owing to British strength. Moreover, the presence of the USN fleet at Hawaii and the placement of USN ships at Singapore would threaten Japan's lines of communication.⁸ In terms of US involvement, war against the NEI would not bring in the US, but war against the

⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁶ Ibid., 2-3.

⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁸ Ibid., 9.

Philippines probably would. It was thought that US policy was more influenced by Britain's fate in the European war as well as US involvement in the Atlantic. In terms of colonialism, many conference representatives believed that European regimes in the Far East would not be maintained in their *status quo* because the trend was towards 'progressive liberation' and 'de-imperialisation'.⁹ Hence, the United States would not be defending former European interests.

Conference representatives offered several suggestions for concerted action. Japan could be offered long-term economic concessions in return for withdrawal from empire in Asia. The United States could offer independence for the Philippines, support for improved living standards in the Far East, free trade without US military or commercial domination, and recognition of Japan as a Great Power.¹⁰ Furthermore, the Pacific Powers could sign a twelve-month non-aggression pact. If Japan persisted in pursuing empire, then the Pacific Powers could still impose an economic blockade and prepare for the eventuality of war. Preparations might include staff negotiations, an exchange of military experts and USN naval support at Singapore.¹¹ Again, it was not anticipated that Japan could win such a war, owing to its limited resources and Allied strength. The Princeton conference provided Ottawa with a survey of informed opinion regarding the Far East crisis, including both interventionist and isolationist views. The conference allowed Canadian representatives to place their own nation's interest in the context of the greater US-Allied community. For historians, the Princeton conference reveals just how perceptive some observers were in late 1940, since most of their predictions came true, even though they underestimated Japan's ability to seize ADB possessions in the short term.

⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰ Ibid., 11–14.

¹¹ Ibid., 8.

The Anglo-American Pacific Naval Conference that became ABC-1

Canadian officials were also privy to high-level Anglo-American strategic planning. The RCN, along with External Affairs, used the services of the Canadian Legation in Washington to monitor plans for a proposed Anglo-American Pacific Naval Conference. In a Most Secret telegram of 23 December 1940, the Canadian Legation told External Affairs about the 'proposed conversations with United States authorities here concerning naval matters in the Pacific', which had been planned as early as 6 December.¹² The British Embassy advised the Legation that full secrecy was required and that Britain would send two naval representatives 'fully camouflaged' to Washington. Initially, US authorities wanted to limit the conversations to US and British representatives because they did not want to alarm the Japanese: 'State Department fear that conversations embracing all interested parties would be dangerous from standpoint of encirclement.' The British Embassy, however, encouraged Canada to send a 'fully camouflaged naval officer' to Washington to act as both observer and consultant. Seemingly, Australia was already sending an observer and both New Zealand and the NEI would soon be invited to do likewise. The British Embassy promised to confer with Sumner Welles about the proposed agenda and report back to the Canadian Legation.

On 24 December, the Legation reported the results of these discussions to Ottawa.¹³ The proposed Anglo-American conference on Pacific affairs would now encompass military, air and naval defences, meaning that Britain would also send camouflaged army and air officers along with its naval personnel. Moreover, Sumner Welles promised to consult the President and US naval authorities about the possibility of inviting observers from Canada and other interested governments. The British Embassy also conveyed the following information to the Canadian

¹² NAC, RG25, B3, Vol. 2453, File: 'UK-US Naval Conference, 1941', 'Beaver' (Washington) to 'External' (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 336, 23 Dec. 1940.

¹³ Ibid., 'Beaver' (Washington) to 'External' (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 338, 24 Dec. 1940.

Legation: 'Welles further emphasized importance of secrecy from internal as well as Japanese standpoints.' Clearly, the State Department did not want Anglo-American conversations over Pacific defence to upset either American isolationists or Japanese diplomats. In particular, the proposed conversations had to avoid any appearance of 'encirclement' of Japan, despite the fact that all Pacific Allied Powers were being invited.

In January 1941, Most Secret telegrams exchanged between the Canadian Legation in Washington and External Affairs officials in Ottawa revealed more conference details. A telegram of 17 January noted that the British Embassy had learned from Sumner Welles that President Roosevelt had no objection to a camouflaged naval observer from Canada.¹⁴ As well, in the next ten days Britain was sending representatives camouflaged as members of the British Purchasing Commission, a ruse that had been used in 1940 and would continue to be used throughout 1941. For example, Stephenson's BSC often 'covered' people as members of either the British Purchasing Commission or British Passport Control. On 27 January, External Affairs informed the Canadian Legation that Commander P.B. (Barry) German, serving the Directorate of Naval Intelligence at NSHQ, Ottawa, would join the Washington conference as the Canadian observer.¹⁵ German (perhaps an unfortunate surname for an Allied agent in 1941) would travel as a shipping broker appointed to the staff of J.B. Carswell, a liaison officer with the Department of Munitions and Supply. German was an excellent choice because he served in Jock de Marbois's Foreign Intelligence Section and since 1940 had specialized in processing intelligence

¹⁴ Ibid., 'Beaver' (Washington) to 'External' (Ottawa), 'Re: Forthcoming conversations on Pacific defence', Most Secret telegram no. 25, 17 Jan. 1941.

¹⁵ Ibid., 'External' (Ottawa) to 'Beaver' (Washington), Most Secret telegram no. 23, 27 Jan. 1941; and 'Beaver' (Washington) to 'External' (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 38, 27 Jan. 1941. A later photograph of Capt. P.B. (Barry) German and his son, Sub.-Lt. A.B.C. (Tony) German, taken when Barry German was Naval Officer-In-Charge at Esquimalt, may be found in DHH, 'German, Andrew Barry (Tony), Biographical File', Photo F-3582.

concerning Japan.¹⁶ Another telegram sent in reply on the same day told Ottawa that US authorities would be informed next day of Barry German's arrival. The telegram also stated that British observers were arriving with Lord Halifax.

On 31 January, Commander German sent his first Most Secret report from Washington to Rear-Admiral P.W. Nelles in Ottawa.¹⁷ He reported that the US-British staff conversations had begun on 29 January, and that British representatives shared details of the talks with both himself and his Australian counterpart, Commander Burrell, RAN. Seemingly, the conference 'observers' were rapidly becoming participants. German referred to the complete secrecy surrounding both the talks and the personalities involved: Admiral Harold R. Stark, USN Chief of Naval Operations, and General George C. Marshall, US Army Chief of Staff, both emphasized secrecy for 'internal political reasons'. German explained that the basis of the talks was the 'most satisfactory distribution' of US and British Commonwealth forces in the event of the United States' entry into the war. Initially, the main focus of the talks was Pacific defence.

In February 1941, Commander German kept Ottawa continually informed about developments in Washington. His reports, which were sent to both Admiral Nelles and Norman Robertson, revealed that the talks now covered 'a broader field than was originally contemplated.' On 1 February, German expressed some regret that the services had to consult with politicians on some questions, but reported that the defence agenda might now include more than Pacific naval matters, the original reason for calling the conference: 'It would appear that

¹⁶ NAC, RG 24, D1b, Vol. 3807, File 1008-75-44 (vol. 1), Lt.-Cmdr. J.M. de Marbois (Ottawa) to Cmdr. F.G. Hart (Esquimalt), Most Secret letter, 8 Aug. 1940.

¹⁷ NAC, RG25, B3, Vol. 2453, File: 'UK-US Naval Conference, 1941', BG (Barry German, Washington) to CNS (P.W. Nelles, Ottawa), Most Secret letter no. 2, 31 Jan. 1941. German also listed those attending the conference. The US representatives included Adm. H.R. Stark (CNO), Gen. G.C. Marshall (Chief of Staff), Lt. Gen. S.D. Embick (PJBD), Brig. Gen. Sherman Miles (War Dept.), Brig. Gen. L.T. Gerow, Col. J.T. McNarney, Rear-Adm. R.L. Ghormley, Rear-Adm. R.K. Turner (USN War Plans), Capt. A.G. Kirk (USN), Capt. DeWitt C. Ramsey (Plans Div., Aeronautics) and Lt. Col. C.T. Pfeiffer (USMC). The UK representatives included Rear-Adm. R.M. Bellairs, Rear-Adm. V.H. Danckwerts, Maj. Gen. E.L. Morris, Air Commodore JC. Slessor and Capt. A.W. Clarke (RN).

the discussions will broaden out and not only primarily include the Pacific and Far East.’¹⁸ On 4 February, he reported that some tentative agreements had been reached ‘regarding disposition of the U.S. Pacific and Asiatic fleets, but the limit of U.S.A. operations west of Honolulu would appear to be very much in abeyance.’¹⁹ However, USN dispositions in the North Atlantic were also a topic of interest. Far East questions, German explained, were to be ‘allowed to simmer for a short period.’ On 6 February, he reported that the talks moved over to strategy in the Mediterranean and Europe, the defence of Malta, and General Francisco Franco’s rejection of German proposals. But Pacific defence was still on the table: ‘In event of war with Japan, it appears that until we have liquidated our commitments in the Eastern Mediterranean we cannot afford to reinforce our present strength in Far East (this is small) to any extent. This immediately ties in with the problem or discussion of U.S. Pacific fleet and its limits of operations to westward of Honolulu.’²⁰ Yet German emphasized that the Americans were against any move west of Hawaii.

On 8 February, conference representatives made important strategic assessments concerning the Far East. Commander German reported that the British desired the reinforcement of the USN Asiatic Fleet in the Philippines because they believed that the USN Pacific Fleet in Hawaii was not sufficient to threaten Japan.²¹ However, the British believed that the Americans were more likely to support Britain’s activities in either the Atlantic or the Mediterranean than in the Pacific. Most significantly, German reported strategic estimates concerning the vulnerability of the Philippines:

Further regarding staff conversations, it appears to be established the Philippines would

¹⁸ Ibid., Escott Reid (Washington) to N.A. Robertson (Ottawa), Secret letter, 1 Feb. 1941; and BG (Barry German, Washington) to CNS (P.W. Nelles, Ottawa), Most Secret letter no. 3, 1 Feb. 1941.

¹⁹ Ibid., BG to CNS, Most Secret letter no. 4, 4 Feb. 1941.

²⁰ Ibid., BG to CNS, Most Secret letter no. 5, 6 Feb. 1941.

²¹ Ibid., BG to CNS, Most Secret letter no. 7, 8 Feb. 1941.

go, to be retaken later, and that U.S.A. forces would retire on Hawaii. The Philippines limited defences are such that they could only be held for a few weeks against a determined Japanese attack. . . . Additional defence measures at Manila cannot be provided owing to material commitments to British and because of possibility that such action would precipitate immediate war with Japan.²²

Seemingly, the Americans were prepared to sacrifice the Philippines in the early stages of a war against Japan. Pacific Coast defences in North America were also considered: German collected information on US defences at Dutch Harbor, Unalaska Island, for the benefit of Pacific Command in Esquimalt.²³

British strategists constantly emphasized the need to reinforce Singapore, hopefully with US support. To reinforce that point, the Chiefs of Staff in London conveyed instructions to British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand representatives. British strategists urged the need for US naval cooperation in the Far East, particularly in Singapore, which had to be retained as a naval stronghold against Japan. On 11 February, Commander German offered Ottawa the following explanation: 'The U.K. staff is informing U.S. delegates from every conceivable angle how retention of Singapore is of major or vital importance, and it is hoped the U.S. attitude may swing to some extent from their Hawaii base attitude.'²⁴ But according to Admiral Bellair's reports to the British Chiefs of Staff, which Commander German reviewed each day, the Americans would not alter their position.

From 12 to 20 February, Commander German's reports to Ottawa suggested that the Americans were reluctant to see Singapore as an essential element in the strategy of war against the Axis Powers.²⁵ According to US strategy, the USN Pacific Fleet at Hawaii would not only protect the Pacific Coast of North America, but also 'contain' the Japanese from operating

²² Ibid., BG to CNS, Most Secret letter no. 10, 8 Feb. 1941.

²³ Ibid., BG to CNS, Most Secret letter no. 11, 8 Feb. 1941.

²⁴ Ibid., BG to CNS, Most Secret letter no. 12, 11 Feb. 1941.

²⁵ Ibid., BG to CNS, Most Secret letter no. 14, 12 Feb. 1941; Most Secret letter no. 15, 15 Feb. 1941; Most Secret letter no. 22, 20 Feb. 1941; and Most Secret letter no. 23, 20 Feb. 1941.

against Malaya. The Americans emphasized that the reinforcement of the Philippines would serve 'no useful purpose in the event of war', but encouraged the British to reinforce Singapore with capital ships. US representatives believed that Japan should be kept out of the war, but not appeased. British strategists saw the security of Singapore as second only to that of Britain itself and forecast the possibility of Japanese land or air attacks against Malaya, the NEI or the Philippines. Churchill even sent a message to Roosevelt that emphasized the strategic importance of Singapore, although his 'political' involvement in the conference displeased US military representatives. Eventually, the British Chiefs of Staff instructed their representatives in Washington to stop pressing the Americans for support in Singapore. German reported that Britain was prepared to send more capital ships to Singapore upon the arrival of more US ships in British waters. In terms of US naval support in the Pacific, the British were forced to rely upon the deterrence value of Pearl Harbor.

By the end of February 1941, most of the Pacific defence issues had been settled at the Anglo-American conference in Washington. On 21 February, Commander German confirmed that the USN would continue to base its main naval force at Pearl Harbor rather than at Manila, and that reinforcement of Singapore was a British responsibility.²⁶ He also discussed a US staff report, which stated that unless the United States was already at war with Germany and Italy, it would not be likely to declare war on Japan following a move against French Indochina, Thailand, Malaya, Borneo or the NEI. The same report explained how the Philippines and Guam could probably not be held against a full-scale Japanese attack. German reported that British and US representatives agreed that Japan could probably occupy most European and US possessions in Southeast Asia in the early stages of a military campaign. Furthermore, German confirmed that the main US objective was now the defeat of Germany and its allies. The Anglo-American

²⁶ Ibid., BG to CNS, Most Secret letter no. 24, 21 Feb. 1941.

Pacific Naval Conference, which in December 1940 had been conceived as a forum to discuss the containment of Japan, had evolved into a more comprehensive defence agreement known later as ABC-1. The presence of Commander Barry German in Washington as a camouflaged observer and consultant allowed Canadian authorities in Ottawa to monitor the evolution of Anglo-American strategic planning.

Neutral Ship Inspections

Despite these conferences and preparations, Canada sought to avoid confrontation with Japan in early 1941. At that time, Whitehall created much anxiety in Washington and Ottawa over its proposal that neutral vessels be intercepted on the high seas. On 14 January, London informed Mackenzie King that British officials were trying to persuade Washington to permit British interception of 'blockade runners' operating in the Caribbean and the Americas, including Japanese ships.²⁷ Neither Cordell Hull nor Sumner Welles agreed to the British proposal because of the political risk involved. On 25 January, British officials requested that Canada divert the Japanese vessels *Seia Maru* and *Takaoka Maru* to Vancouver for inspection as both vessels were suspected of carrying contraband materials for Germany.²⁸ The next day, H.L. Keenleyside reported on the matter to O.D. Skelton, explaining that such actions would annoy Japan and possibly lead to retaliatory measures against Canadian ships. Keenleyside believed that a clear understanding with both Britain and the United States was required and that McGreer in Tokyo should discuss the matter with US Ambassador Joseph C. Grew: 'Mr.

²⁷ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T2208, Vol. 826, File 730: 'Proposed Interception of Neutral Vessels (1941)', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Secret telegram, Circular D25, 14 Jan. 1941.

²⁸ Ibid., W.C. Hankinson, British High Commission (Ottawa), to O.D. Skelton (Ottawa), Secret letters, 25 Jan. 1941.

Grew's advice would, in my opinion, be of greater value than that of the British Ambassador.'²⁹

On 28 January, Mackenzie King wrote to the Canadian Legation in Washington: 'We are naturally anxious to prevent contraband from reaching Germany. . . . We do not wish however to participate in any activity which would result in dangerous developments in the Far East or untoward incidents on our own Pacific coast.'³⁰ He also reminded Legation staff of the 'large Japanese population in Vancouver' and how nothing must further antagonize the feelings of local BC residents. Furthermore, he pointed out the lack of Canadian armed ships on the Pacific Coast and the limitations of local 'land forces'. Clearly, Mackenzie King wanted to avoid any unilateral action against Japanese shipping in the Pacific.

In February, messages exchanged between Ottawa, Washington and London discussed the interception of Russian and Japanese ships. On 8 February, Britain proposed that Canada intercept the Russian vessels *Azerbaijan* and *Minsk*, due to sail from San Francisco to Vladivostok with oil thought to be destined for Germany. A Most Secret telegram sent the next day from the Dominions Office in London to Mackenzie King explained just how important it was to intercept Japanese vessels on the Pacific Coast.³¹ It was reported that 80,000 tons of contraband had been shipped to Germany through the Pacific route. Furthermore, Whitehall wanted Canada to intercept the Japanese vessels *Awata Maru*, *Seia Maru* and *Takaoka Maru* for inspection in Vancouver. On 10 February, M.M. Mahoney, Canadian Minister in Washington, sent two messages to Norman Robertson concerning

²⁹ Ibid., H.L. Keenleyside (Ottawa) to O.D. Skelton (Ottawa), Memorandum: 'The Diversion of Japanese Vessels to the Port of Vancouver', 26 Jan. 1941.

³⁰ Ibid., SSEA (Ottawa) to Charge d'Affaires (Washington), Telegram no. 24, 28 Jan. 1941. The same telegram is also found in NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571: 'Japan-Canada-Relations'. See also NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 28 Jan. 1941.

³¹ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram, Circular D60, 9 Feb. 1941.

American reactions.³² Officially, the State Department had ‘no comments or observations to offer’ regarding neutral ship inspections occurring outside the Panama Safety Zone. ‘Off-the-record’, however, Mahoney had learned that some people in Washington were quite pro-British, such as economic advisor Herbert Feis, and others pro-Russian, such as Justice Frankfurter and Far East affairs advisor Dr. Stanley Hornbeck, who were ‘in favour of a conciliatory policy to Russia.’³³ In other words, the Americans might remain indifferent to British interception of neutral ships as long as Russia was not offended.

Ottawa continued to debate the issue. In a message to Mackenzie King dated 11 February, Keenleyside argued that no Russian ships should be intercepted because the Pacific situation was tense and Russia might be pushed further into the Axis orbit.³⁴ Accordingly, two Canadian corvettes near San Francisco were told to stand down. On the same day, the Cabinet War Committee in Ottawa advised Mackenzie King to refuse Britain’s request that Canada intercept Russian and Japanese shipping, owing to ‘the risk of war in the Far East’.³⁵ The War Committee suggested that reference be made to ‘the meagre British naval forces in the Pacific, the inadequacy of coastal defences in British Columbia, and the presence there of a large Japanese population.’ That day, Mackenzie King sent a Most Secret telegram to London explaining the Canadian position. He used all the references suggested by the War Committee and emphasized ‘the risk of providing Japan with a possible excuse for retaliatory action, if not

³² Ibid., CMUS (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 51, 10 Feb. 1941; and M.M. Mahoney (Washington) to Norman Robertson (Ottawa), Letter, Personal and Secret, 10 Feb. 1941.

³³ However, there were anti-Russian elements in the State Department. According to Mahoney, J.D. Hickerson, Assistant Chief of the State Department’s European Division, believed that British policy toward Russia, which seemed to be anti-Russian, was in line with the European Division. It amused Hickerson that Sir Stafford Cripps, Britain’s ambassador to Moscow, had recently taken the opposite position when speaking to America’s ambassador to Moscow.

³⁴ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T2208, Vol. 826, File 730, H.L. Keenleyside, ‘Memorandum for the Prime Minister: Proposed Interception of Russian Vessels’, 11 Feb. 1941.

³⁵ Ibid., Cabinet War Committee, Extract of minutes: ‘British Blockade Policy, Interception of neutral vessels’, 11 Feb. 1941. For a complete file of minutes of meetings, see QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Ministerial Files C, Box 38, Cabinet War Committee 1941, Minutes of Meetings. Researchers should note that the minutes of meetings for 1941 contain very little information about Japan and the Far East crisis.

a pretext for war.’³⁶ Moreover, he expressed uncertainty over what reaction the United States might have in the event of war between the British Empire and Japan. But London persisted and sent a memorandum to Washington that concerned Russian contraband trade to Germany via Vladivostok: if the Canadians would not sway, then maybe the Americans would. On 22 February, the Canadian Legation in Washington sent Ottawa a copy of London’s memorandum, entitled ‘Exports to Russia’.³⁷ External Affairs in Ottawa noted that the Americans refrained from altering shipping policy, despite the memorandum’s compelling arguments.

In March, Mackenzie King decided to end the crisis over neutral ship inspections. British authorities had recently requested that Canada intercept the Japanese ship *Asaka Maru*, which was believed to carry Japanese naval personnel bound for Berlin. In his diary entry for 5 March, Mackenzie King commented on the implications of the whole British scheme: ‘I felt very strongly war was coming between Japan and Britain; that the United States was not likely to go into it immediately. . . . We must be careful to see that Canada is not made the scapegoat for what will involve both Britain and the United States in a war with Japan.’³⁸ He would not accept any scheme that would make Canada responsible for a Pacific War.

In a Most Secret telegram dated 14 March, Mackenzie King explained his position once again to London:

In view of the continuing uncertainty as to precisely what action the United States Government would take in the event of war between the British Empire and Japan, it appears to us to be of the highest importance, as you have emphasized in your messages regarding the “Asaka Maru”, that if war must come with Japan it should be as a result

³⁶ Ibid., SSEA (Ottawa) to SSDA (London), Most Secret telegram no. 23, 11 Feb. 1941.

³⁷ Ibid., File 726: ‘Canadian Trade with Russia (1940–1941)’, M.M. Mahoney (Washington) to Norman Robertson (Ottawa), Letter, 22 Feb. 1941.

³⁸ NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 5 Mar. 1941.

of clear aggression on her part and not under any circumstances attributable to British or Canadian provocation.³⁹

Quite craftily, he was willing to make one concession to Whitehall in the event of excessive contraband trade: 'we are prepared to agree that vessels intercepted by United Kingdom ships in the Pacific may be diverted into Canadian West Coast ports.' Mackenzie King and his War Committee were not willing to risk war between Canada and Japan at a time when US support was uncertain, and Washington did not seem poised to enter a Pacific conflict initiated by the British Commonwealth. Furthermore, Mackenzie King gambled that Britain was also unlikely to take such a risk unless Canada offered more support. No Russian or Japanese ships were diverted to Canadian ports for inspection.

Dealing with Charges of Espionage

Avoiding confrontation with Japan also meant avoiding diplomatic controversy. One of the more difficult moments in Canadian-Japanese relations began when Japanese authorities accused Father Marcel Fournier, a Canadian Dominican priest serving in Hakodate, of lewd acts and espionage. At that time, Japanese authorities made frequent accusations against Europeans resident in the Japanese Empire, often focusing upon missionaries, who were amongst the most visible signs of Europe's contact with Asia. On 3 February 1941, McGreer, the Canadian Minister in Tokyo, sent a telegram on the matter to Mackenzie King: 'Father Fournier is being held on sex charges involving a Japanese boy. In addition, he has been most indiscreet in asking questions concerning military movements, although this is of secondary

³⁹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T2208, Vol. 826, File 730, SSEA (Ottawa) to SSDA (London), Most Secret telegram no. 42, 14 Mar. 1941.

importance. Efforts are now being made to secure his release.’⁴⁰ On 7 May, McGreer offered Mackenzie King an update: ‘I was informed that there is concrete evidence of his having been engaged in espionage, and that sex charges are now of secondary importance. The delay in bringing him to trial is due to the fact that some fifty Japanese are involved, and have had to be questioned.’⁴¹ Japanese officials claimed that Fournier had committed acts of espionage from September 1938 until July 1940 and had made derogatory remarks about the Japanese Army in China.

By August, the Japanese had implicated McGreer in the espionage charges. On 5 August, Norman Robertson wrote to Mackenzie King: ‘The Japanese Government, apparently, are about to proceed with the trial of Father Fournier on a charge of espionage, basing their case on a letter McGreer is alleged to have written him, asking him to procure military secrets. The charge is utterly fantastic and the letter a forgery.’⁴² Japanese police believed that the British Embassy in Tokyo had written the body of the letter, but that McGreer had signed it.⁴³ In Ottawa, Robertson told Japanese Minister Yoshizawa that Mackenzie King would speak to him and insist upon a withdrawal of the charge along with an apology to McGreer. Also on 5 August, Mackenzie King sent a secret telegram to McGreer: ‘Prime Minister will see Japanese Minister tomorrow and insist on withdrawal of allegation of your complicity in so-called espionage activities. In view of critical nature of general situation it has been decided to postpone projected appointment of new minister.’⁴⁴ McGreer would stay on in Tokyo. In Ottawa, the Cabinet War Committee took the case seriously enough to outline the McGreer–

⁴⁰ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3): ‘War-Japan, Japan-Political and Economic Situation’, CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 13, 3 Feb. 1941.

⁴¹ Ibid., CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 70, 7 May 1941.

⁴² Ibid., N.A. Robertson (Ottawa) to W.L.M. King (Ottawa), Memorandum, 5 Aug. 1941.

⁴³ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261472–3, McGreer (Tokyo) to W.L.M. King (Ottawa), Letter no. 251, 30 Jul. 1941; and 261474–6, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa (Hakodate) to McGreer (Tokyo), 20 Jul. 1941.

⁴⁴ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), SSEA (Ottawa) to Charge d’Affaires (Tokyo), Secret telegram no. 104, 5 Aug. 1941.

Fournier allegations at its meeting of 6 August.⁴⁵ In September, McGreer was cleared of the allegations, although Fournier later faced a reduced sentence.⁴⁶ Certainly, no evidence exists to support any of the allegations made against Fournier. Mackenzie King had managed to avoid a major diplomatic row with Japan, although the Japanese would continue to be suspicious of state-sponsored espionage on the part of foreigners resident in Japan.

Perhaps as a result of the McGreer–Fournier allegations, Mackenzie King hastened the evacuation of Canadians still living in Japan or Japanese-controlled areas. McGreer had reported in August that 296 Canadians, mostly missionaries, were still living in Japan and the Mukden district.⁴⁷ But on 18 September, Mackenzie King advised McGreer to consult with the British about the possibility of evacuating the remaining Canadians on incoming vessels.⁴⁸ Consequently, evacuations occurred throughout September and October. Mackenzie King was not going to endure any further diplomatic or political risks with respect to Canadians resident in the Japanese Empire.

Economic Sanctions against Japan

Canada had avoided early confrontation with Japan, but nevertheless imposed tough economic sanctions against it, regarding these as an Allied deterrent measure. As early as December 1940, Ottawa participated in discussions regarding the formation of a common economic policy towards Japan. On 19 December, G.F. Thorald, an official at the British Embassy in Washington, sent a report on the subject to M. Mahoney, his counterpart at the

⁴⁵ Ibid., 'Extract from minutes of Cabinet War Committee, August 6, 1941'.

⁴⁶ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261501, CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 164, 5 Sep. 1941; SSEA (Ottawa) to Charge d'Affaires (Tokyo), Telegram no. 128, 18 Sep. 1941; and Taro Terazaki (Tokyo) to E. d'Arcy McGreer (Tokyo), undated letter with attached Japanese report, c. Sep. 1941.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 261484, CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 139, 11 Aug. 1941. For a collection of telegrams concerning the evacuation of Canadians from Japan and northern China in 1940–41, see NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1793, Vol. 777, File 365 (pt. 4).

⁴⁸ Ibid., SSEA (Ottawa) to Charge d'Affaires (Tokyo), Telegram no. 128, 18 Sep. 1941.

Canadian Legation.⁴⁹ Thorald expressed Whitehall's view that Japan should be deprived of strategic materials through a common economic policy imposed by the Allies and, if possible, the United States, a plan that Whitehall's Ministry of Economic Warfare had originally formed in November 1940. Thorald reported that the British Embassy had contacted Dr. Hornbeck of the US State Department and asked about holding talks between America, the NEI and the Commonwealth on the subject of 'parallel policies'. Hornbeck believed it would be less embarrassing to hold talks between the British Embassy and the State Department than talks with many representatives, which would look like a conference: 'the Japanese would get to know of it and regard it as a dangerous attempt at encirclement.'⁵⁰ Other views could be represented in the form of a private panel. Thorold invited the views of the Canadian government and recognized that Canada had already enforced greater export restrictions against Japan than either the United States or the rest of the British Empire. Within a day, Mahoney informed Mackenzie King of the Thorald-Hornbeck initiative.⁵¹ Canadian representatives would later join their Commonwealth counterparts in Washington to discuss the economic encirclement of Japan.

British authorities also made direct requests to Ottawa for support in export controls against Japan. On 20 December, the British High Commission in Ottawa informed Mackenzie King that 'Empire Governments' were in general agreement about Far East economic policy.⁵² The Commonwealth could exert export control over trade with Japan whilst soliciting US cooperation. Seemingly, US and British officials had addressed these issues as early as 22

⁴⁹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, G.F. Thorald, British Embassy (Washington) to Merchant Mahoney, Canadian Legation (Washington), Letter, 19 Dec. 1940.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., M. Mahoney, Canadian Legation (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret letter no. 2741, 21 Dec. 1940.

⁵² NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), Gerald Campbell, British High Commission (Ottawa) to W.L.M. King (Ottawa), Most Secret letter, 20 Dec. 1940.

October 1940. Mackenzie King was also given a 'blockade list', which itemized all materials and commodities that might be denied to Japan through export controls. On 27 December, the British High Commission informed Mackenzie King that iron and steel scrap exports from all parts of the British Empire to Japan had been stopped under the pretext of Allied needs.⁵³ Mackenzie King was asked if Canada would adhere to the 'blockade list', but there was no need: he and his External Affairs staff were committed to full economic sanctions against Japan. It was a measure that would please both Whitehall and anti-Japanese protesters in BC whilst leaving Canada's export trade relatively unaffected.

In February, Canadian officials discussed the manner in which a common economic policy could be applied against Japan. On 13 February, H.H. Wrong wrote to Mackenzie King from Washington, reporting that the Americans were now more interested in the scheme.⁵⁴ He also passed on Whitehall's request that the Canadian government enter into discussions with the Commonwealth and the United States. Wrong reminded Mackenzie King that Canada's existing strict export controls against Japan would not be likely to require further adjustment. Wrong echoed Hornbeck's concerns over the need for discretion: 'The preservation of secrecy is obviously of great importance in order to avoid giving new occasion to stimulate Japanese complaints of encirclement. In consequence, it is necessary to avoid anything in the nature of a conference, and to keep the conduct of the discussions on the plane of informal negotiations.'⁵⁵ On the same day, Mackenzie King replied to Wrong's message, offering several observations.⁵⁶ He pointed out that Canada and the United States were now coordinating export policies to a greater degree, and that in his view other governments would

⁵³ Ibid., Campbell to King, Secret letter, 27 Dec. 1940.

⁵⁴ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, H.H. Wrong, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister', 13 Feb. 1941.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., W.L.M. King (Ottawa) to H.H. Wrong (Washington), Most Secret letter no. 150, 13 Feb. 1941.

probably have to come *up* to Canadian levels of control, so strict were they already. He advised against NEI participation in the initial roundtable discussions, owing to critical conditions in the Far East. He cautioned that US agreement to a common economic policy would best be achieved through *ad hoc* discussions with experts rather than through the pursuit of a clear statement of US policy. Of all people, Mackenzie King knew the best methods of political persuasion.

To underscore the importance of economic sanctions, on 17 February London sent Ottawa a copy of a report entitled 'Japan's Economic Position in the Event of War', which the Ministry of Economic Warfare had written in November 1940.⁵⁷ The report summarized Japan's available currency exchange, food supply, textiles, chemicals, coal, iron, steel, metals, alloys, machinery, shipping and fuel. It estimated that Japan consumed annually four million tons of petroleum for civilian use and another two million tons for military use. It was thought that the Japanese Navy would need four million tons annually to wage war in the Pacific. Furthermore, Japan imported about four-fifths of its required petroleum, principally from America. The report also presented two hypotheses: the United States enters a war against Japan and applies both military and economic pressure; or the United States does not enter a war, but applies economic pressure. If it did enter the war, then Japan's food, iron and steel would be adequate for one or two years, but its petroleum stocks would only last for nine months of active warfare. Under these conditions, Japan would face increasing economic problems after the first year of warfare, and disastrous problems before the second year was out. If the United States did not enter the war, then Japan's food, iron and steel would be more secure, but its petroleum stocks would still not last if NEI oil refineries were destroyed before

⁵⁷ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1793, Vol. 777, File 365 (pt. 4), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Secret Circular 84, 17 Feb. 1941. Alternative citation: NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4861, Vol. 302, 256252-61, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Secret Circular D24, 17 Feb. 1941.

conquest. Ongoing Anglo-American embargoes would stress Japan's currency situation despite its continued trade with South America. Considering both hypotheses from the British perspective, economics seemed to suggest that US military involvement was essential in a war against Japan.

Meanwhile, Canada became embroiled in a 'wheat crisis' with Japan. Tokyo was most displeased with Ottawa's multiple trade sanctions against Japan. Months before, Canadian export controls had restricted strategic-metals shipments to Japan, notably copper, but new controls now restricted wheat shipments. The wheat question had been raised in October 1940, when Japan and Russia had requested to buy Canadian wheat, but now Ottawa was prepared to act. On 31 January 1941, Norman Robertson sent Mackenzie King a memorandum in which he discussed Canada's export policies with respect to Britain, Australia and America: Canada had imposed the strictest trade sanctions against Japan.⁵⁸ The next day, H.L. Keenleyside sent Mackenzie King another report on the subject, making a strong case against further restricting wheat exports to Japan.⁵⁹ He reminded the Prime Minister that Canada already had the strictest policy in restricting war materials to Japan, and that critical diplomacy with Japan might suffer from more export controls. On 3 February, Japan ordered 20,000 tons of wheat, but shipment was delayed. Furthermore, on 11 February, the Cabinet War Committee raised questions about a recent sale of 50,000 tons of Canadian wheat to Japan: the shipment was delayed until the Cabinet informed the Wheat Board of its views.⁶⁰ On 13 February, the Cabinet imposed export

⁵⁸ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, N.A. Robertson, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister: Export of Wheat and Flour to Japan and China', 31 Jan. 1941.

⁵⁹ Ibid., H.L. Keenleyside, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister', 1 Feb. 1941.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Extract from Cabinet War Committee minutes, 'Sale of Canadian Wheat to Japan', 11 Feb. 1941.

permits to restrict such trade.⁶¹ Despite Keenleyside's initial opposition, a total of 70,000 tons of Canadian wheat was denied to Japan.

Consequently, Tokyo applied diplomatic pressure. On 10 March, McGreer in Tokyo informed Mackenzie King that the Japanese Foreign Office had lodged an official complaint about Canada's export policies.⁶² Japanese officials wanted Ottawa to grant export permits for 70,000 tons of Canadian wheat that had been ordered by the Mitsubishi Company. The Japanese argued that wheat was not a war material and that Japan had food shortages whilst Canada had surplus grain. McGreer explained that the surplus wheat was reserved for northern China, but the Japanese replied that northern China was in the same economic bloc as Japan. Even so, Canadian export restrictions against Japan stayed in effect.

In April, Japanese protests continued, but Mackenzie King found a compromise solution.⁶³ To begin with, he met with Japanese Minister Yoshizawa, who complained that all trade had effectively ceased with Canada: wheat, wood and strategic metals, namely copper, were all restricted. Mackenzie King explained that he had to prevent trouble in Vancouver, where locals protested at the loading of cargo for Japan. He also reminded Yoshizawa that Matsuoka's visits to Berlin, Rome and Moscow had hardened Allied feelings towards Japan. Moreover, he claimed that both McGreer and Craigie believed that Canada's position was being misrepresented in Tokyo. In response, Yoshizawa pointed to radical elements in Japan that thought the British Empire was trying to starve Japan. Mackenzie King and Yoshizawa spoke briefly about the need to prevent the outbreak of war.

⁶¹ Ibid., J.A.G. (External Affairs), 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister: Export of Wheat to Japan', 10 Jun. 1941. This memorandum on the wheat dispute contains a summary of principal events.

⁶² NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 35, 10 Mar. 1941.

⁶³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Vol. 2960, File 10, W.L.M. King, Dictation: 'Re: Canadian-Japanese Trade, Wheat and Wood', 28 Apr. 1941.

Next, Mackenzie King spoke to all MPs from British Columbia, both Liberal and opposition.⁶⁴ He explained how it was necessary to continue with trade sanctions against Japan in support of British policy, particularly as Canada had recently rejected Britain's proposal to intercept neutral vessels in the Pacific. He and the MPs reached a compromise: Japan would receive a final wheat shipment of 70,000 tons because those orders had been placed just before Canada imposed export permits. Canadian farmers would profit in the short term and British Commonwealth policy would be honoured in the long term. Mackenzie King shared the welcome news with Yoshizawa, but emphasized that war must be avoided.⁶⁵ He warned that any Japanese attack against British possessions might provoke a US response. American sentiments were divided over active participation in the Atlantic, but a Pacific War would be likely to change matters. Mackenzie King reported that Yoshizawa was inclined to agree. Once again, the Prime Minister had manoeuvred Canadian foreign policy to meet domestic needs whilst maintaining visible support for British objectives.

After speaking to Yoshizawa, Mackenzie King reassured London that Canada was 'onboard' with strict export controls. On 25 April, he informed London of his talks with Yoshizawa, emphasizing that he had justified Canada's export controls as a necessary means to avoid protests in British Columbia.⁶⁶ He also reminded London that Canada's export controls against Japan, the strictest in the Commonwealth, included copper, lead, nickel, mica, cobalt and scrap metal, not to mention wheat and wood. Furthermore, he advised consultation with the Americans and suggested denunciation of the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty. On 3

⁶⁴ Ibid., 29 Apr. 1941.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 30 Apr. 1941.

⁶⁶ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, SSEA (Ottawa) to SSDA (London), Secret telegram, 25 Apr. 1941. For an example of BC protests against Canadian exports to Japan, see Ibid., Nanaimo Junior Chamber of Commerce to Allan Chambers, MP, Telegram, 16 May 1941. Nanaimo officials complained that 90,000 tons of scrap iron and other war materials had been shipped over the last six months from Victoria to Japan; they wanted Ottawa to stop the trade.

May, he reaffirmed his views in another secret telegram sent to London.⁶⁷ Mackenzie King had not simply presented himself as London's little soldier in Ottawa; he had exceeded all British expectations in terms of economic sanctions against Japan. If compliance with British policy did not undermine Canadian domestic politics, then Whitehall could count on Mackenzie King.

In June, Canadian officials, in conversation with their Allied counterparts, considered imposing even stricter economic sanctions against Japan. Such a move would be the next step in isolating Japan, although some thought it was premature. On 6 June, McGreer reported from Tokyo that Craigie and the Australian Minister were in agreement with Grew over not yet imposing further economic measures whilst the Washington talks were in a delicate phase.⁶⁸ McGreer did say, however, that his fellow diplomats believed that a common economic policy against Japan should be formed so that it could be readily applied when the time came.

That moment came when Japanese forces moved southward in French Indochina. On 15 July, Norman Robertson informed Mackenzie King that diplomatic sources suggested such a move was imminent. He reminded the Prime Minister that the Allies, along with the United States, had contemplated a 'parallel' export embargo against Japan including an asset-freeze.⁶⁹ Robertson believed that such actions would not be significant for Canada because Canadian export controls were already strict and Japanese assets held in Canada were quite small. Accordingly, Robertson arranged to delay 'all Japanese applications for the withdrawal of capital from Canada' over the next few days. On 15 July, External Affairs informed the Dominions

⁶⁷ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1793, Vol. 777, File 365 (pt. 4), SSEA (Ottawa) to SSDA (London), Secret telegram no. 71, 3 May 1941.

⁶⁸ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261434, CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 97, 6 Jun. 1941.

⁶⁹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, N.A. Robertson, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister', 15 Jul. 1941.

Office that the Canadian government had agreed to allow Britain to give Japan notice of the termination of the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty.⁷⁰ On 23 July, Mackenzie King informed London that he supported the Allied plan to participate in the proposed US asset-freeze against Japan: ‘for political and psychological reasons, we would be ready to take parallel action in respect of freezing here.’⁷¹ He also promised to consider imposing restrictions on future Japanese imports under the terms of Canada’s ‘War Exchange Conservation Act’.

But other parties wanted to delay action until US support was assured. On 23 July, Australian Prime Minister Menzies informed the Commonwealth of the absolute need for US support in the restraint of Japan.⁷² On the same day, the Canadian Legation in Washington informed Ottawa that the Americans wanted to wait for Japan to strike: ‘United States Government do not propose to take action until they are satisfied Japanese have committed overt act in Indo China.’⁷³ These delays irritated Sir Alexander Cadogan, head of the British Foreign Office, who vented his frustration in his diary entry for 24 July: ‘These stupid Dominions of course get cold feet, and don’t want to freeze Japanese assets without an assurance of support from [the] U.S. They must know that they can’t get this.’⁷⁴ In the evening of 24 July, however, the Canadian Legation confirmed that the Americans had announced an official asset-freeze against Japan, effective 26 July.

Messages over the next two days confirmed the beginning of the US-led asset-freeze. In terms of Canadian actions, Ottawa informed Tokyo on 26 July that it was terminating the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, which had been in effect with Britain since 1911 and with Canada

⁷⁰ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), SSEA (Ottawa) to SSDA (London), Most Secret telegram no. 124, 15 Jul. 1941.

⁷¹ Ibid., SSEA (Ottawa) to SSDA (London), Most Secret telegram no. 132, 23 Jul. 1941.

⁷² Ibid., P.M. Australia (Canberra) to P.M. Canada (Ottawa), et al., Secret telegram no. 4, 23 Jul. 1941.

⁷³ Ibid., CMUS (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Secret message nos. 305 and 306, 24 Jul. 1941.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Roland H. Worth, Jr., *No Choice but War: The United States Embargo against Japan and the Eruption of the Pacific War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1995), 74.

since 1913.⁷⁵ That treaty would cease to have effect in twelve months' time. Canada, as the first Allied nation to announce its support for the US-led initiative, would not suffer economically and understood that the United States would now assume responsibility for any breach with Japan that resulted from the asset-freeze. Indeed, an External Affairs report sent to Mackenzie King confirmed that Canada's support for the asset-freeze would be more psychological than material because, quite apart from strict export controls, Canada's imports from Japan had been minimized over the past three years.⁷⁶ Between 1939 and 1941, exports to Japan fell by 95 percent and imports fell by 52 percent.⁷⁷ Ottawa had already shut off Japanese trade.

Not surprisingly, Yoshizawa requested an immediate interview with Mackenzie King to protest at Canada's actions. On 27 July at the Prime Minister's Kingsmere estate, Yoshizawa expressed his grief over Canada's support of the Anglo-American asset-freeze and asked whether Canada had acted on its own.⁷⁸ Mackenzie King confirmed that Canada participated in Allied discussions about collective security, but that the final decision had been Canada's. Yoshizawa justified Japan's expansionism: Japan was denied raw materials from the ADB Powers, in particular Dutch oil and rice, and Japan could have concluded the China Incident if that nation had not received unfair assistance from Britain and America. He compared Japan's occupation of French Indochina with the US occupation of Greenland. Furthermore, he emphasized that Japan had never received advance warning of Hitler's plan to attack Russia. Mackenzie King deflected Yoshizawa's criticisms and reminded him how Japan would suffer through its

⁷⁵ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), P.M. Australia (Canberra) to P.M. Canada (Ottawa), et al., Most Secret telegram no. 5, 25 Jul. 1941; N.A. Robertson to W.L.M. King, Memorandum, 25 Jul. 1941; CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 125, 26 Jul. 1941; SSEA (Ottawa) to CMJ (Tokyo), Telegram no. 96, 26 Jul. 1941; and SSEA (Ottawa) to CMUS (Washington), Telegram, 26 Jul. 1941. See also, NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, SSEA (Ottawa) to Japanese Minister to Canada (Ottawa), Letter, 26 Jul. 1941.

⁷⁶ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, T.A.S. (External Affairs), 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister', 29 Jul. 1941.

⁷⁷ See statistics quoted in Meehan, *The Dominion and the Rising Sun*, 11, 159.

⁷⁸ NAC, RG 25, A2, Vol. 2960, File 10, W.L.M. King, Dictation: 'Interview with Minister of Japan', 27 Jul. 1941.

association with Nazi Germany. The Yoshizawa-King talks illustrated the profound differences in view between Japan and the Western Powers. Japan believed that it had been unjustly encircled and deprived of resources, whilst the West believed that economic sanctions were an appropriate response to Japan's brutal war in China and its occupation of French Indochina. It was a recipe for war in the Pacific.

Over the next two months, Canadian officials ensured that the asset-freeze would bite. On 5 August, Yoshizawa requested assurances from Ottawa that Japan would receive payment for goods now in transit from Japan to Canada.⁷⁹ Some payments were made, but no further imports were permitted. On the same day, Norman Robertson informed Mackenzie King that Cordell Hull wanted Canada to reconsider its decision to appoint a new minister to Japan.⁸⁰ Hull believed that Tokyo might interpret such an action as a sign of 'divergent views' amongst the nations participating in the asset-freeze, particularly Canada and the United States. Hull emphasized that Mackenzie King's relationship with Roosevelt allowed for the ' frankest exchange of views'. What Hull did not know was that Mackenzie King faced another diplomatic problem with Japan. The Japanese government had not only accused Canadian Charge d' Affaires McGreer and Father Marcel Fournier with espionage, as previously noted, but it had also attempted to implicate the British Embassy in Tokyo with that alleged crime. Mackenzie King, however, seemed to believe that McGreer would be cleared and that the asset-freeze had to take precedence over silly accusations in Tokyo. He bowed to Washington's request and kept McGreer in Tokyo as a show of Allied solidarity. In September, Yoshizawa finally

⁷⁹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, Japanese Minister (Ottawa) to External Affairs (Ottawa), Memorandum, 5 Aug. 1941.

⁸⁰ Ibid., N.A. Robertson, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister', 5 Aug. 1941. This memorandum is also found in NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3).

acknowledged Canada's refusal to permit Japanese cargo vessels to call at British Columbia.⁸¹

Later in the month, Mackenzie King underscored the point when he told Yoshizawa that the S.S. *Boris*, a cargo ship bound for Japan carrying 7,400 tons of scrap metal belonging to the Mitsui firm, would have its cargo unloaded and sold, possibly in Canada or the United States.⁸²

Canada's participation in the asset-freeze was complete.

On 7 September, the Dominions Office sent Ottawa a revised estimate of Japan's economic condition, now that the Allied asset-freeze was in full effect.⁸³ Once again, the Ministry of Economic Warfare had considered all aspects of Japan's economy. The resulting secret report, entitled 'Japan – Major Industrial and Raw Material Position', had been distributed throughout the Commonwealth and Empire. It stated that Japan produced enough food to be self-sufficient for two to three years, produced about nine million tons of steel annually, and produced one million tons of oil out of the seven million tons required annually for a full war footing. It estimated that Japan now had sufficient oil stocks to participate in full war for ten to twelve months. It also noted that Japan, in the face of Allied economic sanctions, was now improving its blast-furnace capacity, raw-material mining in Manchukuo, and machine-tool production. Also, Japan could rely upon Chinese and Korean labour in the event of war. But it could not completely replace the resources it had lost through the asset-freeze, and in any case, could not match Allied oil and steel production. The United States alone produced ten times as much steel and iron as Japan. Japan was now reportedly under economic strain due to its war in China, the Manchukuo Army, reduced export trade, and expanding industries, including raw-

⁸¹ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4872, Vol. 320, 271841, Seijiro Yoshizawa to W.L.M. King, Letter, 20 Sep. 1941.

⁸² Ibid., 271842–3, SSEA (Ottawa) to Japanese Minister (Ottawa), Letter, 30 Sep. 1941.

⁸³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, Ministry of Economic Warfare, Enemy Resources Dept., 'Japan – Major Industrial and Raw Material Position', 7 Sep. 1941. This report was distributed to the following London offices: Dominions Office, Colonial Office, India Office, Burma Office and JIC. Ottawa received its copy from the Dominions Office.

material production. Specifically, it laboured under the economic drain of its own military might, including the army's 22 divisions stationed in China, the navy's acquisition of resources and merchant shipping, and the estimated two million men serving in Japan's armed forces. From the Allied perspective, if the asset-freeze failed to deter Japan from aggression, then economics would limit the length of a war against Japan.

Historians continue to question the motives behind the US-led asset-freeze, which many regard as the turning point in the Far East crisis. For example, Michael Barnhart argues that the Americans initially feared provoking Japan into further expansion, but by July 1941 believed that such expansion was inevitable and imposed the asset-freeze to slow Japan's progress.⁸⁴ According to that view, the Americans believed that it was too late for effective deterrent measures. In contrast, Waldo Heinrichs argues that the Roosevelt administration froze the assets to provoke Japan into moving south against resource-rich targets in Southeast Asia, rather than moving north against the Soviet Union: Roosevelt regarded Soviet participation as crucial to the war's outcome and wanted to safeguard its interests.⁸⁵ Heinrich regards the asset-freeze as an act of wilful provocation.

However, as noted, some Allied and American commentators of the period believed that the asset-freeze would *either* bring Japan to terms *or* compel it to go to war. That assessment proved to be rather insightful, given that Japan later considered *both* options. As we know, in August and September of 1941, Konoye sought to renew US-Japanese negotiations, but was rebuffed by Roosevelt. In November, the Tojo government offered to withdraw a limited number of troops in exchange for resumed trade. It was only after the Americans rejected the

⁸⁴ Michael A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941* (Ithaca, London: Cornell UP, 1987).

⁸⁵ Waldo Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American entry into World War II* (New York, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988).

proposal on 26 November (owing to grave concerns over China's plight) that Japan proceeded with its war plans, which had been prepared well in advance in anticipation of a breach in US-Japanese negotiations. It seems that the asset-freeze allowed the Americans to influence the timing of war with Japan, although with more 'control' than Barnhart has suggested. It is beyond the scope of the present study to verify Heinrichs' view that Roosevelt chose to bait Japan into a southward drive, but his view appears to be tenable and it should be noted that few historians have challenged it. For the purposes of the present study, we may conclude that the Canadians regarded the asset-freeze as a means to deter Japan in accordance with Allied strategy, although with little economic or political risk for Canada, and as a basis for further US intervention into Far East affairs.

Hong Kong as a Deterrent Factor

Military deterrence in the Far East was another consideration and the question of Hong Kong had been debated for quite some time in British circles. Let us first draw upon the research of historian Brereton Greenhaus to place the Hong Kong question in context. To begin with, in February 1939, the British Chiefs of Staff concluded that in the event of war it was 'almost certain that Japan would attack Hong Kong'.⁸⁶ But British strategists had to decide whether or not Hong Kong could be defended against Japanese attacks. In 1938, for example, Britain's Cabinet Committee for Imperial Defence debated that matter in light of the Sino-Japanese War: 'our prestige in the Far East would seriously suffer if we showed ourselves ready to surrender the Colony to Japan without striking a blow in its defence.'⁸⁷ British strategists considered the defence of Hong Kong, even if unviable, as a matter of honour. In August 1940, the British

⁸⁶ Quoted, Greenhaus, '*C*' Force, 6. Greenhaus quoted from PRO, CAB 53/45, COS 843, 'European Appreciation, 1939-40', 21 Feb. 1939.

⁸⁷ Quoted, Ibid. Greenhaus quoted from PRO, CAB 5/9, COS (32) 596 & CID 471-C.

Chiefs of Staff reinforced that opinion: 'Hong Kong is not a vital interest and the garrison could not long withstand Japanese attack. . . . In the event of war, Hong Kong must be regarded as an outpost and held as long as possible. We should resist the inevitably strong pressure to reinforce Hong Kong'.⁸⁸ Again, the colony had to be 'held' as a matter of honour, even if losses were minimized by limiting troop placements.

In January 1941, British officials discussed the reinforcement of Hong Kong. Winston Churchill opposed such a move:

This is all wrong. If Japan goes to war with us, there is not the slightest chance of holding Hong Kong or relieving it. It is most unwise to increase the loss we shall suffer there. Instead of increasing the garrison it out to be reduced to a symbolical scale. . . . We must avoid frittering away our resources on untenable positions. Japan will think long before declaring war on the British Empire, and whether there are two or six battalions at Hong Kong will make no difference to her choice. I wish we had fewer troops there, but to move any would be noticeable and dangerous.⁸⁹

But some of the service chiefs disagreed. Air Chief Marshall Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, Commander in Chief Far East, wanted a larger garrison in Hong Kong: 'it seems no longer a question of reducing our losses in Hong Kong but of ensuring the security of places that will be of great value in taking offensive action at a later stage of war.'⁹⁰ Brooke-Popham argued that two extra battalions would make Hong Kong more defensible, encourage China in its resistance to Japanese aggression, and serve as a strategic deterrent to Japan. Rear-Admiral Sir Tom Phillips, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff at the Admiralty, believed that Hong Kong could be 'properly defended with 15-inch guns and everything else we can put there.'⁹¹ Despite

⁸⁸ Quoted, *Ibid.*, 10. Greenhous quoted from PRO, CAB 80/15, COS (40) 592 (Revise), 'The Situation in the Far East in the Event of Japanese Intervention', 15 Aug. 1940.

⁸⁹ Quoted, *Ibid.*, 11. Greenhous quoted from Winston Churchill, *The Grand Alliance* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950), 177.

⁹⁰ Quoted, *Ibid.*, 10. Greenhous quoted from PRO, WO 106/2418, COS (41) 18 & 51, CinC Far East to Air Ministry, 6 and 18 Jan. 1941. See also Ferris, 'Savage Christmas' in Bercuson and Wise (eds.), *The Valour*, 115.

⁹¹ Quoted, *Ibid.*, 10–11. Greenhous quoted from PRO, ADM 116/4271, Phillips to DCOS, Minutes, 3 and 8 Jan. 1941.

Churchill's views, there was a growing view in certain quarters that Hong Kong just might be defensible.

Canadian involvement in Hong Kong matters really began in the late summer of 1941. In August, Major-General A.E. Grasett, a Canadian who had served as Commanding Officer of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Force since November 1938, retired from his Hong Kong command and returned to London via Ottawa. Several years before, Grasett had thought that the defence of Hong Kong involved 'unjustifiable' risks, but in 1939 had changed his opinion and argued that such defence was now viable, owing to inferior Japanese military training.⁹² In Ottawa, Grasett expressed these views to his old RMC classmate, H.D.G. Crerar, now Chief of Canadian General Staff. According to Crerar, Grasett informed him that 'the addition of two or more battalions to the forces then at Hong Kong would render the garrison strong enough to withstand for an extensive period of siege an attack by such forces as the Japanese could bring to bear against it.'⁹³

In London, Grasett asked the British Chiefs of Staff about a Canadian contribution to Hong Kong. Major-General Sir John Kennedy, Director of Operations, did not want to send reinforcements, but his peers did not share that view. On 10 September, the British Chiefs of Staff finally agreed to Grasett's proposal, believing that two or more battalions 'would have a very great moral effect in the whole of the Far East and it would show Chiang Kai-shek that we really intend to fight it out at Hong Kong.'⁹⁴ The Chiefs also thought that Canadian reinforcement of Hong Kong would complement British-Australian reinforcement of Malaya and

⁹² Quoted, *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹³ Quoted, *Ibid.*, 15. Greenhous quoted from Sir Lyman P. Duff, *Report on the Canadian Expeditionary Force to the Crown Colony of Hong Kong* (Ottawa: Canadian Government, 1942), 14. See also J.L. Granatstein, *The Generals: The Canadian Army's Senior Commanders in the Second World War* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1993), 98–9.

⁹⁴ Quoted, *Ibid.*, 16. Greenhous quoted from PRO, PREM 3/157/1, Hollis to Churchill, 10 Sep. 1941. See also Ferris, 'Savage Christmas', in Bercuson and Wise (eds.), *The Valour*, 116–17.

US reinforcement of the Philippines: these moves might deter Japan from further expansion. Thus was born the plan to send Canadian reinforcements to Hong Kong, a move that was more political than military in its nature. The plan had been initiated by Grasett, backed by the British, and promised to provide deterrent value whilst maintaining British honour and prestige at a remote outpost in the Far East.

All that remained now was official Canadian assent to an official British request. On 19 September, the Dominions Office sent External Affairs a formal request for two Canadian battalions to be sent to Hong Kong. That request explained how such reinforcements would 'increase the strength of the garrison out of all proportion to the actual numbers involved' and boost the morale of the Far East, whilst reassuring Chiang Kai-Shek that Britain intended to hold Hong Kong.⁹⁵ Major C.G. 'Chubby' Power, acting Minister of National Defence in J.L. Ralston's absence (he was on holiday in the United States), along with General Crerar, agreed to Britain's request. At a Cabinet War Committee meeting on 23 September, Mackenzie King accepted Power's and Crerar's recommendations. On 24 September, Crerar wrote to Ralston that 'the dispatch of troops was ultimately a political as well as moral decision' and that it was 'an important link in imperial co-operation.'⁹⁶ During a meeting of the Cabinet War Committee, Mackenzie King was reluctant to agree with the plan, which he thought might later be used as an argument for overseas conscription, but the urgency of Britain's request compelled him to reconsider.⁹⁷ The fact that Canada had recently rejected Britain's request for Canadian troop

⁹⁵ DHH, 112.3M2 (D251), File: 'Hong Kong Forces, Oct. 41/Oct. 45', Major-General C.G.S. to the Minister, Most Secret HQS 8873: 'Canadian Battalions – Hong Kong', 24 Sep. 1941. This report also discussed how reserve battalions were going to be rotated into position within Canada so that coastal defence could be maintained after the Hong Kong battalions departed. See also, Ibid., Col. DMO & I to CGS, Secret message HQS 8873: 'Replacement of Units Selected for Service in Hong Kong', 2 Oct. 1941.

⁹⁶ Quoted, Greenhous, '*C' Force*', 17. Greenhous quoted from DHH, 593.009 (D5), Crerar to Ralston, 24 Sep. 1941.

⁹⁷ NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 18 Dec. 1941. In his diary entry for 18 December, Mackenzie King spoke of the Cabinet War Committee meeting of 2 October.

reinforcements in North Africa also put pressure on Canadian officials to agree to the Hong Kong plan. Finally, on 2 October, External Affairs informed the Dominions Office that Canada had officially agreed to Britain's request.

Canada's decision to reinforce Hong Kong must be seen in its proper context. It is tempting to condemn the decision in light of the tragedy that followed. As we have seen, however, a growing number of British and Canadian strategists saw deterrence value in Hong Kong, even up until the autumn of 1941. This is not necessarily surprising: the asset-freeze brought the risk of war, but some thought that it still might bring Japan to terms, and the Allies were well aware that the Konoye government sought to renew negotiations with Washington in August and September. Deterrence still seemed to be a viable option when the decision was made to reinforce Hong Kong.

Next, Canadian military officials created 'C' Force, which would serve in Hong Kong. Brigadier J.K. Lawson was appointed as commander of 'C' Force, which included 1,973 Canadian soldiers from the Royal Rifles and Winnipeg Grenadiers regiments.⁹⁸ C.G. Power had a personal interest in the selection of the Royal Rifles from Quebec: his own son served in that regiment. On 16 October, the Directorate of Military Intelligence in Ottawa sent Lawson 'the latest Intelligence Reports from Shanghai and Hong Kong commands' along with information on the Japanese Army.⁹⁹ After brief preparations, on 27 October, 'C' Force set sail from Vancouver aboard the HMT *Awatea* and HMCS *Prince Robert*, arriving at Hong Kong on 16 November. The stage had been set for a future tragedy in the Far East.

Throughout November as the Far East crisis unfolded, British and Canadian officials tried to rationalize the reinforcement of Hong Kong with Canadian soldiers. On 6 November,

⁹⁸ Quoted, Greenhous, '*C' Force*', 28.

⁹⁹ DHH, 112.3M2 (D251), Brig. R.B. Gibson, Memorandum: 'Action by D.M.O. & I. In Respect of The Despatch of The Force to Hong Kong', 23 Feb. 1942.

the British Chiefs of Staff sent Brooke-Popham a message in which they emphasized Hong Kong's deterrent value alongside similar reinforcements that the Americans had made in the Philippines:

It has now become possible for U.S.A. and ourselves to take a more forward line in the Far East. . . . Our reinforcement of Hong Kong will show China that in spite of other commitments we intend to fight it out at Hong Kong and it will also have salutary effect on Japanese. . . . Canada, by providing these troops, will be accepting wider commitment in imperial defence similar to that assumed by Australia in Malaya.¹⁰⁰

Again, Hong Kong evoked the themes of Allied deterrence, British honour and imperial solidarity. On 10 November, Canadian officials prepared a draft announcement of 'C' Force's arrival in Hong Kong. The draft reminded Canadians that the government welcomed this 'further commitment' to the war effort and that collective security was at stake: 'In view of her position as a Pacific Power, Canada has a special interest in the question of security in that area'.¹⁰¹ On 16 November, Mackenzie King noted in his diary that the timing of the arrival of the Hong Kong reinforcements was good as they arrived just before Kurusu had in Washington.¹⁰² For Mackenzie King, Hong Kong had potential deterrent value in light of the forthcoming Washington talks.

Furthermore, there was no doubt that the residents of Hong Kong welcomed the Canadians. A Dutch construction engineer based in Hong Kong offered the following account: 'Somehow, their arrival apparently cinched Hong Kong's complacency. In 1939, nobody had thought Hong Kong could be defended successfully. After the arrival of the few thousand Canadians, everybody felt that the Crown Colony could and would be defended successfully. It

¹⁰⁰ Quoted, Ferris, 'Savage Christmas', in Bercuson and Wise (eds.), *The Valour*, 117.

¹⁰¹ DHH, 112.3M2 (D251), H. DesRosiers, Acting Deputy Minister (Army), to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Ottawa), Secret message HQS 20-1-20, FD7, 10 Nov. 1941.

¹⁰² NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King, Diary entry, 16 Nov. 1941.

was a psychological miracle I am unable to explain.’¹⁰³ Perhaps the ‘miracle’ involved basic denial of Japan’s military capability, an attitude fostered by government authorities. In any case, the Canadian reinforcements at Hong Kong had satisfied public opinion whilst meeting imperial requirements.

But what exactly were those imperial requirements on the eve of the Pacific War? By late November, it was obvious to Allied observers that war was coming and that no deterrent measures were going to stop Japan from altering its course of action. After 26 November, according to multiple sources, the Allies anticipated Japanese strikes in Southeast Asia. According to post-war anecdotal evidence, some even anticipated a Japanese strike at Pearl Harbor. To explain why the Canadians remained in Hong Kong on the eve of the anticipated war, we must look at Allied rationale for their placement there in the first place: Allied deterrence, British honour and imperial solidarity. Ruling out deterrence, which was no longer viable by late November, we are left with British honour and imperial solidarity. In the military culture of the period, Hong Kong could not be abandoned without a fight. As previously noted, one Canadian analyst expressed that view whilst assessing a Far East intelligence report that suggested troops should never have been sent to Hong Kong. In the British Empire of 1941, one did not simply evacuate a doomed outpost, for honour had to be upheld in the face of defeat. In terms of imperial solidarity, the Canadian troops served as an example of collective security and wider participation in the war. The Canadians in Hong Kong, along with the British in Singapore and the Australians in Malaya, shared defence responsibilities and would ultimately share in Britain’s losses throughout the Far East. The Commonwealth public at large might be further motivated to fight on in a wider war if all Dominions had been involved in the first place.

¹⁰³ Quoted, Greenhous, ‘C’ Force, 35–6. Greenhous quoted from J.H. Marsman, *I Escaped From Hong Kong* (New York, 1942), 9.

In short, Hong Kong, like Pearl Harbor and Singapore, might have public relations value even in defeat.

Yet the men on Hong Kong would have to pay the price for British honour and imperial solidarity. On Christmas day in December 1941, 'C' Force along with its British counterpart surrendered to the Imperial Japanese Army, which had thrown an entire reinforced division against the battalions at Hong Kong.¹⁰⁴ Mackenzie King and Churchill showed great remorse for the loss, but avoided assuming direct responsibility.¹⁰⁵ For Mackenzie King, the tragedy resulted from Britain's inappropriate request for Canadian troops. For Churchill, who had originally argued against reinforcement, the troops were only there to provide defence in a nominal sense. In Canada, accusations would later be made that the Canadian battalions were not sufficiently trained or provided with adequate military intelligence, but the simple fact remained that no token Allied force was going to win the day against a full Japanese land attack.¹⁰⁶ Allied assessments had come to that conclusion years before and, by late November 1941, 'deterrent measures' had ceased to be an issue. Canadian and British soldiers at Hong Kong were there to uphold British honour and to ensure that the anticipated Pacific War was seen as a cause worthy of full Allied participation. In that regard, the soldiers at Hong Kong were not alone: British Malayan forces faced about 100,000 Japanese soldiers, whilst US Philippine forces faced about 50,000. Both the British Commonwealth and the United States were now committed to maximum effort in the Far East.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 31. Hong Kong faced the reinforced 38th Division of the Japanese 23rd Army.

¹⁰⁵ NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 18 and 29 Dec. 1941, 22 and 28 Jan. 1942.

¹⁰⁶ George Drew, a Canadian MP serving in the opposition Conservative Party, complained of untrained troops and an unsuccessful voluntary recruitment plan (Drew's party was committed to conscription). Drew also believed that the Canadian government should have reconsidered the plan to reinforce Hong Kong in October 1941, when Tojo assumed control of Japan. Despite Conservative opposition, on 28 July 1942, Mackenzie King won a parliamentary vote of confidence over Hong Kong. See Granatstein, *Canada's War*, n.211, 224, and n.240, 242; and Pickersgill, *The Mackenzie King Record*, 403–7. For further Conservative reactions to the Hong Kong debacle, see Granatstein, *The Politics of Survival*, 119–24.

Conclusions

Canada participated in Allied strategies to contain Japan, provided that these strategies promised deterrence, not provocation. During the Princeton Conference and Anglo-American Pacific Naval Conference, Canadian observers noted that both US and British officials advocated the containment of Japan, although officials still wanted to avoid war in the first instance. Initially, economic sanctions and military deterrence were seen as the answers. It became quite evident to Canadian observers that British officials were almost begging their US counterparts to reinforce Singapore as well as Pearl Harbor, although US deterrent measures were restricted to the latter. In early 1941, Canada sought to avoid confrontation with Japan because the Mackenzie King government feared the prospect of a war without US participation. Accordingly, Canada blocked Britain's attempts to establish a system of neutral ship inspections in the Pacific: Canada sought deterrence, not provocation. It also carefully avoided the potentially damaging consequences of Japan's espionage charges: Canada could not be seen to derail the diplomatic process.

Meanwhile, the Dominion enthusiastically supported Allied and American economic sanctions against Japan because it could afford to do so, both economically and politically. Canada had already cut most of its trade with Japan and its participation in further Allied sanctions was more symbolic than material. It was known that the US-led asset-freeze, which Canada fully supported, would either bring Japan to terms or compel it to go to war. From the Canadian perspective, the asset-freeze might still deter Japan, but in any case would serve as a basis for further US intervention into Far East affairs. Even if the asset-freeze led to war with Japan, US participation seemed to be assured. Japan would lose all its imported US oil, about 70 percent of its total requirements, and see America, not Canada, as its principal antagonist.

Canada met Britain's request to provide troop reinforcements to Hong Kong because Allied commentators initially believed that such an action would have deterrent value. Some thought that Allied troop placements throughout the Far East might discourage Japan from further expansion. Moreover, the Konoye government sought a rapprochement with Washington during the period when the decision was taken to reinforce Hong Kong. In late November, however, when the imminence of war undermined the deterrent value of the troops, it was too late to withdraw because British honour and imperial solidarity were at stake.

It is clear that Canada supported Allied measures thought to have deterrent value, but it is questionable whether or not Britain saw all proposed measures as deterrence, rather than encirclement. As early as December 1940, Britain had proposed secret economic and naval conferences, almost in tandem, and later pushed Canada for neutral ship inspections in the Pacific. If Canada had participated in such inspections and entered into a conflict with Japan, would the United States have rushed to its side, owing to the Monroe Doctrine and the Kingston Address? Certainly, Mackenzie King did not think so. Did all Allied strategists want the asset-freeze to succeed in deterring Japan? One outcome could be a war with Japan, but with a much greater probability of active US participation. On the question of Hong Kong, we must conclude that some British strategists really did see troop reinforcements as a deterrent measure, even if they were completely wrong. All told, British strategy seemed to involve deterring Japan from further expansion whilst exploring every opportunity to secure US co-belligerency through a Pacific 'incident'. Further to that aim, Britain's decision to abstain from the delicate negotiations with Japan would leave America solely responsible for any diplomatic breach.

Canada succeeded in moderating British Pacific strategy at times, but ultimately fulfilled its role as Britain's senior ally in the British Commonwealth. After the asset-freeze, Canada was

free to pursue a more vigorous Far East policy because US participation appeared to be assured.

But how did the Dominion regard its own security during all these attempts to contain Japan?

We will now examine Canadian strategies to defend the coastline and the North Pacific.

Chapter 7

Guarding the Coast: Canadian Defence Strategy for the North Pacific

The Pacific Coast held both military and political significance for the Mackenzie King government during the Second World War. Military strategists had long predicted the possibility of a Japanese or a Soviet North Pacific campaign, involving coastal raids, submarine attacks or island hopping through the Aleutians. Political strategists realized that Pacific Coast defence was a means to keep Canadian troops on domestic service, so as to avoid an overseas conscription crisis. This chapter discusses military strategy, as formed by the Canadian armed services working in conjunction with Ottawa officials, in three parts. The first part, composed of three sections, examines general strategy regarding Pacific Coast defence, cooperation between the RCN and the USN, and RCAF strategy. We will see how Canadian strategists regarded potential threats from Japan and the Soviet Union, how they planned for joint Canadian-US defence of the Pacific Coast, and how they proposed to improve coastal surveillance. The second part examines how Canadian officials dealt with the Japanese Canadians in British Columbia. We will learn how the Dominion government sought to address British Columbia's concerns over the Japanese Canadians, even whilst attempting to maintain a few civil rights for the Asian community. The third part examines how Canada prepared for the Pacific War, with particular reference to the defence of the coast and North Pacific shipping. We will learn how Canada invoked the ABC-1 Agreement on the eve of the war and how the RCN sought to protect Allied shipping in the North Pacific, where it anticipated naval action. In 1941, Canadian strategists, working closely with their US counterparts, not only prepared for Japanese coastal

and North Pacific raids, but also sought to reduce opportunities for coastal espionage through the relocation of the Japanese-Canadian community.

General Strategy regarding Pacific Coast Defence: The Japanese and Soviet Factors

On several occasions in 1941, Canadian authorities considered the defence of the Pacific Coast. Part of such planning included British strategic assessments. On 7 January, the British High Commission in Ottawa sent Mackenzie King a British War Cabinet report entitled 'Possible Scale of Japanese Attack on the American Coast'.¹ The report explained that a Japanese expedition against the coast was improbable because of fuel, food, water and supply problems for a 5,000-mile voyage. But Alaska offered another route: 'An attempt at a progressive advance on Canada via the Aleutian Islands presents an easier problem of maintenance. A shuttle service might be established from Japan through the Kurils and Aleutians by which advanced supplies could be built up.'² It was noted that the Alaska route sacrificed initial surprise and invited attack from USN bases in the Aleutians and in Pearl Harbor. The report suggested that a probable course of enemy action might be Japanese coastal raids using cruisers or even carriers, although Allied air counterattacks would minimize the risk.

Canada also considered the Soviet factor in terms of coastal defence. On 19 April 1941, the Naval Secretary in Ottawa distributed a Secret RCMP report of 16 February entitled 'Ships passing through Bering Straits' to the DNI at the Admiralty, the FECB in Singapore, the

¹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1793, Vol. 777, File 365 (pt. 4): 'War-Japan, Japan-Political and Economic Situation (1939-1941)', Gerald Campbell, British High Commission (Ottawa) to W.L.M. King (Ottawa), Most Secret letter, 7 Jan. 1941. Campbell's letter included the following report: T.S.V. Phillips, Vice Chief of Naval Staff, 'Possible Scale of Japanese Attack on the American Coast', War Cabinet Report, COS (40) 970, 22 Nov. 1940.

² Ibid.

intelligence officer in Shanghai, and the Commander in Chief in Bermuda.³ The report began with an historical survey of Arctic travel including the failed Russian 'Goodwill Flight' in 1937 from Moscow to California over the Arctic Ocean (the aeroplane went down in the Arctic). More significantly, the report discussed the strategic implications of US, Canadian and Russian navigation through the Bering Straits. The Russians, who used the Straits extensively to supply their Siberian ports, might threaten Alaska and the North American Pacific Coast through bases at Herschel Island and Diomed Island. Mr. R.B.C. Mundy, a former RCMP sergeant who worked for Esquimalt naval intelligence, attempted to verify rumours concerning the presence of a Russian base at Diomed Island, but was unsuccessful. The report explained that 'Germany and Russia together control the entire Arctic Coast line from Norway to the Bering Sea, and in view of the fact that Spitzbergen produces enormous coal supplies, this would enable Russian and German shipping to operate in the Arctic continuously without having to come south even to refuel.'⁴ The report concluded that Alaska and the Northwest Territories were a 'Wide Open Door' for invaders, given Russia's advanced Arctic capabilities.

In May, Canadian authorities discussed the movement of US ships and aircraft within Canadian coastal areas, including the Pacific Coast. On 6 May, Adolph Berle, writing on behalf of Cordell Hull, asked Leighton McCarthy, Canadian Minister in Washington, to consider having discussions on reciprocal landing rights for each nation's ships and aircraft.⁵ Four months later, the Canadian Legation agreed to US-Canadian reciprocal landing rights

³ NAC, RG24, D11, Vol. 11764, File: PC 09-6-3, 'Bering Straits, Ships Passing Through'; Sgt. H.A. Larsen, RCMP St. Roch (Walker Bay, NWT) to Officer Commanding, RCMP 'G' Division (Ottawa), Secret Report entitled 'Ships passing through Bering Straits', 16 Feb. 1941; and J.O. Cossette, Naval Secretary (Ottawa) to COPC (Esquimalt), Secret Memorandum, 19 Apr. 1941.

⁴ Ibid., Secret Report, 4.

⁵ NAC, RG 25, B3, Vol. 2151, File 133: 'National Defence: Western Hemisphere, 1941', sub-file 1, Adolph Berle, State Dept. (Washington), to Leighton McCarthy, Canadian Legation (Washington), Letter, 6 May 1941.

including permission for US aircraft to land at Esquimalt and RCAF stations.⁶ On 17 May, the Canadian Legation in Washington reminded Cordell Hull that USN vessels operating in Canadian waters had to report their movements to Canadian coastal commands. It was noted that USN vessels were allowed to operate in Canadian zones under the terms of 'Western Hemisphere Defence Plan No. 2', but identification was required 'to prevent false enemy reports being passed on, and to remove the possibility of offensive action being taken against the vessels in question.'⁷ The Canadian Legation took coastal defence quite seriously.

In August, Canadian officials in C.G. Power's Air Ministry planned to create a 'torpedo dropping area' along the Pacific Coast. That scheme would allow RCAF pilots and aircrew to use aerial torpedoes against practice targets, a technique that might be needed in the event of enemy action along the coast. On 23 August, External Affairs officials told the Canadian Legation in Washington that 'a torpedo dropping area approximately nine miles square is required for the use of No. 25 Operational Training Unit, Patricia Bay' and that the area would be used for both 'running drops' and 'torpedo camera training'.⁸ External Affairs instructed Legation staff to seek US permission because the training area overlapped with two square miles of US waters. It seems likely that Britain's successful use of aerial torpedoes against the Italian fleet at Taranto had made an impact on the Canadians, just as it had the Japanese.

In October, further plans were made to ensure that the Pacific Coast was adequately defended. As mentioned, Canadian officials had already agreed to US-Canadian reciprocal landing rights for ships and aircraft, but now the Americans wanted to build a coastal highway to Alaska. Accordingly, Highway Commission officials in Canada studied the matter and

⁶ Ibid., sub-file 11, H.H. Wrong, Canadian Legation (Washington), to Cordell Hull, State Dept. (Washington), Letter no. 577, 13 Sep. 1941.

⁷ Ibid., sub-file 1, Wrong to Hull, Secret letter, 17 May 1941.

⁸ Ibid., External Affairs (Ottawa) to Canadian Legation (Washington), Memorandum, 23 Aug. 1941.

produced a document entitled 'Report on the proposed highway through British Columbia and the Yukon Territory to Alaska'.⁹ The report concluded that the Alaska Highway was necessary for coastal defence and the protection of the fisheries, which might be of interest to the Japanese. The Canadians agreed with the US proposal and later participated in plans for construction of the highway.

In late 1941, strategic reports also focused on the Soviet Union's value as an ally of the Anglo-American Powers. Before the German-Soviet War, strategists had seen Russia as a potential threat to the Pacific Coast, but now Russia might serve as a deterrent against Japanese expansionism, thereby reducing Japan's ability to threaten the coast. On 18 November, the Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence (DMO&I) in Ottawa sent the Canadian Legation in Washington a Secret report on the Russian Army. The report portrayed the Russians as valiant warriors in the Allied cause: 'The brightest spots in the picture are the almost incredible determination and unity of purpose of the Soviet peoples'.¹⁰ The Soviets were praised for wisely withdrawing machinery and personnel eastwards to resume war production whilst the Allies continued to send war supplies. Moreover, the Soviets were assumed to have a strong presence in the Far East: 'Nor is there any reason to believe that the Russian armies which remain in the Far East, are not a fair match in point of numbers and equipment for any attack which Japan may now undertake.'¹¹ The report seemed to express every confidence in the Soviets.

⁹ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261591-9, British Columbia, Yukon, Alaska Highway Commission Canada, 'Report on the proposed highway through British Columbia and the Yukon Territory to Alaska', 15 Oct. 1941.

¹⁰ DHH, 314.009 (D160), File: 'Notes on Russian Army, Etc., Nov 41-Jan 42, DMI Files', Intelligence Section, General Staff (Ottawa), 'The Russian Army and the Present Campaign', Secret Report, 18 Nov. 1941.

¹¹ Ibid.

On 4 December, MI2 Military Intelligence in Ottawa produced a seventeen-page Secret report on Russia that emphasized its supposed strength in the Far East. The report offered a more blunt appraisal of Soviet success: 'Stalin himself is the key to Russian Policy. The Soviet Union is exclusively controlled by him and his men . . . Stalin is extravagantly ruthless. The Russian Terror was itself a wholesale punitive assault on a class. But it is this same ruthlessness which supplied the driving force behind the immense industrialization of Russia'.¹² The report also discussed the Allied armaments shipments to Russia as well as Japan's criticism of that action. Soviet strength in the Far East continued to be emphasized: 'The Far Eastern Army is self contained, estimated to include some: 30 Infantry Divisions plus the equivalent of 15 Cavalry and Armoured Divisions Plus Corps troops. In all an approximate total strength of 600,000 men. The Russians have always been confident that their Siberian troops will make Japan think twice before attacking.'¹³ As these figures constitute an exaggeration of Soviet Far East forces at that time, it is quite likely that Stalin's staff supplied the Allies with such information for the purpose of placating the Allies and scaring Japan.

One of the more insightful passages in the report concerned the United States' position in the Far East:

Both Russia and the United States warned Japan; and today there looms the possibility that the United States might enter the war fighting Japan. In any event it is to the United States interests now to go to all possible lengths to keep Russia fighting, no matter what displeasure that aid incurs in Japan. For (it is believed by most observers) that the fall of Moscow would almost certainly embolden Japan in her "expansion" policy in the Far East; to the danger of American interests there.¹⁴

That observation was rather poignant given that President Roosevelt himself was committed to supporting Russia and keeping that nation in the war against Germany for as long as possible. In

¹² DHH, 112.3M1023 (D9), File: 'Int. Survey of Russia, DMI d/4 Dec 41', MI2 Military Intelligence, General Staff (Ottawa), 'Russia', Secret Report, 4 Dec. 1941, 3.

¹³ Ibid., 11.

¹⁴ Ibid., 15–16.

terms of Pacific matters, Japan might never get the chance to conduct nuisance raids along the Pacific Coast if it faced so many threats to its domestic security.

Even so, following Japan's attacks throughout the Pacific, the Canadian forces intensified their preparations for possible attacks against coastal areas.¹⁵ Canadian intelligence staff gradually learned that the Soviets were unlikely in the near future to enter into the war against Japan. On 7 January 1942, Military Intelligence offered a lecture on the 'Russian Campaign' at the Royal Military College in Kingston. Part of that lecture concerned Anthony Eden's long conversation with Stalin on 16 December 1941: 'As regards Japan, he [Stalin] said very briefly that he regretted, in present circumstances, he could not help us. In the spring, however, he would be in a position to do so.'¹⁶ Later, the Allies would learn that Russia's conflict with Germany was so intense that Stalin would not fight Japan until he had achieved total victory in Europe.

Consequently, Canadian authorities contemplated various defence measures and also increased troops and aircraft/naval cover along the Pacific Coast. Some Canadian officers even considered producing mustard gas for use against any Japanese invaders who might instigate chemical warfare. In January 1942, one report offered the following justification: 'Japan has used gas in China. . . . Germany is collecting stocks of gas on invasion coasts'.¹⁷ Furthermore, Canadian officers met their US counterparts and considered using Alaska as a base from which to launch Allied attacks against Japan, a measure that might also forestall a

¹⁵ A complete understanding of Pacific Coast defence and security preparations in late 1941 will have to await the declassification of certain files. For example, the following files are restricted in terms of content from late 1941: NAC, RG 24, D11, Vol. 11768, File PC S-019-2-8, part 1 (1941–1942): 'Flag Officer Pacific Coast – Security Intelligence Reports, MD11'; and File PC S-019-2-11, part 1 (1942–1945): 'Flag Officer Pacific Coast – Weekly Reports, Esquimalt' (no associated file from 1941 has been released).

¹⁶ DHH, 314.009 (D160), Intelligence Section, General Staff, 'The Russian Campaign', Lecture at RMC, Kingston, 7 Jan. 1942.

¹⁷ DHH, 193.009 (D4), Chiefs of Staff (Canada), Brief: 'Chemical Warfare', 20 Jan. 1942. In the same file collection, see also Joint Services Committee (Pacific Coast), Meeting no. 17: 'Dealing with Japanese in Coastal Areas in the Event of an Emergency', 20 Feb. 1942.

Japanese occupation of the Aleutians. In March 1942, however, a meeting on the subject produced these conclusions: weather conditions prevented North Pacific operations from occurring until the spring/summer; the Americans could not launch an offensive because of limited aircraft; and Russia would be unlikely to 'intervene on the Pacific while involved on the European front.'¹⁸ Canadian authorities continued to regard Pacific coastal defence as an important issue, but events proved that Japan could not overcome the vast distances involved in operations against North America. Japanese attacks along the Pacific Coast were limited to submarine torpedo attacks and minor coastal shelling. Japanese troops never landed in BC and neither side ever resorted to mustard gas. In June 1942, the Japanese occupied two Aleutian Islands, Attu and Kiska, but the arrival of an US-Canadian task force in May 1943 compelled them to abandon both islands by the summer.¹⁹ Perhaps the Aleutians were 'stepping stones to nowhere', just as historian Galen Perras has suggested.

RCN-USN Cooperation, December 1940 to November 1941

On 17 December 1940, the RCN created its own operational plan with which to implement the 'Joint Canadian – United States Basic Defence Plan, 1940'.²⁰ The RCN emphasized how the original PJDB joint-defence plan provided for the direct defence of the North American continent in the event of any of the following incidents: an Axis victory over British naval and air forces; attacks on the Eastern Seaboard with major portions of the USN in the Atlantic; or Japanese control of the Western Pacific with raids on coastal targets in Alaska,

¹⁸ DHH, 193.009 (D5), 'Report of Meeting held at Headquarters, 13th Naval District Seattle, at 1000 hours, Friday, 6 March, 1942', 2.

¹⁹ 30,000 Americans and 5,000 Canadians formed the joint task force that liberated Attu and Kiska. In May and June 1943, the Japanese fought at Attu before surrendering, but in August they simply abandoned Kiska without a fight.

²⁰ NAC, RG24, D11, Vol. 11764, File: PC 010–9–1: 'Operational Plan of R.C.N. to implement "Joint Can. – U.S. Basic Defence Plan, 1940"', J.O. Cossette, Naval Secretary, NSHQ (Ottawa) to COPC (Esquimalt), Most Secret memorandum, 31 Mar. 1941.

British Columbia and the northwestern states. The Pacific portion of the plan included the defence of naval bases at Dutch Harbour, Kodiak and Sitka, along with army bases at Anchorage and Fairbanks, as well as the defence of naval bases at Esquimalt, Victoria, Vancouver and Prince Rupert, complete with coastline patrols from Oregon to British Columbia. US and Canadian service groups had already coordinated aircraft warning schemes and meteorological services, and the two countries had already exchanged naval attachés at Ottawa and Washington. Upon the US entry into the war, however, a joint command would be established with an exchange of liaison officers at Ottawa and Washington, and at Seattle and Esquimalt. Furthermore, USN codes and cyphers would supersede the Canadian versions for intercommunication. The RCN carefully considered all aspects of the original 'Joint Canadian – United States Basic Defence Plan, 1940', including Pacific defence matters.

Canadian and US naval authorities continually developed closer links throughout 1941. From December 1940 to February 1941, Esquimalt and Seattle exchanged coastal defence information and planned for joint coastal patrols and convoys.²¹ These plans included laying minefields, installing torpedo nets, creating a seaplane anchorage at Aliford Bay, building a 'hydrophone listening control hut' on Vancouver Island, designating Port McNeill as an assembly point for Seattle–Alaska convoys, and establishing a trans-shipment centre at Prince Rupert for supply-runs to Alaska. On 24 February, Lieutenant-Commander Ivan S. Day, RCN Staff Officer, Intelligence, in Esquimalt, known also as 'SO (I)', reported to Commodore W.J.R. Beech, Commanding Officer Pacific Coast (COPC) Esquimalt, on his visit with USN

²¹ NAC, RG24, D11, Vol. 11764, File PC 010–9: 'Joint Defence Liaison with U.S. Authorities – General Policy and Definitions'; COPC (Esquimalt) to Naval Secretary, NSHQ (Ottawa), Secret letter, 13 Dec. 1940; COPC (Esquimalt) to SO (I) (Esquimalt), Memorandum, 13 Jan. 1941; J.O. Cossette, Naval Secretary (Ottawa) to COPC (Esquimalt), Memorandum, 3 Feb. 1941; and COPC (Esquimalt) to Naval Secretary, NSHQ (Ottawa), Secret letter, 20 Feb. 1941.

intelligence staff in Seattle.²² Day and the Americans exchanged information on coastal facilities and discussed W/T intelligence procedures in preparation for the implementation of the 'Joint Canadian – United States Basic Defence Plan, 1940'. Day sent a separate report to Captain Brand in Ottawa, which was normal reporting procedure for RCN intelligence officers. In March, Commander C.S. Freeman, Commandant of the USN 13th Naval District in Seattle, decided that Lieutenant-Commander Glenn F. Howell would serve as his District Liaison Officer to Canada.²³

On 25 March, Howell, along with Captain F.S. Craven, USN, and Harold Swan, British Consul in Seattle, visited Esquimalt to discuss possible communications links between there and Seattle.²⁴ It was decided that secret correspondence between the two stations would be passed through Harold Swan. Furthermore, both naval forces made a commitment to improve coastal defences and to monitor small craft such as fishing boats. Craven argued for improved air patrols and the use of 'hydrophone buoys' to transmit sound data. According to Craven, the USN believed that in the event of war with Japan, it was unlikely that heavy enemy warships would operate on North American Pacific Coast, although air and submarine attacks were possible.

On 28 March, the Bermuda station sent Ottawa a detailed report entitled "'Y" and D/F Co-operation with U.S. Navy'.²⁵ The report explained that Lieutenant W.S.L. Bartram, an RNVR 'Y' officer stationed in Bermuda, had travelled to Washington to assess USN intelligence

²² Ibid., Lt.-Cmdr. I.S. Day, SO (I) (Esquimalt), to COPC (Esquimalt), Report, 24 Feb. 1941.

²³ Ibid., Capt. F.S. Craven, 13ND (Seattle), to COPC (Esquimalt), Letters, 3 and 14 Mar. 1941.

²⁴ Ibid., COPC (Esquimalt) to Naval Secretary, NSHQ (Ottawa), Secret letter, 'Liaison with U.S. Naval Authorities', 9 Apr. 1941.

²⁵ NAC, RG24, D1b, Vol. 3805, File 1008-75-12 (vol. 1): 'D/F and "Y" Co-operation with US Navy', Vice-Adm. C.E. Kennedy-Purvis, CinC, America and West Indies Station (Bermuda) to Admiralty, copied to Naval Attaché (Washington) and NSHQ (Ottawa), Report: "'Y" and D/F Co-operation with U.S. Navy', 28 March 1941. This report is also found in NARA, MMRB, RG38, Crane – Inactive Stations, 370/27/24/1, Box 21, 3270/1, 'Canada – Canadian/British Evaluation of U.S. HFDF Operations; 16 Jul 41 – 1 Apr 45'.

capabilities. Bartram observed that the USN wanted full cooperation on intelligence matters including the exchange of D/F bearings as well as further links with the Bermuda station, which was already sending weekly 'Y' reports to Commander Laurance F. Safford, head of OP-20-G in Washington, in exchange for similar USN reports. He criticized the USN D/F network, which he felt was limited by the use of slow, manually rotated D/F systems, but listed an impressive array of USN stations located in the Atlantic, Caribbean, Pacific Coast, Mid-Pacific and Asiatic regions.²⁶ Bartram advocated the sharing of British-made Adcock D/F systems with the USN and a greater exchange of D/F bearings, although he felt that the Admiralty should retain control of communications in British bases leased to the Americans under the Lend-Lease Act.

Bartram's report drew several unsatisfactory comments from Commander Jock de Marbois, head of the Foreign Intelligence Section at NSHQ. Firstly, de Marbois believed that the USN might not appreciate Bartram's efforts 'to take the world under his control'.²⁷ De Marbois was highly suspicious of Bartram's motives: the Bermuda station had already made several attempts to take over Canadian W/T and 'Y' activities. Secondly, de Marbois regarded the USN network as something of a liability: 'Results obtained through . . . Washington, are, so far, appalling. According to bearings and positions recently sent by the U.S. W/T Intelligence, they appear not to have the faintest idea of what is required of them.'²⁸ He felt that the slow USN D/F equipment was inadequate for 'abbreviated enemy W/T procedure.' De Marbois urged

²⁶ Ibid. The following USN stations were listed: *Atlantic Region*: Cheltenham (Maryland), Winter Harbor (Maine), Amagansett (Long Island, NY), Povuana Hill (NC), Charleston (SC) and Jupiter (Florida); *Caribbean Region*: San Juan (Puerto Rico), Balbao (Panama Canal Zone) and Guantanamo Bay (Cuba); *Pacific Coast Region*: Bainbridge Island (Wash.), Point St. George (Calf.), Farallons Island (Calf.), Point Arguello (Calf.), Imperial Beach (Calf.) and Sitka (Alaska); *Mid-Pacific Region*: Pearl Harbor (Oahu), Vaitogi (Samoa), Dutch Harbor (Alaska) and Kodiak Island (Alaska); and *Asiatic Region*: Corregidor (Philippines) and Libugon (Guam). Most USN stations had both MFDF and HFDF equipment.

²⁷ NARA, MMRB, RG38, Crane – Inactive Stations, 370/27/24/1, Box 21, 3270/1, 'Canada – Canadian/British Evaluation of U.S. HFDF Operations; 16 Jul 41 – 1 Apr 45', Cmdr. J.M. de Marbois, FIS (Ottawa) to Director of Naval Intelligence (Ottawa), Most Secret memorandum, 18 Apr. 1941.

²⁸ Ibid.

Captain Brand to have a USN liaison officer appointed to Ottawa for 'training' or to send one of his men to Washington to 'coach' the Americans. In light of the true capabilities of the USN network in early 1941, de Marbois's comments seem unjustifiably condescending, but the Americans were not yet in a shooting war where speed and accuracy were a matter of life and death. It is also possible that the Americans were not revealing their full intelligence capabilities because they sought to improve their bargaining position in future exchanges with the British Commonwealth.

Meetings throughout the spring of 1941 resulted in improved Canadian-American cooperation. In April, the USN requested Canadian assurance that the inside passage between Vancouver and the mainland would be secure for convoys.²⁹ Yet the USN was reluctant to meet a Canadian request that it mine coastal waters or lay anti-torpedo nets in Canadian waters; the RCN itself had not yet performed these activities. However, the USN 13th Naval District assured the Canadians that parts for 2,400 mines were stored at Seattle. On 23 April, Commandant Freeman produced a plan entitled 'Tentative Administrative Canadian Liaison Plan – Thirteenth Naval District', which discussed liaison with Canadian forces prior to and following the United States' entry into the war.³⁰ Freeman's plan focused on the defence of the Pacific and the Alaskan coasts. On 27 April, Commodore Beech approved a teletype service between Seattle and Esquimalt.³¹ On 10 May, NSHQ informed Beech that the Admiralty now permitted foreign and Allied shipping information to be given on a weekly basis to US consuls for promulgation to

²⁹ NAC, RG24, D11, Vol. 11764, PC 010-9, Lt.-Cmdr. Glenn Howell (Seattle) to Commodore W.J.R. Beech (Esquimalt), Secret letter, 24 Apr. 1941.

³⁰ Ibid., PC 010-9-1: 'Operational Plan of R.C.N. to implement "Joint Can. – U.S. Basic Defence Plan, 1940"', Commandant C.S. Freeman (Seattle) to Thirteen Naval District officers, Secret report no. 123344, 23 Apr. 1941.

³¹ Ibid., PC 010-9-2: 'Joint Defence Liaison with United States Authorities – Communications', Commodore W.J.R. Beech (Esquimalt) to Lt.-Cmdr. Glenn Howell (Seattle), Secret letter, 27 Apr. 1941.

USN authorities.³² In late May, Beech told NSHQ about Howell's suggestion that a Canadian liaison officer be appointed to Seattle, although the Naval Secretary later rejected this proposal as too 'political'.³³ The USN and the RCN gradually developed closer ties, but the United States' status as a non-belligerent meant that discretion was essential.

Meanwhile, both sides considered the problem of defending the Arctic against marauders. Prior to Germany's attack against Russia on 22 June, Howell considered several possibilities, including Soviet aggression against the Allies. On 14 June, he prepared a report for his own commandant, one that he later sent to Beech, entitled 'Possible air raids in Canada from the Arctic'.³⁴ Howell's report was not without precedent. A month earlier, one US source had informed Ottawa that the Soviets might attack: 'the Russians plan to attack Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver Canada from north presumably by air in mid-July to detract U.S. attention from Europe and dislocate aid to Britain.'³⁵ According to Howell, the British consulate in Seattle also considered the possibility of a mid-July Soviet air raid through the Arctic. The Canadians chose not to take these particular reports too seriously. On a more realistic note, Howell also considered Japanese, German or Soviet air raids against Canada's Pacific Coast through 'base-hopping'. He recommended that the USN maintain a patrol boat at Point Barrow as Canada was not patrolling the region.

³² Ibid., PC 010-9, NSHQ (Ottawa) to COPC (Esquimalt), Message no. 1433/Z, 10 May 1941.

³³ Ibid., PC 010-9, COPC (Esquimalt) to Naval Secretary (Ottawa), Letter, 26 May 1941; Naval Secretary (Ottawa) to COPC (Esquimalt), Memorandum, 7 Jun. 1941; Commodore W.J.R. Beech (Esquimalt) to Lt.Cmdr. Glenn Howell (Seattle), Letter, 19 Jun. 1941.

³⁴ Ibid., Lt.-Cmdr. Glenn Howell (Seattle) to Commodore W.J.R. Beech (Esquimalt), Secret letter, 28 Jun. 1941, with enclosed report dated 14 Jun. 1941, 'Possible air raids in Canada from the Arctic'.

³⁵ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1810, Vol. 808, File 597, NSHQ (Ottawa) to Norman Robertson, RCMP, et al., Secret message, 23 May 1941.

But in a Secret letter of 25 June, Howell offered Beech a new assessment.³⁶ Howell believed that Hitler's campaign in Russia might last another four to six weeks and that Hitler might attempt an invasion of North America in August. He explained that Hitler's move surprised the Japanese, who were now uncertain of which action to take. He predicted that the United States might enter the war against Germany and Italy on or before 1 September. Howell also offered an interesting appraisal of Washington politics based on 'private information': isolationist senators, such as Wheeler, Nye and Worth Clark, knew that war was inevitable, but were maintaining their position to secure later the best possible political trade with Roosevelt. The senators, according to Howell, would trade their support in wartime for Roosevelt's curb on 'foolish New Deal internal expenditures'. Howell himself believed that Roosevelt's government wasted money at the expense of national defence expenditures (a view held by most military planners in any country, then as now). Considering Pacific Coast defence, Howell thanked Beech for US-Canada boundary-line data that was required to plan more defensive measures. He confirmed that inshore patrols were being increased and that radio links were being established between Sitka Air Station and Prince Rupert. Howell also pointed out that Seattle was not only establishing a censorship unit to handle cables, mail and radio, but also considering how to solve the 'West Coast Japanese problem'.

In July, Howell sent Beech more information about US preparations for war. His letter of 9 July offered Beech the following assessment:

Washington opinions about the war run along these lines: Germans will win against Russia, and then will propose new peace terms, which will not be acceptable to Britain or U.S. – so the war will go on. This situation tends to delay the entrance of the U.S. into full war, but increases the chances that the U.S. will be drawn into it eventually. Reports of internal dissatisfaction in Germany are received. Secretary of War Knox talked naval war in the Atlantic with the President's approval. The Army request for freedom to send

³⁶ NAC, RG24, D11, Vol. 11764, PC 010–9, Lt.-Cmdr. Glenn Howell (Seattle) to Commodore W.J.R. Beech (Esquimalt), Secret letter, 25 Jun. 1941.

troops to any part of the world will stir up a row in Congress, and action will be delayed. By October the defense program will really get going on a big scale.³⁷

Howell, like many officers in the US armed forces, portrayed the United States' entry into the war as both necessary and inevitable, despite isolationist public opinion. In a letter of 26 July, Howell assured Beech that USN convoys had been ordered to operate in Iceland within the Canadian-Iceland sector, relieving the RCN of this chore: 'Orders are to shoot to kill.'³⁸ Howell's correspondence made it quite clear that the Roosevelt administration wanted to commence a shooting war against Germany.

In a Secret letter of 30 July, Howell continued his discussion of war preparations.³⁹ He reported on command changes in the US forces, heavy-tank manufacturing, plans to expand the US army to four million men, and the extension of military training service. He also mentioned the US blacklisting of more South American firms with Axis ties. But he complained that the Roosevelt administration was still weak on taking action against labour strikes: defensive measures took a second seat to 'New Dealer theories'. Howell expressed the hope that economic sanctions would prevent war with Japan, but said that Washington 'general talk' pointed to October as the date of the United States' entry into the war. It was still felt that Germany would defeat Russia, but not before late September, thereby preventing a German invasion of Britain in the autumn. In terms of continental defences, Howell pointed out that US bases in Alaska were being completed, but that the Panama Canal zone was still a worry: 'After we go to war, we feel that attempts may be made to close the Canal by bombing from German suicide planes operating from Africa.' Clearly, Howell had an active imagination. He concluded his letter to Beech with

³⁷ Ibid., Lt.-Cmdr. Glenn Howell (Seattle) to COPC (Esquimalt), Secret letter, 9 Jul. 1941.

³⁸ Ibid., Howell (Seattle) to Beech (Esquimalt), Secret letter, 26 Jul. 1941.

³⁹ Ibid., Howell (Seattle) to Beech (Esquimalt), Secret letter, 30 Jul. 1941.

the announcement that his office would expand to liaise with the US Army as well as the Canadian forces.

In August, US and Canadian authorities applied the finishing touches to their framework of military cooperation. Letters of 6 and 13 August confirmed that Howell's District Liaison Office was officially expanded.⁴⁰ Commandant Freeman of the USN 13th Naval District visited Washington to discuss the refined joint US-Canadian operating plan. On 16 August, Adolph A. Berle, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State in Washington, requested official permission from Canada for US aircraft to land at Esquimalt as well as RCAF sites throughout British Columbia; permission was later granted.⁴¹ Both sides were preparing for any threat to the coastlines of North America.

On the eve of the Pacific War, the USN and RCN made their final preparations. On 19 November, Howell sent Beech a Secret report concerning US actions.⁴² According to Howell, Washington and Ottawa had formally approved ABC-22, the joint US-Canadian military agreement. The USN, which had expanded after taking over the US Coast Guard, was arming all merchant vessels and continuing its naval movements and training in the Straits of Juan de Fuca. As well, a new degaussing range for ships had been completed at Jefferson Head, near Seattle. In the Aleutians, the US Army had taken over Unalaska Island. Howell also offered Beech secret information concerning the departure of USN naval transports carrying 400 motor vehicles and many troops from San Francisco to the Philippines. Finally, Howell said he planned to visit Esquimalt on 26 November, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Tourtillott and Lieutenant Bayley.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Commandant C.S. Freeman (Seattle) to Heads of Dept. and Staff HQ, Letter, 6 Aug. 1941; and Howell (Seattle) to Beech (Esquimalt), Letter, 13 Aug. 1941.

⁴¹ Ibid., A.A. Berle, Jr. (Washington) to Canadian Legation (Washington), Letter, 16 Aug. 1941.

⁴² Ibid., Howell (Seattle) to COPC (Esquimalt), Secret report no. 133, 'General Report on U.S. conditions which may interest the Commanding Officer Pacific Coast', 19 Nov. 1941.

Meanwhile, the RCN revised its routing instructions and discussed implementation of ABC-1, Annex 5, with respect to Pacific shipping control. In a memorandum of 24 November, Captain Eric Brand, Director of Naval Intelligence in Ottawa, reported on the 'VESCO' routing system, which would now be extended to convoy assembly ports, and the plan to have US port directors (instead of British Commonwealth officers) issue routing instructions after ABC-1, Annex 5, was implemented.⁴³ Under Annex 5, with respect to merchant shipping, Canadian naval authorities would also conform to the wishes of the USN Chief of Naval Operations in Washington. Brand explained that Admiral Harold Stark, the USN Chief, was involved in a proposal to send the Admiralty a message about invoking ABC-1, Annex 5: 'Decision as to bringing Annex 5 of ABC-1 into effect is political and C.N.O. [Stark] proposes discussions which should be exploratory and confined to military aspect.' The Allies were anticipating the United States' entry into the war.

RCAF Strategy for Pacific Coast Defence

In late 1941, the RCAF sent several Pacific Coast assessments to C.G. Power, Minister of National Defence for Air. On 11 September, Air Vice-Marshal G.M. Croil sent Power a secret report entitled 'An Appreciation of the Situation likely to arise on the West Coast in the event of a War between the British Commonwealth and Japan, in which Canada is involved'.⁴⁴ In his covering letter, Croil explained to Power that Japanese attacks on Canada were not likely unless US-Canadian cooperation faltered or the USN was defeated. Croil reminded Power that Japan would attempt to intercept Canadian Pacific trade using submarines, although US

⁴³ DHH, 81/520/1440-127, File: 'Naval Control Service', Capt. E.S. Brand, Memorandum no. 1017-10-35, 'Existing System of Routeing - November, 1941', 24 Nov. 1941.

⁴⁴ QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Ministerial Files C, 2150 IId, Box 59, File D1030: 'Event of War with Japan, War Plans, Estimates of Japan's Intentions', Air Vice-Marshal G.M. Croil to C.G. Power, Secret memorandum I.G.S500-1-8-1, 11 Sep. 1941.

involvement would push such attacks back from the BC coastline. Croil wanted to strengthen Pacific Coast bases, increase RCAF personnel along the coast and provide more aircraft to Western Air Command.

Croil's secret report made several observations. Japan was focusing on a southward advance, but also watched Vladivostok shipments. In the event of war in the Pacific, Canadian shipping and coastal areas would be threatened, possibly through Japanese occupation of Aleutian or northwest coastal bases. Yet Japanese attacks would probably be limited to raids rather than occupation, owing to the 4,300-mile distance between Japan and BC. Japan was reported to have the ability to launch long-range strikes: 'There are known to exist, eight Japanese aircraft carriers capable of carrying from 20 to 60 aircraft each, or collectively 332 aircraft made up of 90 Fighters, 146 Torpedo Bombers, and 96 Day Bombers.'⁴⁵ However, USN naval support combined with Canadian Pacific Coast air power would minimize the Japanese threat. In any instance, the report concluded, Canada's Pacific Coast required more air and naval support to reduce the threat of Japanese naval attacks or sabotage of mainland railways, communications, defence works, stores and maintenance facilities.

One observation made in Croil's secret report cast suspicion on the Japanese-Canadian community in BC:

The Japanese fisher fleet on the British Columbia coast has long been a worry to Canadians, for among its numbers are known to be many Japanese naval men, whose knowledge of the North American coast can be equalled by few Canadians. These fishermen live in communities which are entirely composed of Japanese and where white men seldom call. Their activities can be watched only by spies of their own race, whose reports cannot be trusted. It would be easy for Japan to make use of such material. There are 28,350 Japanese nationals in British Columbia, approximately one-half in the vicinity of Vancouver, the balance well distributed along the coast.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The report explained that Japanese nationals engaged in fishing could shelter Japanese submarines within 'the many inlets on the British Columbia and Alaska coasts.' Japanese supply ships could also operate along the coast with local help from Japanese agents. Patrolling the coast would be difficult, as there were 3,000 miles of coastline between Prince Rupert and Vancouver, a direct distance of only 450 miles. Croil also noted that Pacific Coast weather would aid clandestine Japanese activity and hinder Canadian air reconnaissance.

Croil's secret report is important to our understanding of Canadian strategy for at least two reasons. First, the report confirms that Canadian strategy regarding Pacific Coast defence largely resembled that of both Britain and the United States. Japanese raids across the North Pacific were possible, particularly through the Aleutians or Pacific Coast 'base hopping', although the vast distances involved, along with USN support, reduced the threat posed by such raids. Second, the report reveals Canadian anxieties over the presence of Japanese Canadians along the Pacific Coast. It was thought that they could serve as a 'cover' for clandestine operations involving Japanese naval activity or even sabotage along the Pacific Coast. It was suggested that spying on their communities was useless as nominated agents of Japanese descent could not be trusted. The strategy implicit in these observations is that the Japanese-Canadian community would have to be removed from the Pacific Coast area for security reasons. Croil's report foreshadowed the internment of the Japanese Canadians.

On 22 November, Air Marshal L.S. Breadner sent C.G. Power an 'Air Appreciation of the West Coast' as a supplement to a report made in late October.⁴⁷ It was reported that Japanese attacks might include mine-laying craft, small airborne raiding parties, coastal and inland bombing, and airborne torpedo or gas attacks. The RCAF role in the event of war in the North Pacific was to provide air defence for the Pacific Coast and shipping, and to cooperate

⁴⁷ Ibid., Air Marshal L.S. Breadner to C.G. Power, Secret memorandum, 22 Nov. 1941.

with Canadian and US forces in providing fighter cover, reconnaissance patrols and convoy escorts. RCAF squadrons were located at Alliford Bay, Ucluelet and Patricia Bay, although more were planned for Prince Rupert, Bella Bella and Coal Harbour. Pacific Coast air bases had been provided with an 'initial issue' of bombs, torpedoes, ammunition and aviation fuel. Breadner concluded by requesting more fighters and Catalina aircraft, along with the completion of aerodromes at Tofino and Hardy Bay. The RCAF wanted to be fully prepared for any conflict in the North Pacific.

On 7 December, Breadner sent Power a secret report about the Japanese air attacks.⁴⁸ It was reported that Japanese aircraft had bombed Cavite, Manila and Pearl Harbor. Accordingly, Breadner listed the Great Circle distances across the Pacific from Japan, Siberia and Pearl Harbor to North America. Vancouver was about 4,500 miles from Tokyo and 2,000 miles from Siberia, whereas Japanese bombers were reported as having a range of about 2,000 to 2,500 miles. Breadner believed that these distances made Japanese raids against the Pacific Coast an unlikely prospect unless aircraft carriers were used, but Japan required its carriers for home defence and other operations: 'it appears very doubtful if carriers would be diverted from their normal role of fleet operations to bombing attacks on the Pacific Coast.'⁴⁹ He also noted that all Great Circle routes to BC passed over the Aleutian Islands or Alaska and 'hence must come through American Defences.' Once again, strategic thought concerning Pacific Coast defence included due consideration for vast distances and US support. A survey of Canadian strategic reports made just before the outbreak of hostilities would be helpful, but some file collections are incomplete. For example, the C.G. Power file entitled 'Event of War

⁴⁸ Ibid., Breadner to Power, Secret report S.15-1-133-158, 7 Dec. 1941.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

with Japan, War Plans, Estimates of Japan's Intentions' is lacking documents from 26 November to 2 December and from 4 to 7 December.

The Japanese Canadians in British Columbia

In 1941, the RCMP 'Standing Committee on Orientals in British Columbia' held discussions on the future of the Japanese Canadians. Established by Order in Council PC117 on 7 January, the committee consisted of five members who sought to reconcile differences in opinion between British Columbia and the Dominion government.⁵⁰ BC Premier T.D. Pattullo sought to limit the freedom of Japanese Canadians on the Pacific Coast because public opinion there demanded it. Many English Canadians resident in BC harboured racist attitudes towards the Asian community. They believed that the Japanese and Chinese posed a threat to culture, security and economic livelihood. The Dominion government, on the other hand, adopted a more conciliatory attitude towards the rights of the Asian community. As far as the second generation of Japanese Canadians (known as the *Nisei*) was concerned, the Dominion government favoured the view that such people had sufficiently integrated into Canadian society, despite Ottawa's political tension with Tokyo. For Mackenzie King and his officials, the problem was to balance the rights of the *Nisei* with the political pressure exerted by the Pattullo government. The 'Standing Committee' was meant to study that problem and to offer recommendations.

In Ottawa, Japanese Minister Yoshizawa took particular interest in the plight of Japanese Canadians. Needless to say, he probably used Canada's treatment of the Japanese community as political leverage against criticism of Japan's actions in Southeast Asia, but his protests struck a

⁵⁰ The RCMP 'Standing Committee' consisted of Henry F. Angus, Chairman Fred J. Hume, Lt.-Col. Macgregor Macintosh, Assistant Commissioner F.J. Mead and Lt.-Col. A.W. Sparling.

resonant chord within the *Nisei* community. On 25 January, for example, Yoshizawa protested against a decision made on 8 January to exclude 'Canadians of Japanese origin from participation in compulsory military training' because he believed this would disappoint them greatly.⁵¹ *The New Canadian*, a *Nisei* newspaper published in BC, offered editorials that lent credence to Yoshizawa's concerns. Yet his protest seemed almost paradoxical: if Japanese Canadians entered compulsory military service, then they might have to fight Yoshizawa's own countrymen. But Tokyo hardly considered Canadian ground troops as a threat; Yoshizawa could make good political capital out of the issue. In any case, he and the *Nisei* were right: compulsory military service in a modern nation should not be based upon racial distinctions. On 1 February, however, Mackenzie King responded negatively to Yoshizawa's statements.⁵² The Prime Minister wished to maintain favour with the Pattullo government.

In February, the RCMP 'Standing Committee' began voicing its opinions in Ottawa. Initially, some members of the committee felt that the Dominion government was working against them. On 25 February, H.L. Keenleyside informed Norman Robertson that the committee resented Ottawa's implication that BC politicians were stirring up hostility against Japanese Canadians for political advantage.⁵³ Keenleyside reported that the committee and Ottawa officials were debating over how many Japanese fishermen operated along the Pacific Coast: Ottawa placed the figure at 1,200, as opposed to the committee's figure of 2,200. These details were considered important in terms of the perceived threat to local economics and security. Quite apart from the fishing trade, the Japanese fishermen were seen as a potential 'screen' for enemy sabotage or espionage. On 26 February, the committee sent Mackenzie King

⁵¹ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4872, Vol. 320, 271837-8, Seijiro Yoshizawa to W.L.M. King, Letter, 25 Jan. 1941.

⁵² Ibid., 271839, King to Yoshizawa, Letter, 1 Feb. 1941.

⁵³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, H.L. Keenleyside, 'Memorandum for Mr. Robertson: Mr. Tom Reid, M.P., and the Report of the Special Committee on Orientals in British Columbia', 25 Feb. 1941.

a report from Vancouver, where it had met with local Japanese-Canadian representatives.⁵⁴ The meeting concerned the voluntary registration of Japanese Canadians. The committee successfully persuaded the Japanese community to register voluntarily with the RCMP so that compulsory registration could be avoided. From the committee's perspective, such a move would be an acceptable compromise.

But a limited form of registration was imposed soon after, even if it was presented as 'voluntary' registration in some quarters. Beginning on 4 March, all Japanese people over sixteen years of age were required to register with the RCMP. Later in the year, on 12 August, Canadian authorities required Japanese Canadians who had registered to carry their registration cards, which included a photograph and thumbprint. The Canadian security authorities were already poised to assume more control over the Japanese community in Canada.

Over the course of the year, Canadian authorities in Esquimalt monitored Japanese Canadians along with other groups. Pacific Command collected information on alleged 'subversive' activity amongst its own army personnel as well as local civilians. Pro-Axis remarks or signs of espionage were recorded in 'Weekly Internal Security Intelligence Reports'.⁵⁵ Yet only a few cases involved Japanese Canadians, a group that seemed quite law-abiding and respectable. In terms of those few cases, Canadian authorities focused on potential espionage. One Japanese family was watched throughout the year and a family member was

⁵⁴ Ibid., RCMP (Vancouver) to SSEA (Ottawa), Report: 'Re: Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia', 26 Feb. 1941. The report was signed by F.J. Hume, Chairman, Standing Committee on Orientals in British Columbia.

⁵⁵ NAC, RG 24, D11, Vol. 11768, File PCS-019-2-8, pt. 1, vol. 2 of 2 vols., Flag Officer, Pacific Coast, 'Security Intelligence Reports – Military District No. XI'. Researchers should note that pt. 1, vol. 1, which contains reports dating from before March 1942, has not been released. Therefore the author has relied upon pt. 1, vol. 2, which contains reports dating from 26 March 1942 onwards (these reports also mention cases from 1941). Researchers may wish to consult another file that contains 'Security Intelligence Officer's Weekly Reports' issued by RCN Esquimalt between late 1942 and early 1945. See NAC, RG 24, D11, Vol. 11768, File PCS-019-2-11, pt. 1, 'Weekly Reports – Esquimalt', 30 Nov. 1942 to 12 Mar. 1945. The author originally obtained these files through a Canadian 'Access to Information' request (ATIPS).

later arrested at Rossland, BC, for possession of detailed hand-drawn sketches showing 'industrial activities' in the adjacent Warfield-Tadanac area.⁵⁶ In July, one Japanese person in Vancouver was under surveillance because of an alleged association with Japanese group located in Minto, BC: 'This group will not be inactive long and if there is a good lake there for a landing it is possible they may communicate with the outside.'⁵⁷ Some reports concerned the assistance that Japanese forces might receive from German Canadians. In August, for example, one report discussed a certain BC lumber mill with all-German employees who might assist the enemy during an attack and perform acts of sabotage.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, the security records seem quite sparse with respect to the *Nisei*. Japanese Canadians were not yet perceived as a great security risk.

Even so, planning continued. As noted, in July, when Japan occupied southern French Indochina, External Affairs held a meeting with a special committee to discuss 'Measures to be taken in the event of war with Japan'.⁵⁹ In the event of war, the committee recommended the compulsory registration of 'all persons of Japanese race' across Canada, including Canadian-born Japanese, those 'naturalized' since 1922, and Japanese nationals living in Canada: 'In principle, Japanese subjects will be treated in the same way as nationals of Germany and Italy.'⁶⁰ The committee discussed internment policy, but did not yet advocate 'wholesale internment' for Japanese Canadians. Just the same, some officials anticipated a security problem along the coast

⁵⁶ Ibid., Pacific Command, Mil. District no. 11 (Equimalt), 'Weekly Internal Security Intelligence Report', No. 71, Week ending 21 Mar. 1942 (sub-report G221).

⁵⁷ Ibid., No. 80, Week ending 23 May 1942 (sub-report G98).

⁵⁸ Ibid., No. 84, Week ending 20 Jun. 1942 (sub-report G14). For other examples of reports concerning German Canadians on the Pacific Coast, see Ibid., No. 74, Week ending 11 Apr. 1942 (sub-report A105); and No. 76, Week ending 25 Apr. 1942 (sub-report A105).

⁵⁹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, Chairman J.E. Read (External Affairs, Ottawa), 'Measures to be taken in the event of War with Japan', Secret report, 28 Jul. 1941.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Appendix A, 15.

in the event of war. In September, as we have noted, Croil's RCAF report suggested that the Japanese Canadians might serve as a 'cover' for Imperial Japanese espionage.

In October, Canadian officials sought to allocate responsibility for the management of the Japanese Canadians. On 7 October, S.L. de Carteret, Deputy Minister for Air, wrote to his counterpart in Naval Services and suggested a course of action: 'I am of the opinion that the matter of policy to co-ordinate action between United States and Canada regarding the control of Japanese on the West coast is a matter for the Department of External Affairs and the United States State Department, rather than the Joint Defence Board.'⁶¹ De Carteret wanted policy directed by civilian government authorities, rather than by the armed forces. He also had advice for RCN authorities who had sent reports to Ottawa: 'the Commanding Officer, Pacific Coast, should utilize the medium of the Joint Services Committee, Pacific Coast, in making further recommendations regarding the control of Japanese on the West coast in the event of war with Japan.'⁶²

On 29 October, Norman Robertson sent two messages concerning official policy. He told the Deputy Minister for Naval Services that if Canada received a 'War Telegram' stating that Britain and Japan were at war, then Canadian forces would stand down until Ottawa decided upon 'the question of action', although Japanese merchant and fishing vessels would not be allowed to sail outside Canadian waters.⁶³ As well, he told the Deputy Minister of Justice that the Cabinet War Committee had not yet approved compulsory registration of Japanese Canadians, but had approved an internment policy: upon the outbreak of war between Britain

⁶¹ QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Archives no. 2150, Ministerial Files C, Box 59, File D1030: 'Effect of War with Japan, War Plans, Estimates of Japan's Intentions', S.L. de Carteret to Deputy Minister, DND Naval Services, Secret Letter, 7 Oct. 1941.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ NAC, RG 24, D11, Vol. 11763, File PC04-43-1, J.E. Read for Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Ottawa) to Deputy Minister, DND Naval Services (Ottawa), Secret Letter, 29 Oct. 1941.

and Japan, the Department of Justice and the RCMP would intern the Japanese 'for cause', but would not indulge in 'wholesale internment'.⁶⁴ According to these policy decisions, Japanese Canadians faced limited internment and a shipping quarantine in the event of war with Japan.

In November, Mackenzie King managed to moderate Pattullo's views on the Japanese Canadians. On 22 November, Pattullo wrote to Mackenzie King and grudgingly accepted the voluntary enlistment of Canadian-born Japanese in the Canadian armed forces. On 26 November, Mackenzie King responded to Pattullo's letter and thanked him for his capitulation on the issue. He assured Pattullo that the move was 'a step towards the amelioration of the racial situation in British Columbia'.⁶⁵ However, it is difficult to see how the 'racial situation' would have improved if Canadian policy continued to draw a distinction between Canadian-born Japanese and foreign-born Japanese. There were also contradictions with other policy statements. Ottawa had already created an internment policy that drew no distinction on the basis of birth: that policy was based on demonstrated loyalty to the state. Furthermore, all Japanese were encouraged to register voluntarily with the RCMP as a compromise measure: the Pattullo government wanted compulsory registration. On the eve of the Pacific War, Canadian policymakers had made contradictory concessions to both the Pattullo government and the Japanese Canadians.

But policy became more focused following the outbreak of war. At first, Mackenzie King still adhered to the policy initiatives of November. On 7 December, he sent a telegram to Pattullo, in which he reiterated the position of the Dominion government:

There is danger that the unparalleled treachery of the Japanese attack may precipitate irresponsible anti-Japanese demonstrations in Canada. I shall, in the broadcast speech

⁶⁴ Ibid., Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Ottawa) to Deputy Minister of Justice (Ottawa), Secret Letter, 29 Oct. 1941.

⁶⁵ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, W.L.M. King (Ottawa) to T.D. Pattullo (Victoria), Letter, 26 Nov. 1941.

which I shall give tonight (or tomorrow night) emphasize that adequate measures have been taken . . . to guarantee full security within Canada at the present time. Japanese who are suspected of disloyalty will be interned, but Japanese who are loyal to Canada and loyal Canadians of Japanese race may rely on adequate protection both as to their persons and as to their property. Action in this sense will accord with a generous interpretation of Canada's aims in the war and with a sincere condemnation of the racial discrimination practised by the Fascist powers with which we are at war.⁶⁶

He also asked Pattullo to address the BC public in a show of support for the Dominion government. In the evening of 7 December, Mackenzie King released a press statement that offered several assurances: 'All measures necessary to national security have been taken. All Japanese in Canada have been registered and fingerprinted, and any individual of Japanese origin deemed dangerous to the state is being apprehended. Japanese nationals in Canada who are loyal will not be molested.'⁶⁷ It appeared that all interests would be considered.

However, official policy changed rapidly in the following weeks. On 17 December, Mackenzie King informed BC politicians and the press that an Order-in-Council issued the day before provided for penalties 'in the case of any person of Japanese race who fails to register with RCMP.'⁶⁸ For Pattullo and the BC public, the long-awaited compulsory registration of all Japanese Canadians had finally come.

Next, Ottawa moved towards 'wholesale internment' after receiving security reports of clandestine activities occurring along the Pacific Coast amidst the Japanese fishing fleet. On 17 December, the USN Naval Attaché in Ottawa informed Admiral Nelles, RCN, that Japanese fishing vessels were suspected of sending 'deceptive W/T messages' and acting as 'lookouts' for

⁶⁶ Ibid., W.L.M. King (Ottawa) to T.D. Pattullo (Victoria), Telegram, 7 Dec. 1941.

⁶⁷ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), W.L.M. King, 'Information on Japan given press by P.M., Dec. 7 (Mears' report)', 7 Dec. 1941.

⁶⁸ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4863, Vol. 306, 259050, W.L.M. King (Ottawa) to Mayor F.J. Hume (New Westminster, BC), Telegram, 17 Dec. 1941.

Japanese submarines.⁶⁹ As a result, naval authorities boarded and checked suspected vessels.

On 13 February 1942, the Joint Services Committee, Pacific Coast, decided that in view of deteriorating conditions throughout the Pacific, 'the continued presence of enemy aliens and persons of Japanese racial origin in the Protected Area constitutes a serious danger and prejudices the effective defence of the Pacific Coast of Canada.'⁷⁰ On 11 March, Captain E.S. Brand, RCN, shared an Esquimalt report with the DOT in Ottawa:

There is a persistent rumour that the Japanese have in British Columbia one, or more, W/T interception posts, whose logs are cyphered and forwarded by mail to a central espionage bureau in Mexico. This information has been received from a contact in the Chinese Wang Ching Wei Puppet Government Organization in Vancouver and appears to be reliable.⁷¹

The next day, the DOT agreed to Brand's request that the matter be investigated and also informed him that the RCMP had already restricted Japanese people from using cameras and radio equipment in certain areas.⁷² Ultimately, on the basis of reported clandestine W/T activity, nearly 20,000 Japanese Canadians were interned inland following the forced sale of their possessions.

Gil Murray, who served in the 'Number One Canadian Special Wireless Group' (1CSWG) during the war, has commented on the reasons for the internment of the Japanese Canadians. He explained that stations at Gordon Head and Mills Road Camp on Vancouver Island were monitoring signals emanating from 'the Japanese-Canadian fishing fleet innocently going about its business in Canadian waters':

⁶⁹ DHH, 81/520/1440-127, Naval Control Service, 'Summary of File 1017-10-35 (2 vols.): Defence of Canada: Schemes and Plans: Co-operation between Naval Control Service of Canada and U.S. Authorities', Vol 1, 1/3/41 to 21/11/42, Item 6, USN Attaché to Adm. Nelles, Letter, 17 Dec. 1941.

⁷⁰ DHH, 193.009 (D5), Joint Services Committee - Pacific Coast (HQ, Pacific Command), Minutes of meeting no. 15, 13 Feb. 1942.

⁷¹ NAC, RG 24, D1b, Vol. 3805, File 1008-34-6 (vol. 1): 'Suspicious Wireless Stations', Capt. E.S. Brand (DNI Ottawa) to W.A. Rush, Controller of Radio (DOT Ottawa), Secret letter, 11 Mar. 1942.

⁷² Ibid., Rush to Brand, Secret letter, 12 Mar. 1942.

Hidden amongst those vessels, Imperial Japanese naval officers in fishermen's clothing were mingling with the Canadian fleet in boats equipped with powerful radios. According to RCMP sources and ICSWG veteran eavesdroppers, these spies were observing Canadian and U.S. naval movements up and down the west coast, from California to Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. Canadian operators monitored the floating spies' Japan-bound signals but, even though their radio direction finders (RDF) could pinpoint the sources, there was never enough time for the Mounties to move in before the spies escaped or ditched their radio equipment.⁷³

According to Murray, the problem was only solved when the Japanese Canadians, though innocent, were interned inland, thereby exposing the 'Imperial Japanese waterborne spies', who 'instantly disappeared.'⁷⁴ At that time, Murray stated, Canadian authorities could not publicly explain the internment because Canada's interception of Japanese signals was a wartime secret. Murray concluded that Canadian authorities saw internment as the only 'workable solution'.

Considering all sources, it may be said that the Dominion government interned the Japanese Canadians for three reasons. First, internment would satisfy BC public opinion, which grew even more hostile following the outbreak of the Pacific War, and provide the BC government with political capital. For example, reports of Japan's mistreatment of the Hong Kong prisoners increased hostility towards the Japanese Canadians. Mackenzie King worried about the repercussions of internment, but believed that the move was necessary to prevent BC race riots, which, in turn, might bring on even worse treatment of the Hong Kong prisoners.⁷⁵ In essence, he responded to the racist attitudes then prevalent in Canada. Secondly, internment would stop a small number of Imperial Japanese agents from spying along the Pacific Coast. Thirdly, internment would match US policy, thereby providing the Dominion government with political capital. Roosevelt, who on 19 February 1942 had ordered the relocation of the 120,000 Japanese Americans, suggested to Mackenzie King that Canada adopt the same strategy. On 24

⁷³ Murray, *The Invisible War*, 22.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M King Diary, 19 Feb. 1941.

February, Mackenzie King ordered the evacuation of all Japanese Canadians. Both US and Canadian officials considered the Pacific Coast Japanese community as a shared 'problem'.

In 1942, the Dominion government chose to act expeditiously to satisfy both public opinion and the Canadian armed forces. Not surprisingly, many Canadians of the period saw the internment as a necessary measure. Numerous letters and documents of the period demonstrate the public's growing concern over enemy aliens and subversives.⁷⁶ Many Canadians were conditioned to believe that treachery was an integral part of the Japanese character. It would be many years until documents were publicly released that demonstrated failed diplomacy and Allied preparations for the Pacific War. From the civilian perspective, Japan's attacks throughout the Pacific were a complete surprise and the government could present the internment of Japanese Canadians as a 'preventative measure'. Within the Canadian armed forces, many saw Canada's defence regulations as rather lenient. For example, in June 1942, one army officer working at Pacific Command lamented the regulations regarding internment: 'to date we have been unable to obtain sufficient information to warrant taking any action under Defence of Canada Regulations whereby we could recommend the internment of Marx.'⁷⁷ Some armed forces personnel believed that all 'aliens' should have been removed from Pacific Coast protected areas. Internment was seen as the only answer to Pacific Coast defence.

However, internment posed the Dominion government with several problems. Ottawa had to abandon its position (or more cynically, its pretence) that it was committed to social equality for Japanese Canadians. Also, Ottawa would later be held accountable for relocating Japanese Canadians without offering sufficient explanation: the W/T interception secret was

⁷⁶ For example, see the letters and documents from 1939–44 that are found in QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Archive no. 2150, Ministerial Files II, Box 70, File D2030: 'Internal Security – Intelligence and Espionage Generally'.

⁷⁷ NAC, RG 24, D11, Vol. 11768, File PCS-019-2-8, pt. 1, vol. 2, Pacific Command, Mil. District no. 11 (Equimalt), 'Weekly Internal Security Intelligence Report', No. 84, Week ending 20 Jun. 1942 (sub-report G148).

kept for many years. Even when it was later revealed, some critics of government policy regarded the internment as out of all proportion to the perceived security threat. It might be suggested that more appropriate solutions had been possible, such as quarantining Japanese-Canadian vessels whilst permitting the people to continue living in their homes. It might also be observed that strategic assessments made in 1941 had discounted the likelihood of Japanese attacks along the Pacific Coast and that no reason could justify 'wholesale internment'. Furthermore, Ottawa would later be held accountable for seizing Japanese-Canadian property: future financial compensation might prove to be a problem. The unjust internment of Japanese Canadians left the government with a legacy that troubles us still today.

Preparing for the Pacific War, August–December 1941

Canada made other preparations for war in the Pacific, often in consultation with the Commonwealth. In late August 1941, Ottawa learned of a British plan to use commercial radio broadcasts to warn British subjects of impending hostilities with Japan. Whitehall had seemingly developed its own version of the Japanese 'Winds Message' system.⁷⁸ If hostilities appeared imminent, then the BBC would insert the following code sentence into its broadcasts made in North America and the Pacific: 'We hope shortly to include in our programme a talk on the

⁷⁸ Japanese authorities planned to warn Japanese diplomats overseas of impending war with America, Britain or Russia using a series of code phrases, which would be inserted into commercial weather broadcasts. For example, if Japan went to war against America, then the phrase 'East Wind, Rain' would be inserted into the weather broadcasts. The system became known as the 'Winds Messages'. Between 25 and 28 November 1941, both American and British intelligence staff intercepted the 'Winds Set-Up' message, in which Tokyo told its overseas staff how the warning system would work. The Americans and the British then monitored Japanese commercial radio broadcasts, carefully listening for any use of the code phrases, or 'Winds Execute' messages, so that they would know when war with Japan was imminent. USN radioman Ralph Briggs later claimed that he had intercepted a 'Winds Execute' message on 2 December 1941 at Station M, Maryland, although no record of that intercept appears in USN archival records. However, archival evidence shows that British authorities in Hong Kong intercepted a 'Winds Execute' message on 7 December 1941, just before the Japanese attacked Malaya that day. For the 'Winds Set-Up' message, see NARA, MMRB, RG 80, PHLO Records, Intelligence Report no. 97, 28 Nov. 1941. For the 'Winds Execute' message, see Toland, *Infamy*, 195–8, 286–7, 352–3; and Best, *British Intelligence and the Japanese Challenge*, 185–6. Best cited from PRO, ADM 199/1472A, Young (Hong Kong) to CO, 8 Dec. 1941.

development of air communications in the Far East.’⁷⁹ The main purpose of this scheme was to warn the British Ambassador in Tokyo, although the entire Commonwealth would also benefit. There is no record that the scheme was ever used, but it seemed a good idea at the time.

In October 1941, when hostilities between Japanese and Soviet forces along the Manchukuo border appeared imminent, NSHQ exchanged messages concerning Allied preparations, rather than mainly reporting on Japanese tactics.⁸⁰ As early as 11 October, Admiralty Most Secret telegrams informed Ottawa that the ADB agreement might be invoked against Japan and that a ‘warning message’ might be sent to all ADB Powers in the event of Japanese aggression.⁸¹ Later in the month, NSHQ informed the Admiralty and FECB Singapore that its ‘Japanese merchant shipping intelligence’, gathered from D/F and ‘Y’ sources, could be made readily available upon request. NSHQ requested that all ships passing through the Panama Canal from the Pacific make reports on unknown ships directly to British authorities in Panama, rather than simply informing the USN. NSHQ also informed intelligence staff in Vancouver, Seattle and San Francisco that five Russian ships at harbour in Seattle could receive communications books from Vancouver. The Admiralty informed NSHQ that USN authorities in Balboa and Honolulu would begin transmitting British shipping messages simultaneously on LF and HF. Also, the Admiralty told the Pacific intelligence community, including NSHQ, that a ship crossing from Manila to Hong Kong would be provided with British ‘cruiser-escort’. All

⁷⁹ NAC, RG 24, D11, Vol. 11763, File PC04-43-1, SSDA (London) to Government of Australia, Secret letter no. 560, 12 Aug. 1941; UK High Commissioner (Ottawa) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret letter no. 41, 30 Aug. 1941; Naval Secretary J.O. Cossette (Ottawa) to COPC (Esquimalt), Most Secret memorandum, 3 Sep. 1941.

⁸⁰ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12082, NSHQ (Ottawa) to Admiralty, Message no. 1234Z/23, 23 Oct. 1941; Vol. 12091, NSHQ (Ottawa) to Climate 2, Message no. 1601Z/24, 24 Oct. 1941; Vol. 12082, NSHQ (Ottawa) to SO(I) Vancouver, Seattle, San Francisco, Message no. 2103Z/23, 23 Oct. 1941; Vol. 12082, Admiralty to NSHQ (Ottawa) and BAD Washington, Message no. 1555A/23, 23 Oct. 1941; and Vol. 12091, Admiralty to CinC China, NSHQ (Ottawa), et al., Message no. 0553A/24, 24 Oct. 1941.

⁸¹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 572: ‘Japan-Strategic Position in Far East (1941)’, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram, Circular M.319, 11 Oct. 1941; SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram, Circular M.320, 11 Oct. 1941. Researchers should note that there is a gap in this file collection from 12 Oct. to 11 Dec. 1941.

told, Allied preparations included the possible implementation of ADB, improved intelligence reporting, provision for secure maritime communications with the Russians, USN communications support in the Pacific, and British naval escorts in Southeast Asia.

Allied preparations for the anticipated Pacific War intensified in November 1941. On 7 November, London sent a Most Secret telegram to Ottawa stating that a new Far East command had been created as per the ABC-1 agreement.⁸² Admiral Sir Tom Phillips, Vice-Chief of Naval Staff, RN, had been selected to assume the new ABC-1 Singapore command, entitled Commander-in-Chief of Eastern Fleet. The former command, Commander-in-Chief of China, would lapse upon Phillips' arrival. On the same day, London sent Ottawa another Most Secret message, which outlined the respective roles of British, Commonwealth, Dutch and US forces in the Pacific in the advent of war with Japan.⁸³ On 20 November, Rear-Admiral Percy W. Nelles, Chief of the Naval Staff, RCN Ottawa, informed Canadian commanding officers of the new ABC-1 Singapore command. On 26 November, NSHQ sent a Most Secret message concerning ABC-1 to the Admiralty and its delegation in Washington after considering a Secret letter from the Chief Naval Officer, USN Washington, who had requested discussions regarding the implementation of the agreement.⁸⁴ NSHQ wanted to implement Annex V of ABC-1, with respect to Pacific shipping control, and to initiate full liaison between US, British and Canadian naval authorities. Furthermore, an Admiralty 'basegram' distributed throughout Canada on 26 November made the following request: 'Report names of all R.N.R. and R.N.V.R. officers and ratings who have a knowledge of Japanese and Chinese'.⁸⁵ On 29 November, the Admiralty

⁸² NAC, RG 24, D11, Vol. 11763, File PC 04-43-1: 'Dominion Affairs – Circular Letters', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 193, 7 Nov. 1941.

⁸³ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M.353, 7 Nov. 1941.

⁸⁴ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12149, NSHQ (Ottawa) to Admiralty 307 and BAD Washington, Most Secret message no. 2238Z/26, 26 Nov. 1941.

⁸⁵ Ibid., Vol. 12149, Admiralty Basegram GM969 to AIG1-840A, SDO Ottawa, et al., Message no. 1515A/26, 26 Nov. 1941.

informed OPNAV Washington and NSHQ Ottawa that it was implementing the Type X enciphering system on 1 December to report daily ship movements; a wise security precaution.⁸⁶

The war preparations continued into the first week of December. NSHQ continued to monitor Tokyo naval W/T stations, track Japanese *Marus* using D/F, intercept and decrypt Japanese *Maru* weather/position reports, and liaise with the British Pacific network.⁸⁷ On 2 December, the China Station conveyed several orders to the Allied Pacific Powers: 'Withdrawal of all ships north of Hong Kong . . . Ships over 4,000 tons to leave Hong Kong to southward. . . . No ship is to leave Singapore to north eastward without special permission except to parts in Malaya or Borneo. . . . No Dutch ship is allowed to sail northward of Netherlands East Indies without permission Dutch C. in C.'⁸⁸ Clearly, Japanese naval action was anticipated in the areas cited. Also on 2 December, British authorities requested support for an RDF-281 radar set that was being installed in Puget Sound, a USN base near Seattle, so that the Americans would have a 'warning unit'.⁸⁹ On 3 December, NSHQ Ottawa passed on a message from the RCMP to Captain P. Tyrwhitt of the Far Eastern Security Section, FECB Singapore.⁹⁰ The RCMP had arranged with the FBI to advise the FECB of all 'suspected persons' departing from North America to the Far East, but now proposed that the FECB report on similar persons travelling from the Far East to North America. Three days later, the FECB agreed to the Canadian request.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Vol. 12151, SPENAVO (London) to OPNAV (Washington), et al., Most Secret message no. 1222/29, 29 Nov. 1941.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Vol. 12152, COPC (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 0538Z/28, 28 Nov. 1941; Vol. 12149, NSHQ (Ottawa) to Admiralty, et al., Message no. 1351Z/1, 1 Dec. 1941; Vol. 12151, COPC (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 0013Z/3, 3 Dec. 1941; Vol. 12151, Admiralty to NSHQ (Ottawa), et al., Message no. 1844A/3, 3 Dec. 1941; and Vol. 12151, SO(I) Jamaica to Admiralty, DNI Ottawa, et al., Message no. 1520R/3, 3 Dec. 1941. According to Message no. 1844A/3, the Admiralty did not require Ottawa's decryptions of Japanese *Maru* weather/position reports. The Admiralty likely drew upon its resources at FECB Singapore for such information.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Vol. 12147, CinC China to Admiralty, et al., Message no. 0353Z/2, 2 Dec. 1941.

⁸⁹ Ibid., Vol. 12147, BNLO Navy Yard (Puget Sound) to BARM Washington, Message no. 0025Z/2, 2 Dec. 1941.

⁹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 12151, NSHQ (Ottawa) to Captain on the Staff (FECB Singapore), Message no. 1835/3, 3 Dec. 1941; and Vol. 12149, C/S Singapore to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 1023Z/6, 6 Dec. 1941.

More preparations followed in the last two days before the Japanese attack. On 5 December, the Admiralty issued a message to Washington and Ottawa regarding full implementation of ABC-1, Annex V, with respect to Pacific shipping control.⁹¹ The Admiralty, writing in response to NSHQ's message of 26 November, emphasized that US flag ships should hold the same signals books as British and Allied merchant ships, agreed to the exchange of US and British liaison officers, and suggested that all merchant shipping movements, both US and Allied, be reported to Washington. On the same day, NSHQ Ottawa sent a message to Esquimalt regarding US plans to lay sono-buoys in Canadian waters and to build a 'listening hut' on Canadian territory.⁹² It requested that the USN use diplomatic channels to complete its planned chain of sono-buoys along the Strait of Juan de Fuca on the Pacific Coast; a measure that the USN had planned as early as 29 November. Also on 5 December, Atlantic Command in Halifax confirmed that it had sent 'depth charge throwers' to Esquimalt two days earlier.⁹³ Evidently, the Pacific Coast required more protection. From 5 to 6 December, Esquimalt made frequent contact with Seattle, San Francisco, Honolulu, Singapore and the HMCS *Prince Robert*, which was crossing the North Pacific.⁹⁴ On 6 December, British authorities placed the entire British and Commonwealth naval network on an emergency alert, enacting nearly 20 'QFA' emergency messages.⁹⁵

Following Japan's attacks on US and Allied targets on 7 December, the final defensive measures were taken. NSHQ informed its naval network that the United States had executed

⁹¹ Ibid., Vol. 12152, Admiralty to BAD Washington and NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 0146A/5, 5 Dec. 1941.

⁹² Ibid., Vol. 12152, NSHQ (Ottawa) to COPC (Esquimalt), Message no. 1536Z/5, 5 Dec. 1941; and Vol. 12151, COPC (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 2051Z/29, 29 Nov. 1941.

⁹³ Ibid., Vol. 12152, COAC (Halifax) to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 1330Z/5, 5 Dec. 1941.

⁹⁴ Ibid., Vol. 12154, Message nos. 0003X/5, 1853Z/6, 1955Z/6, 2131Z/6, 2156Z/6 and 2345Z/6, 5–6 Dec. 1941.

⁹⁵ Ibid., Vol. 12149, ACND (London) to Admiralty, et al., Message no. 2055Z/6, 6 Dec. 1941.

WPL 46, the 'Rainbow 5' war plan, against Japan.⁹⁶ The Admiralty ordered all merchant ships in the Far East to proceed to British, Dutch or US ports, although no ships were to go to Hong Kong, Borneo or Yellow Sea ports.⁹⁷ From the Canadian perspective, it was significant that the Admiralty regarded Hong Kong as a risk. On 8 December, NSHQ informed its naval network that ABC-22, the 'Joint Canadian – United States Basic Defence Plan No. 2', was now in effect against Japan.⁹⁸ On the same day, Washington authorities informed NSHQ Ottawa that all US Pacific Coast shipping north of Panama was cancelled, as were all Lend-Lease shipments to Vladivostok.⁹⁹ American-Allied defensive measures were required in both the Far East and the North Pacific.

Meanwhile, in the days before the outbreak of war, the RCN had also taken measures to protect North Pacific shipping in a likely naval emergency. On 3 December, Pacific Command made a request on behalf of the *Komsomolsk*, a Soviet merchant vessel, which was due to sail on 4 December from Esquimalt to Vladivostok.¹⁰⁰ The Command asked Naval Headquarters in Ottawa to secure US permission for the *Komsomolsk* to use Iliuliuk Bay and Unalaska Bay as refuge anchorages in case of an emergency within the North Pacific; the request was important enough to copy to Canadian naval intelligence staff.

That request also made specific reference to an earlier incident. On 23 and 24 October, a similar request for North Pacific refuge anchorages had been made on behalf of the *Columbia*, a Swedish merchant vessel, which also planned a Great Circle routing from Esquimalt to

⁹⁶ Ibid., Vol. 12149, NSHQ (Ottawa) to COAC (Halifax), Message no. 1930/7, 7 Dec. 1941.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Admiralty to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 2100Z/7, 7 Dec. 1941.

⁹⁸ Ibid., Vol. 12147, NSHQ (Ottawa) to COAC (Halifax), et al., Message no. 2100Z/8, 8 Dec. 1941. For a discussion of Canadian military planning in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese attacks, see Granatstein, *The Generals*, 225–6.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Vol. 12147, Washington to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 2023Z/8, 8 Dec. 1941.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., Vol. 12151, COPC (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa), copied to DIO and DOO, Message No. 2252Z/3, 3 Dec. 1941.

Vladivostok.¹⁰¹ In late October, messages exchanged between Esquimalt, Ottawa and Washington had indicated that war between Japan and the Soviet Union was possible and that North Pacific shipping might be affected. With respect to these past incidents, on 4 December Ottawa passed on Pacific Command's request concerning the *Komsomolsk* to Washington naval authorities and permission was granted the same day.¹⁰² It is clear that Pacific Command now took the threat of naval conflict in the North Pacific quite seriously. A war between Japan and the Western Powers would have threatened not only Far Eastern ports like Vladivostok, but also the Great Circle shipping routes between North America and the Far East. Any concern over a possible attack on Pearl Harbor would have intensified such planning.

Other vessels plying the North Pacific were also carefully monitored. The San Francisco–Honolulu voyage of the S.S. *Lurline* was noted in several reports after 26 November.¹⁰³ On 29 November, NSHQ informed Wellington, Melbourne and FECB Singapore that the merchant ship *Hawaiian Planter* was soon due in Honolulu.¹⁰⁴ A 3 December message from NSHQ informed FECB Singapore of the San Francisco–Honolulu voyage of the *Jagersfontein*, a Dutch merchant vessel.¹⁰⁵ Between 4 and 5 December, the RCN closely monitored the movements of the *Felix Dzerjinsky* and the *Uritski*, Soviet merchant vessels that

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Vol. 12082, COPC (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa), copied to DIO and MMS, Message No. 0056Z/23, 23 Oct. 1941; Vol. 12082, NSHQ (Ottawa) to BAD Washington, copied to COPC, CinC China and Admiralty, Message No. 1529Z/23, 23 Oct. 1941; and Vol. 12091, CNA Washington to NSHQ (Ottawa), copied to BAD Washington, COPC, DIO, DOO, CinC China and Admiralty, Message No. 2112Z/24, 24 Oct. 1941.

¹⁰² Ibid., Vol. 12155, NSHQ (Ottawa) to CNA Washington, copied to COPC and DNI, Message No. 0235Z/4, 4 Dec. 1941; and Vol. 12155, CNA Washington to N.01/C Esquimalt, copied to NSHQ, DIO and DNI, Message No. 2034Z/4, 4 Dec. 1941.

¹⁰³ Ibid., Vol. 12149, Message nos. 2345Z/26, 0324Z/1, 2057Z/6 and 2034Z/7, 26 Nov. to 7 Dec. 1941; and Vol. 12151, NSHQ (Ottawa) to DNI Wellington, Message no. 2139Z/30, 30 Nov. 1941.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Vol. 12151, NSHQ (Ottawa) to DNI Wellington, SO(I) Melbourne and Captain on the Staff (FECB Singapore), Message no. 1528Z/29, 29 Nov. 1941.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Vol. 12151, NSHQ (Ottawa) to DNI Wellington and Captain on the Staff, HMS *Sultan*, Singapore (FECB), Message no. 2044Z/3, 3 Dec. 1941. See also NSHQ (Ottawa) to HBM Consul General, San Francisco (requesting the ship's route through the North Pacific), Message no. 2042Z/3, 3 Dec. 1941; and SO(I) (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 2047Z/3, 3 Dec. 1941.

had embarked from American west-coast ports for the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶ The RCN reported these Soviet ship movements to both the Admiralty and US authorities.

The movements of HMCS *Prince Robert* across the North Pacific from Hawaii to Canada caused even more concern. In the evening of 4 December, the ship left Honolulu for Esquimalt, a fact that Pacific Command felt necessary to report on 5 December to the entire Pacific intelligence community, including the Admiralty in London, naval and intelligence staff in Ottawa, and naval staff in China, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand.¹⁰⁷ That message's wide distribution was most unusual for a ship movement report. Most ships never warranted such attention and the *Prince Robert* was not even heading west into the Far East; it was heading *east* across the North Pacific from Hawaii to Canada. Clearly, Pacific Command saw that routing as potentially dangerous. Moreover, the *Prince Robert*'s deck log shows that the ship made flare contact with an US submarine at 2340 hours on 5 December near the position 28°N, 152°W – about 500 miles southeast of the *Kido Butai*.¹⁰⁸ Given that the *Kido Butai* was almost certainly on full radio silence by the time it steamed south to Hawaii, it is quite unlikely that either the *Prince Robert* or the US submarine detected its presence. Nonetheless, US submarine reconnaissance in the waters north of Oahu was a wise measure.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Vol. 12152, Seattle to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message No. 2248Z/4, 4 Dec. 1941; and Vol. 12155, Portland (Oregon) to NSHQ (Ottawa), copied to Admiralty, Message No. 2135/5, 5 Dec. 1941. See also Ibid., Vol. 12149, Message nos. 1541/26 and 2027Z/26, 26 Nov. 1941; and Vol. 12151, Message no. 2231Z/3, 3 Dec. 1941.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Vol. 12152, COPC (Esquimalt) to Admiralty, CinC China, NOI/C Hong Kong, NSHQ, ACNB, NZNB, CinC AWI, copied also to DIO and DOO, Message No. 2208Z/5, 5 Dec. 1941. The *Prince Robert* had originally been sent to the Far East as a troop ship. The ship left Vancouver on 27 October 1941 to deliver two Canadian battalions to Hong Kong, arriving there on 16 November, after stops at both Honolulu and Manila. On 19 November, the ship left the ill-fated Canadian battalions at Hong Kong and steamed east toward Hawaii, landing at Honolulu on 3 December.

¹⁰⁸ NAC, RG 24, D2, Vol. 7752, HMCS *Prince Robert* Deck Log, 13 Oct. 1941 to 8 Jan. 1942. The deck-log entry for 5 December 1941 reads: '2340 – Flare bearing Red 100° – American Submarine'. At 2000 hours on 5 December, three hours and forty minutes before the *Prince Robert* had flare contact with the American submarine, the ship reported its position as 27°19'N, 152°45'W. For the position of the *Kido Butai* on 5 December, see the position reports of the 3rd Battleship Division in Goldstein and Dillon (eds.), *The Pearl Harbor Papers*, 258–9.

Following the Pearl Harbor attack on 7 December 1941, the RCN intensified its efforts to protect shipping and to share important intelligence. On 7 December, RCN messages from Esquimalt and Ottawa informed the *Prince Robert* of the Japanese attacks against Pearl Harbor and Manila, also explaining that US merchant ships were facing submarine attacks; indeed, the *Cynthia Olsen* was sunk by a Japanese submarine just miles away from the *Prince Robert*.¹⁰⁹ The *Prince Robert* was ordered to proceed swiftly back to Esquimalt and did so using a ‘zig-zag course’ for the next two days, thereby avoiding Japanese submarine attacks. On 7 and 8 December, Naval Headquarters in Ottawa ordered the Soviet merchant vessels *Komsomolsk*, *Felix Dzerjinsky* and *Uritski* to return to US or Canadian ports.¹¹⁰ On 8 December, NSHQ reported that Japanese submarines were operating a ‘scout line’ 800 miles east of Honolulu.¹¹¹ It also used D/F and decrypted ‘noon position reports’ to track the positions of numerous Japanese *Marus* throughout the Pacific.¹¹² The Pacific War had finally broken out, and for Canada that

¹⁰⁹ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12149, COPC (Esquimalt) to HMCS *Prince Robert*, copied to DIO, Message No. 2031Z/7, 7 Dec. 1941; NSHQ (Ottawa) to HMCS *Prince Robert*, copied to COPC, Message No. 2158Z/7, 7 Dec. 1941; and NSHQ (Ottawa) to OPNAV and BAD Washington, copied to A/DSD, Message No. 2244Z/7, 7 Dec. 1941. According to Message No. 2031Z/7, the *Cynthia Olsen* sent distress reports indicating that the enemy submarine was located at 33°42’N, 145°29’W at 1902 hours on 7 December. The *Prince Robert*’s position, according to its deck log, was 33°30’N, 145°30’W at 2000 hours on 7 December. If these figures are correct and if the Japanese submarine remained in the vicinity, then the *Prince Robert* may have been less than fifteen miles away from enemy action – she was fortunate to still be afloat. In Message No. 2244Z/7, Naval Headquarters in Ottawa told OPNAV and the British Admiralty Delegation in Washington that the *Prince Robert*’s approximate position at 2000 hours on 7 December was 34°N, 141°W, but the cited longitude differs by several degrees from the *Prince Robert*’s deck log entry.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 12147, NSHQ (Ottawa) to Russian ship *Uritski*, Message No. 2049Z/8, 8 Dec. 1941; NSHQ (Ottawa) to SO(I) (Shanghai) and Captain on the Staff, HMS *Sultan*, Singapore (FECB), Message No. 2127Z/8, 8 Dec. 1941.

¹¹¹ Ibid., Vol. 12147, NSHQ (Ottawa) to DNI Wellington, Message no. 1413Z/8, 8 Dec. 1941; NCSO San Francisco to NSHQ (Ottawa), et al., Message no. 0245Z/8, 8 Dec. 1941. . Japanese strategy called for submarines to support battleships, to serve on reconnaissance missions and to ambush enemy vessels on occasion. Within two weeks of the Pearl Harbor attack, nine Japanese submarines had been in action on the coast between Juan de Fuca Strait and San Diego, sinking five merchant ships and damaging others. See Whitby, ‘The Quiet Coast’, in Haydon and Griffiths (eds.), *Canada’s Pacific Naval Presence*, 68–9.

¹¹² Ibid., Vol. 12149, COPC (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 2016Z/7, 7 Dec. 1941; Vol. 12147, NSHQ (Ottawa) to CinC A&WI, et al., Message no. 0236Z/8, 8 Dec. 1941; and Vol. 12147, COPC (Esquimalt) to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 0528Z/8, 8 Dec. 1941. The Japanese vessels tracked include *Belgian Maru*, *Sinyo Maru*, *Nissyo Maru*, *Tatuta Maru*, *Naruto Maru*, *Terukawa Maru*, *Toa Maru*, *Kobe Maru* and *Palao Maru*.

conflict began not only in Hong Kong, but also in the vast expanses of the North Pacific, which it had attempted to monitor carefully.

Conclusions

In 1941, Canadian strategists attempted to fathom Japan's next move in the North Pacific. The Army, RCN and RCAF all anticipated Japanese nuisance raids along the Pacific Coast, particularly in the form of submarine attacks, but did not believe that a coastal invasion would occur. Before the German-Soviet War, strategists also considered the Soviet Union as a potential threat to continental defence, but later believed that it might confine Japanese forces to the Far East, if only Stalin could be coaxed into a war declaration against Japan. In terms of Pacific Coast defence measures, Canadian and US authorities ensured that each other's armed forces had shared landing/docking rights for aircraft and ships, and throughout the year the RCN and USN maintained very close ties. The RCN also organized other defence measures, including anti-torpedo nets, sono-buoys, depth-charge throwers and aerial torpedo practice. The Dominion government succumbed to pressure from British Columbia and registered Japanese Canadians, also exempting them from compulsory military service for much of 1941. The Canadian armed services saw the *Nisei* as a security risk because it was believed that they could shelter Imperial Japanese agents along the Pacific Coast. In terms of preparations for the Pacific War in late November, Canadian authorities invoked ABC-1, Annex V, with respect to Pacific shipping control. Significantly, the RCN anticipated conflict in the North Pacific. It set up refuge anchorages for the *Komsomolsk* when the ship sought to traverse the North Pacific just days before the outbreak of war. At that time, the RCN also reported the Honolulu–Esquimalt voyage

of HMCS *Prince Robert* to the highest Allied intelligence authorities. Clearly, the RCN believed that the North Pacific deserved as much vigilance as the Far East.

Canadian defence strategy throughout 1941 demonstrates that Canadian officials fully anticipated war in the Pacific. It is difficult to see how any action Japan took on 7 December 1941 could have surprised Canada. The Dominion improved its Pacific Coast defences in anticipation of Japanese raids and monitored Allied shipping across the North Pacific. If some in Canada anticipated an attack on Pearl Harbor, then the concern shown over North Pacific voyages is even more understandable. In any case, Canada and its allies invoked the ABC-1 Agreement in preparation for total war against Japan. Canada adhered to Allied strategy and took its role as a Pacific Power quite seriously. We have looked at Canadian strategy as it applied to specific aspects such as economic sanctions, Hong Kong reinforcements, Pacific Coast defence, the treatment of Japanese Canadians, Allied agreements and North Pacific shipping control. In the last two chapters, we will offer a comprehensive survey of Canada's strategic choices and observations throughout 1941 so that we may summarize Canada's response to the Far East crisis.

Chapter 8

Planning for War: Canadian Strategy and Observations, January–October 1941

In 1941 Canadian decision-makers, who benefited from a great wealth of domestic and external intelligence sources, made specific strategic decisions with respect to the Far East crisis. As we have seen, the Mackenzie King government was not simply observing the crisis and adopting Allied strategy in an uncritical manner. Canada anticipated Japan's actions in the Far East and formed its own strategy, which involved participation in Allied strategies to deter Japan, but only when it appeared that such actions would not instigate a war without active US support. Since October 1940, Prime Minister Mackenzie King had anticipated a Pacific War and knew that Canada would participate, provided that the United States was involved as a co-belligerent. This chapter discusses Canada's day-to-day response to the Far East crisis from January to October 1941, a period during which Canada and its allies faced several war scares, shifting Far East alliances, Japanese expansionism and the development of the Anglo-American special relationship. In particular, we will examine Canada's response to the January–February war scare, the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact, the German-Soviet War, Japan's move into southern French Indochina, the Atlantic Conference and the October Soviet-Japanese war scare. Our examination will show that Canadian strategists carefully considered US and Soviet influences over Japan's actions, eventually realizing that war with Japan was unavoidable.

From Early War Scares to the Occupation of Southern French Indochina, January–July 1941

In January, External Affairs officials drew several conclusions about the Far East crisis. In terms of influencing Japan's intentions and actions, Russia seemed to be a greater factor

than Germany: the Soviets could limit Japan's freedom to operate in the Far East in a way that Germany could not. Yet Japan continued to monitor the European War with great interest, as Germany's performance in the conflict might weaken Britain and indirectly undermine that nation's strength in the Far East. In terms of Allied deterrence, the British Commonwealth had to take responsibility for reinforcing British possessions in Southeast Asia because US regional support was limited to the Philippines. In January, however, External Affairs learned that the USN was relocating its Pacific Fleet to Pearl Harbor, a move that might help deter Japan from making a move in Southeast Asia.¹ Nevertheless, O.D. Skelton took the precaution of informing the Canadian Legation in Tokyo that the Argentine Legation might be requested to protect Canadian interests in the event of war between Canada and Japan.² Skelton, however, did not believe that war was absolutely certain. On 20 January, he responded to Feaver's report from Tokyo, offering his own thoughts on the Far East situation: 'Our own feeling here has been that Japan was not likely to take on a new war unless Britain suffered serious reverses, and assurances were given of Russia's benevolent neutrality. In a situation that is so fluid, it is difficult however even to frame hypotheses.'³ Skelton's remarks were well considered, but non-committal. Canada would have to watch for political indicators in the Far East.

During the February war scare, Ottawa made more decisive plans. On 4 February, H.L. Keenleyside informed Norman Robertson that Canada had to provide the very best diplomatic

¹ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #5', SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular DW578, 23 Jan. 1941. The message included information on the USN Pacific Fleet: 'It is learnt that the United States Pacific Ocean Fleet will be concentrated at Honolulu by January 31st. It will comprise at the minimum ten battleships, three aircraft carriers, nine heavy cruisers, eight light [cruisers], fifty destroyers, thirty submarines and auxiliaries, and means that the entire United States Fleet, except warships in dock or stationed in the Atlantic, will be in the Western Pacific.'

² NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, O.D. Skelton (Ottawa) to Canadian Legation (Tokyo), Secret letter, 7 Jan. 1941.

³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), O.D. Skelton (Ottawa) to H.F. Feaver (Tokyo), Letter, 20 Jan. 1941.

representation to Japan whilst economic sanctions continued.⁴ Keenleyside believed that the Far East situation was approaching a climax. On 8 February, Robertson informed Mackenzie King that the number of Canadian nationals in Japan and Japanese-controlled areas had fallen from 483 to 177; more than half of those remaining were Roman Catholic priests and nuns who wanted to remain no matter what developed.⁵ Robertson expressed great concern over future evacuation, given that trans-Pacific shipping had been reduced. On 14 February, Ottawa received a report from Craigie in Tokyo concerning the protection of British interests in the Japanese Empire in the event of war.⁶ Craigie, like Skelton a month earlier, advocated using Argentina as an agent to protect British interests. From the Canadian perspective, the February war scare involved cautious diplomacy and plans for possible evacuation from Japan, rather than concrete military preparations.

Throughout the spring, however, Ottawa officials monitored US-Allied discussions over Japan and participated in Washington conferences. On 27 March in Washington, British and US staff officers signed the ABC-1 agreement, which outlined a joint defence plan to be followed in the event of the United States' entry into either the war in Europe or a war against Japan. Canadian officials had carefully monitored the development of this agreement and had participated in the associated Washington talks. In March and April, Ottawa received word from London that British officials were pressing their US counterparts to adopt a joint Anglo-US declaration that any Japanese move against ADB possessions in the Far East would be

⁴ Ibid., Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, H.L. Keenleyside, 'Memorandum for Mr. Robertson', 4 Feb. 1941.

⁵ Ibid., Reel T1793, Vol. 777, File 365 (pt. 4), N.A. Robertson, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister', 8 Feb. 1941.

⁶ Ibid., R.L. Craigie to Dr. Rodolfo Moreno (Ambassador for Argentina), Letter, 14 Feb. 1941. In his report, Craigie emphasized the need to protect official property, offices, furniture and about 2,000 British subjects resident in the Japanese Empire. For an explanation of British strategy during the February war scare, see Antony Best, 'Straws in the Wind: Britain and the February 1941 War Scare in East Asia', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 5 (1994), 642–65.

considered a *causus belli*.⁷ Despite Cordell Hull's personal support for such a plan, the US State Department could not offer official endorsement for domestic political reasons. Nonetheless, Ottawa learned that on 27 April, US, Dutch and British staff officers in Singapore had signed a joint-defence ADB agreement to be followed in the event of war with Japan. On 22 and 30 May, London asked Canada and the other Dominions about possible support for a Dutch initiative to make a public ADB declaration against further Japanese aggression.⁸ Specifically, the Dutch wanted Japan to know that any attack on 'the line running from Singapore to Australia via the Netherlands East Indies' would be considered as an attack on all ADB Powers. Cordell Hull, however, believed that public declarations would not be useful at that time: he believed that US naval movements would be a more suitable deterrent. As a result, Britain and the Commonwealth temporarily shelved the Dutch proposal.

On 30 May, McGreer in Tokyo sent a rather curious message to Mackenzie King, informing him that the Japanese Ambassador in Washington was negotiating with Cordell Hull without the knowledge of the Japanese Foreign Minister.⁹ McGreer, along with Craigie and the Australian Minister in Tokyo, had sent a telegram to London in which they expressed great concern over these diplomatic activities: if Japan became free in China because of a negotiated settlement with the United States, then it might turn to other aggression in the Far East. Specifically, Washington's conditions for a US-Japanese settlement included the withdrawal of Japanese forces from China; as these same forces might be used against British possessions, it was in Britain's interests to keep Japan embroiled in China. It is interesting to note that

⁷ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 571, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular Z66, 11 Mar. 1941; and SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular Z142, 24 Apr. 1941.

⁸ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M93, 22 May 1941; and N.A. Robertson, 'Memorandum for the Prime Minister', 30 May 1941.

⁹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 85, 30 May 1941.

McGreer, as a representative of the Canadian government in Tokyo, had so readily adopted the views of his British and Australian counterparts; no Dominion government wanted to face large Japanese forces in the event of a Pacific War. From the Commonwealth perspective, it might be best to see Chiang Kai-Shek continue his valiant struggle against Japanese occupation in China.

In the first fortnight of June, Ottawa considered Allied agreements with respect to Far East affairs. From 3 to 6 June, Mackenzie King discussed the manner in which Canada would implement ABC-1 when the time came.¹⁰ In a series of Most Secret reports and letters, he made it quite clear that Canada would act autonomously and not simply as one of four Dominions with an assumed purpose and plan. For Mackenzie King, Canada would present itself as a sovereign nation during wartime. On 16 June, London informed Ottawa of the various Allied staff talks that had occurred in Singapore.¹¹ In the event of war with Japan the Anglo-Dutch-Australian (ADA) Plan, created in February for mutual defence in the Far East, promised coordinated control of naval and air power, as well as the demolition of any oil fields that might fall to the Japanese. In April, as previously noted, the American-Dutch-British (ADB) Agreement had been created 'to prepare plans for the conduct of military operations in the Far East on the basis of the report of the Washington conversations' and on the basis of war between the Tripartite-Pact Powers and the US-Allied Powers. For Canadian officials, knowledge of these agreements was essential because Canada would support Britain in a war against Japan, provided that US participation was assured.

In late June, External Affairs considered the impact of the German-Soviet war on Far East affairs. On 23 June, H.L. Keenleyside sent Norman Robertson a four-page report entitled

¹⁰ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261118–39, Most Secret reports and letters, 3–6 Jun. 1941.

¹¹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel 1809, Vol. 805, File 571, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret & Personal, Telegram no. 1039, 16 Jun. 1941.

‘Possible Effects of the Russo-German Conflict on the Policy of Japan’.¹² Keenleyside began with a disclaimer: ‘Under its present irresponsible national leadership it is always difficult to speak with assurance about Japanese foreign policy.’ But he then proceeded to assess the possibilities. The Tripartite Pact did not require Japan to declare war on Russia, although Japan might use the German-Soviet war as an opportunity to take Kamchatka, Vladivostok, the Amur region and other Russian maritime provinces, thus gaining fisheries, oil fields and strategic advantages in the north. Soviet forces, particularly submarines and bombers out of Vladivostok, would however offer great opposition to Japanese forces. Keenleyside also noted that Japan was unlikely to launch simultaneous attacks in the north and the south because it would face insurmountable opposition from Russia, Britain and America. He speculated that Japan was more likely to take advantage of the German-Soviet war by minimizing northern troop commitments in preparation for a southern advance. The Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact, signed two months earlier, along with a ‘temporizing policy’, would in his view enable Japanese officials to move southward in a cautious manner: ‘Tokyo is likely to continue to push southward as far and as fast as possible short of provoking Britain and America to war – and otherwise to await the culmination of events in Europe.’ Keenleyside concluded that Japan was not ready to fight a major war unless Germany prevailed in Europe.

Another External Affairs report sent to Norman Robertson in June discussed the ‘Prospective Effect of the Russo-German Conflict on the Policy of the United States’.¹³ American policy was deemed to be of crucial importance: ‘As the whole future of the British,

¹² Ibid., H.L. Keenleyside to N.A. Robertson, Memorandum: ‘Possible Effects of the Russo-German Conflict on the Policy of Japan’, 23 Jun. 1941. This document is also found in NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3).

¹³ Ibid., ‘Memorandum for Mr. Robertson: Prospective Effect of the Russo-German Conflict on the Policy of the United States’, unsigned and undated six-page document. The document was most likely written by H.L. Keenleyside in late June 1941.

Canadian and allied cause is dependent upon the policy of the United States any development that is likely to affect that policy is a matter of immediate and vital interest to us. The German attack upon Russia is such a development.' The report considered in particular the effect that the German-Soviet war might have on American isolationists, which were divided into several groups. 'Theoretical isolationists' were opposed to intervention because 'democracy would be lost at home in fighting for it abroad'. 'Defeatist isolationists', like Lindbergh, believed that Hitler was too strong in Europe. 'Pro-Nazi isolationists' would never sway in their views. 'Anti-British isolationists', like Senator Nye or the Irish Americans, would also be difficult to convert. 'Anti-Communists' might be supportive: even the anti-Communist Winston Churchill welcomed the prospect of a Second Front in Europe. 'Communist isolationists' were the people most likely to change their views as Moscow's instructions changed. In the United States, the 'Communist isolationists' were perhaps a million strong, but exerted a disproportionate influence over the US labour force: there would be no impediment to US war materials production if Russia remained an ally of Britain. The report concluded that Soviet participation in the war could only be beneficial to the British, Canadian and Allied cause.

External Affairs also produced a four-page report entitled 'Canadian Comment on Recent Developments in Canadian-Russian Relationships'.¹⁴ The report noted that Canadian public opinion had altered following Germany's attack on Russia. Canadians wanted full diplomatic and trade relations with Russia, as well as the release of interned 'anti-fascists' and labour leaders within Canada (which in fact happened). It was thought that Canada should support Russia because a German victory would expose the Dominion to a Pacific attack. The report offered the following conclusion:

¹⁴ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1810, Vol. 808, File 597: 'Russia – Political and Economic Situation (1919–1946)', SFR/MM (External Affairs, Ottawa), 'Canadian Comment on Recent Developments in Canadian-Russian Relationships', 30 Jul. 1941.

. . . in spite of the grounds for mistrust and suspicion, there is little doubt that it is a vital Canadian and Allied interest to keep Russia in the war against Germany. If this can be done, Germany's Eastern Front will become a constant drain on her men and resources, and the Russian front would in time become a stepping-off place for the offence against Germany. If, on the other hand, Russia cannot be kept in the war, the outlook for the Allies is dark indeed. Germany would have solved the problem of the blockade, could move vital war industries still further away from the Royal Air Force, and could hold Europe for years to come.¹⁵

The report could not have been more insightful: the Soviets were indeed to tie down German troops in a war of attrition in the East and then contribute to a final assault on *Reich* territory. As in other reports, their participation was seen as vital to the war's outcome.

In total, these reports provided Canadian officials with several ready-made conclusions about the German-Soviet war. Japan would take advantage of the war as much as possible, particularly in terms of a southward drive, but would not engage the Western Powers until the war's outcome was more certain. It was important for Canada and the Allies to watch Tokyo's every move. It was in Allied interests to keep Russia in the war for as long as possible: Britain could only benefit from an Eastern Front in Europe, and public opinion, particularly in leftist quarters, seemed to favour an alliance with Russia. With Russia on board as an ally, even American public opinion might sway to a degree. Canadian officials serving in Washington were also getting the impression that Roosevelt would do his best to support Russia as a prelude to active American participation in the war.

On the domestic front, Mackenzie King may have used the new crisis to justify his absence from a proposed Prime Ministers' conference in London: he decided instead to tour Pacific Coast military, naval, air and industrial establishments. On 25 June, he shared his thoughts with Roosevelt in a letter written on a train bound for British Columbia: 'There is no doubt in my mind about the wisdom and necessity of my remaining here at present, if

¹⁵ Ibid., 3.

Canadian unity is to be maintained and our war effort to continue to gain the momentum which I hope and believe it will.'¹⁶ On 1 July, Roosevelt responded and hinted at US support for the Allies: 'I feel that if the Russians should fail to hold out through the Summer, there may be an intensified effort against Britain itself, and especially for control of the Atlantic. We may be able to help a good deal more than seems apparent today.'¹⁷ Russia's participation seemed to be vital to the war's outcome in both the East and the West.

In July, Ottawa monitored shifting alliances and considered advice from diplomatic missions abroad. On 14 July, the Canadian Minister in Canberra informed Ottawa that Australia had concluded an agreement with Russia, although Prime Minister Menzies held back immediate military aid because his government was still monitoring the nature of Communist 'subversive activity'.¹⁸ On 20 July, McGreer urged Mackenzie King to announce the appointment of a new Canadian Minister in Japan for 'psychological' effect and to encourage anti-Axis elements in Japan.¹⁹ Although his telegram fell silent on the subject, McGreer no doubt wanted out of Japan because Japanese authorities had not yet cleared him of espionage charges in the Fournier matter. As previously noted, he had to remain in Tokyo because Cordell Hull had asked Mackenzie King to maintain existing diplomatic appointments as a show of solidarity for the American-led asset-freeze.

From 23 July until early August, Menzies corresponded frequently with Mackenzie King, emphasizing the need for US assurances, British capital ships operating east of Suez and

¹⁶ FDRL, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers as President, President's Secretary's File, Box 25, File: 'Canada: 1941', W.L.M. King to Roosevelt, Letter, 25 Jun. 1941.

¹⁷ Ibid., Roosevelt to W.L.M. King, Letter, 1 Jul. 1941.

¹⁸ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4861, Vol. 301, 255159, HCCA (Canberra) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 55, 14 Jul. 1941.

¹⁹ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261459, CMJ (Tokyo) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 119, 20 Jul. 1941.

at Singapore, and the neutrality of Thailand.²⁰ Not surprisingly, the Australian Prime Minister was extremely concerned over Japan's move into southern French Indochina. He suggested that all Dominion Prime Ministers attend the Imperial Conference in London, but Mackenzie King made it clear that he was 'needed' in Canada. On 30 July, Menzies contacted the entire British Commonwealth and implored London to encourage Washington to provide assurances of US military assistance in the event of war with Japan, which he believed would deter Japan from initiating such a conflict. If US support was denied, he cautioned, then 'Japan will engage in policies from which at a later stage she cannot withdraw without a serious loss of face.'²¹ The tone of Menzies' various missives suggested that Australia was exceptionally vulnerable in the South Pacific: an Anglo-American alliance had to be forged before it was too late.

On 28 July, External Affairs considered Japan's move into southern French Indochina and produced a Secret report entitled 'Measures to be taken in the event of War with Japan'.²² The report resulted from a meeting that External Affairs held with a special committee consisting of representatives from various government departments, the armed services and the RCMP. Once again, Commander Barry German, who had represented Canada at the ABC-1 talks, appeared as a specialist in Asian affairs. The special committee discussed shipping and economic questions, trading with the enemy, financial measures, embargoes, diplomatic

²⁰ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4867, Vol. 312, 263951-82, R.G. Menzies/W.L.M. King correspondence, 23 Jul. to 11 Aug. 1941.

²¹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), P.M. Australia to SSDA (London), et al., Most Secret telegram no. 6, 30 Jul. 1941.

²² NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, Chairman J.E. Read (External Affairs, Ottawa), 'Measures to be taken in the event of War with Japan', Secret report, 28 Jul. 1941. A special committee, chaired by J.E. Read, produced the report. The following officials served on the committee: J.E. Read, L.B. Pearson, H.L. Keenleyside, H.F. Angus, T. Stone, M. Wershof (External Affairs); R.H. Tarr (Foreign Exchange Control Board); D.M. Johnson (Finance); W.R. Jackett (Justice); Col. R.B. Gibson, Major L.S. Yuill (National Defence, Army); Group Capt. F.V. Heakes (National Defence, Air); Comdr. Barry German (National Defence, Navy); P.L. Young, A.W. Merriam (National Revenue, Customs); F.E. Jolliffe (Post Office); Asst. Comm. Tait, Inspector D. Saul (RCMP); A.H. Mathieu, G.W. McPherson (State, Custodian); Col. H. Stethem (State, Internment); L.D. Wilgrees (Trade & Commerce); and C.P. Edwards (Transport).

questions, censorship, defence measures, internment and the prevention of race riots.

Considering that agenda, it is clear that the committee took the threat of war with Japan quite seriously. They formed several conclusions: in the event of war, Pacific shipping would be controlled carefully, particularly 'neutral' shipping; the Canadian parliament would decide on Canada's declaration of war with Japan, even if Britain issued a 'war telegram' stating that Britain was at war with Japan; and 'all persons of Japanese race' in BC would undergo compulsory registration, a move that would be extended to other provinces: Japanese nationals in Canada would ostensibly face the same treatment as German and Italian nationals.

The report, viewed critically, seemed to reflect the inclinations of the Mackenzie King government. In the event of a Pacific War, control of Pacific shipping, deemed necessary for national defence, would keep Canadian resources in Canada. Ottawa would make independent war declarations in an ongoing display of Canadian sovereignty within the British Commonwealth of Nations. Compulsory registration of Japanese Canadians, with possible internment, would not only match existing conditions for 'Axis nationals' across Canada, but also satisfy the Pattullo government and BC public opinion. In wartime Canada, foreign policy and defence measures were often bound inextricably to domestic issues.

From the Atlantic Conference to the Soviet-Japanese War Scare, August–October 1941

In August, the Canadians studied various Allied policies and assessments concerning the Far East. On 5 August, Ottawa learned that officials in Batavia, NEI, were disappointed that US economic measures against Japan had not been 'wholeheartedly' executed. Batavia also wanted more support from Washington: 'if the United States expects the Netherlands East Indies to cooperate in stopping oil supplies to Japan, United States must be ready to stand by

the Netherlands East Indies if Japan attacks them to seize oil fields.’²³ Three days later, Hume Wrong in Washington noted that the US public largely accepted Russia as a new ally, although this had weakened demand for US intervention in Europe; the new focus was on Japan.²⁴ Sumner Welles had assured the Soviets of ongoing economic assistance, as support for the Soviets strengthened the Allied-American position in both Europe and the Far East.

The subject of deterrence came up once again. On 11 August, Menzies shared his views on the matter with other Dominion Prime Ministers. Not surprisingly, he regarded Singapore and Malaya as vital outposts requiring full air and naval support. He also believed that the Commonwealth should consider any attack on Thailand as *casus belli*, regardless if necessary of the United States’ position, although US support was highly desirable: ‘if Thailand is abandoned and we delay our action we will be one country nearer to war. . . . We feel that if we are prepared to fight, America will not, in fact, desert us’.²⁵ Perhaps Japan would think twice about further expansion if the Allies showed determination and unity of purpose. On 13 August, the acting Prime Minister of New Zealand wrote to the Dominions and shared Menzies’ anxiety over the Far East situation, but advised moderation.²⁶ He was reluctant to make Thailand a *casus belli* and believed that economic sanctions should be given a chance. Messages sent to Ottawa the next day showed that the US State Department largely

²³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 1393, 5 Aug. 1941.

²⁴ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4872, Vol. 320, 271648–51, H.H. Wrong (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Letter, 8 Aug. 1941.

²⁵ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), PM Australia (Canberra) to SSDA (London), et al., Most Secret telegram no. 8, 11 Aug. 1941. This telegram is also found in CAC, CHAR 20/41/105–6.

²⁶ Ibid., Acting PM New Zealand (Wellington) to PM Australia (Canberra), et al., Most Secret telegram no. 7, 13 Aug. 1941.

agreed with the moderate position.²⁷ In August, not everyone was ready for a showdown in the Pacific.

But some British strategists were planning for that eventuality and shared their thoughts with the Dominions. On 29 August, the Ministry of Economic Warfare produced a five-page Most Secret report entitled 'Mechanism of Control in the Pacific Ocean for Purposes of Economic Warfare in the Event of War with Japan'.²⁸ According to that plan, the Allies would regard the Japanese Empire, including the China coast and French Indochina, as enemy territory upon receipt of a British 'war telegram'. Navigational controls, known as the 'navicert system', would be imposed on Far East and Pacific shipping so that British authorities could search for contraband. This would depend on US cooperation, control of Japanese trade with South America, and more consultation with Washington and Moscow with respect to Pacific shipping control. In essence, the plan resembled Annex V of the ABC-1 agreement, which concerned shipping controls in any theatre of operations. British officials distributed copies of the plan throughout the Commonwealth, although Canada did not receive a copy until early November.

The Atlantic Conference, held between Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt aboard ships off Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, was an event that Ottawa had to learn about from London, rather than from direct participation. On 6 August, Churchill informed Mackenzie King that he was attending a secret meeting with Roosevelt near Newfoundland,

²⁷ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4872, Vol. 320, 271670–2, H.H. Wrong (Washington) to N.A. Robertson (Ottawa), Secret letter, 13 Aug. 1941; and 271673–6, Wrong to Robertson, Secret letter, 14 Aug. 1941.

²⁸ QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Archival no. 2150, Ministerial Files C, D1030, Ian Maclellan, British High Commission (Ottawa) to N.A. Robertson (Ottawa), Most Secret letter with attached report, 3 Nov. 1941.

but said nothing about Canadian participation.²⁹ The next day, however, Churchill revealed his opinion on the matter to the Lord Privy Seal in London:

It would be a pity if anything happened to lead Mr. Mackenzie-King to join us in Newfoundland. Please make sure Dominions Office give no encouragement to any such plans. I have no reason to suppose he has any idea of coming. Trust all arrangements will be made to receive him with most cordial welcome if he arrives England before I get back.³⁰

Canada was Britain's senior wartime ally before the United States entered the war and was usually consulted on matters of Allied policy: Mackenzie King did not wish to be ignored.³¹

But the Atlantic Conference dealt with wartime and post-war problems in the context of future US participation in the Grand Alliance. Mackenzie King's absence signified the subordinate role that Canada would play following US entry into the war. In essence, the Atlantic Conference signified the beginning of the Anglo-American special relationship, one that would eventually undermine the importance of the British Commonwealth during wartime and in the immediate post-war years. Churchill seemed to underscore that point in a Most Secret telegram sent to London during the conference. On 11 August, he told the Lord Privy Seal that Roosevelt's proposed joint declaration of post-war aims would 'prejudice the future of imperial preference' in British trade (because Roosevelt wanted free trade) and would see the maintenance of a British-American air and naval force 'for a long indefinite period'.³² Churchill, who desperately wanted American support for the Allied cause, felt that it was expedient to agree to Roosevelt's terms: 'It would be most imprudent, on our part, to raise

²⁹ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261173-4, British High Commission (Ottawa) to W.L.M. King, Letter, 6 Aug. 1941.

³⁰ CAC, CHAR 20/48/2, Churchill to Lord Privy Seal, Most Secret telegram, Tudor no. 6, 7 Aug. 1941.

³¹ For further comment on Mackenzie King's views on this matter, see Spencer Dunmore, *Wings for Victory: The Remarkable Story of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994), 275-9. Dunmore notes that after the Pearl Harbor attack, the British and the Americans sometimes ignored Canada. For example, Canada was not consulted in late December 1941 when a UK-US aircraft-allocation deal threatened BCATP allotments in Canada.

³² CAC, CHAR 20/48/5-6, Churchill to Lord Privy Seal, Most Secret telegram, Tudor no. 15, 11 Aug. 1941.

unnecessary difficulties. We must regard this as an interim and partial statement of war aims designed to reassure all countries of our righteous purpose and not the complete structure which we should [have] after victory.'³³ Nevertheless, in accepting American support during wartime, Britain and the Commonwealth would have to accept American dominance in the post-war period.

For the moment, however, Canada and the other Dominions were still important allies and London offered full information on the progress that was being made in Placentia Bay. On 12 August, Ottawa received an update from London.³⁴ Roosevelt proposed a 30-day moratorium on US-Japanese discussions, during which time Britain could reinforce Singapore whilst full economic sanctions continued. He wanted the 'neutralization' of Thailand and Indochina, even though Japan would not agree until it had resolved the 'China Incident'. Roosevelt also promised to warn Japan against further encroachment in Southeast Asia and hinted at possible joint US-British action. On 24 August, Churchill informed the Dominion Prime Ministers about conference matters, repeating much of the information contained in the earlier update.³⁵ Furthermore, he announced that Roosevelt had agreed to a joint declaration regarding the 'final destruction of Nazi tyranny', and had pledged to continue sending US supplies to both Russia and Britain. On 30 August, Churchill elaborated on Roosevelt's sense of timing regarding negotiations with Japan:

The President and State Department think it a good thing to gain time, be it 30 days or 90 days, so long as there are no further encroachments, and the Japanese seem disposed

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), SSDA (London) to British High Commission (Ottawa), Most Secret Circular Z258, 12 Aug. 1941. See also CAC, CHAR 20/48/9-10, Churchill to Foreign Office, Most Secret telegram, Tudor no. 19, 12 Aug. 1941.

³⁵ CAC, CHAR 20/42A/10-13, Churchill to British High Commissioners in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, Telegram T508, 24 Aug. 1941.

to parley on this basis. Our interests are served by a standstill, and the Japanese for their part want to know what is going to happen to Russia.³⁶

Churchill also wanted to place more capital ships in the 'Aden–Singapore–Simonstown' triangle before the end of 1941. Anglo-American strategy seemed to involve delaying conflict with Japan until late 1941, whilst improving Allied defences in the Far East.

In late August, Mackenzie King travelled to Britain, where he met with Churchill at the Chequers estate. Churchill expressed his belief that Japan would not fight both Britain and America.³⁷ To that end, he had asked Roosevelt at the Atlantic Conference to adopt 'an inflexible position' regarding Japan, although the President later avoided meeting that request. Churchill now informed Mackenzie King that the text of his upcoming Mansion House speech included an assurance of British support for the United States in the event that Japan attacked US possessions. It seemed that Churchill wanted to offer British support to the United States in the hope that such support would be reciprocated. Not surprisingly, Mackenzie King expressed concern over this pledge of support because it risked war with Japan without an absolute guarantee of US belligerency. What if Japan attacked the Philippines and the US Congress did not see the attack as sufficient grounds for a war declaration? Mackenzie King reminded Churchill that US public opinion was still quite isolationist, despite the interest that Roosevelt, Stimson and Knox all had in active US participation in the war.³⁸ Churchill, however, was more willing to take risks than Mackenzie King, perhaps because he had few options given Britain's tenuous position in the European War. For Mackenzie King, Churchill's strategy rested upon the questionable assumption that the United States could be

³⁶ CAC, CHAR 20/42A/39–41, Churchill to Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand, Telegram T530, 30 Aug. 1941.

³⁷ NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 23 Aug. 1941.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 24 Aug. 1941.

brought into the war through the encirclement of Japan, which would not necessarily result in full-scale war in the Far East.

Churchill seemed to confirm that strategy during further conversations with the Canadian Prime Minister. On 18 September, Mackenzie King spoke to J. Pierrepoint Moffat, US Minister in Canada, about his recent meeting with Churchill in London. He wanted Moffat to tell Roosevelt that Churchill and his ministers were convinced that Britain could not win the war without US support: 'Churchill himself had said he would rather lose several months of supplies and have that declaration of war than to have the additional supplies without any definite word as to the U.S. coming in.'³⁹ Mackenzie King told Moffat that, unlike Churchill, he feared an immediate US declaration of war against the Axis because that might bring in Japan. He thought that Japan should be *kept out* of the war, whereas Churchill thought that Japan would choose to *stay out* in the face of a strong Anglo-American alliance. In support of Mackenzie King's appraisal of Churchill's views, it may be noted that Churchill's correspondence at that time reflected his belief in deterrence in the Far East. But Mackenzie King and Moffat also considered his views with respect to the Soviet factor. They both believed that if Russia lost its struggle against Germany, then Japan would probably enter the war.

Meanwhile, Canadian officials took advantage of reduced tension in Far East affairs to study American attitudes and strategy. On 9 September, Hume Wrong reported on his visit to the British Embassy in Washington, where he learned more about the renewed Hull–Nomura talks.⁴⁰ Cordell Hull apparently believed that the Anglo-American position in the Far East was bound to improve with time, so that even if the Japanese were disingenuous about negotiating

³⁹ Ibid., 18 Sep. 1941.

⁴⁰ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4872, Vol. 320, 271677–8, H.H. Wrong (Washington) to N.A. Robertson (Ottawa), Most Secret letter, 9 Sep. 1941.

in the context of the Nine-Power Agreement, avoiding an immediate crisis was still in US-Allied interests. Furthermore, Japan would continue to be tied down in China because Chiang Kai-Shek preferred to fight it out so as to gain the most enduring negotiated settlement with Tokyo. Later in the month, H.L. Keenleyside wrote a note for Norman Robertson in which he expressed his concerns over Joseph Grew's idea of offering Japan economic benefits if it abandoned the Axis and economic exclusionism in the Far East: proof would be needed of Japan's sincerity. Keenleyside favoured the *status quo* in Washington: 'The appeasers in the State Department are still working hard and Canadian views might strengthen the determination of Mr. Hull to adhere to his present policy.'⁴¹

On 13 September, Hume Wrong offered a more personal impression of the Washington scene:

I don't like Washington any better. I'm sick of its artificiality. Also, I am getting sick of the U.S. attitude towards the war. . . . If, as Roosevelt says, they are determined to destroy Hitlerism, let them get busy with destruction. They are in a thoroughly inglorious position, and lots of them are ashamed. Can't we exploit this feeling of shame without giving offence? I feel, however, fairly satisfied at last that F.D.R. has crossed the crucial watershed *in his own mind* and has decided that this war won't end without U.S. belligerency. I think he only got to this point recently.⁴²

To place Wrong's concerns in context, it is important to note that US public opinion still favoured isolationism, despite Allied diplomatic efforts and BSC covert operations.

On 19 September, Wrong wrote to Mackenzie King and reported that US public morale had improved towards the war, but that Soviet resistance to Germany had taken pressure off Britain, thereby creating a new sense of indifference in America. Wrong, however, noted that Charles Lindbergh had become a liability to the isolationist cause: 'It is to be hoped that

⁴¹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, H.L. Keenleyside to N.A. Robertson, Secret memorandum, 22 Sep. 1941.

⁴² NAC, MG 30, Series E101, Vol. 8, H.H. Wrong (Washington) to unknown addressee, Letter, 13 Sep. 1941.

Lindbergh has seriously damaged the isolationist cause by his latest speech, in which he described the Jews, the British, and the Administration as the three forces leading the country into war. . . . The America First Committee is clearly embarrassed.’⁴³ As a result, Wrong explained, Lindbergh had little press support and had further damaged his reputation in Washington: ‘The supporters of the Administration will not allow the public to forget his appeal to racial prejudice.’ BSC-controlled interventionist groups across the United States would also use Lindbergh’s remarks to great advantage. Canadian officials monitored US isolationist sentiment quite carefully because it constituted the only restraint on Roosevelt’s interventionist designs.

Unfortunately, Mackenzie King ran afoul of US public opinion after press censors misrepresented a speech he had made in London. On 4 September, Mackenzie King and Winston Churchill made speeches about Allied solidarity at Mansion House in London, but British press censors omitted a sentence in Mackenzie King’s text that had revealed Churchill’s presence at the function: no one wanted the enemy to know Churchill’s whereabouts.⁴⁴ The resulting modified text made it look as if Mackenzie King was asking for the United States to guarantee Britain’s security, in a form similar to the pledge that Roosevelt had made to Canada three years earlier. As it happens, the omitted line referred to Churchill’s pledge of support for the United States: ‘Your declaration, Prime Minister, that in the Far East, Britain would stand at the side of the United States, is a sure sign of the deepening interdependence of the free world.’ On 11 September, Hume Wrong reported from Washington that the published speech

⁴³ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4872, Vol. 320, 271762–6, H.H. Wrong (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Secret letter, 19 Sep. 1941.

⁴⁴ In his diary entry for 4 September, Mackenzie King commented on his Mansion House speech. See NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 4 Sep. 1941.

had received unfavourable comment in the US press.⁴⁵ On 22 and 23 September, Mackenzie King wrote to Roosevelt and Churchill, conveying his anxiety over the matter.⁴⁶ Roosevelt responded on 27 September, admitting that the press reports were damaging and played into isolationist hands, but would not have a long-lasting effect.⁴⁷ He reminded Mackenzie King that he had to watch public opinion and Congress ‘like a hawk’ whilst increasing armed help all the time. From the Canadian perspective, the Mansion House speech would eventually be forgotten and public opinion could, once again, be managed through careful press releases.

In October, when it appeared that there might be conflict between Japan and Russia, Ottawa joined in an Allied discussion over the prospect of using a ‘war telegram’ in the event of war in the Pacific. On 11 October, London informed the Dominions that if Japanese actions fell within the context of the Anglo-Dutch-Australian conversations of February 1941, then a warning telegram could be issued to all Allied nations.⁴⁸ That telegram could be sent if ‘active military counter measures’ were considered. Six days later, John Curtin, the new Prime Minister of Australia, heartily agreed with such a plan and emphasized the need for ‘inter-governmental consultation’.⁴⁹ On 20 October, the Canadian High Commissioner in Canberra informed Ottawa that the Curtin government intended to cooperate fully with all Allied nations, because a Pacific conflict might spread quickly to Australia.⁵⁰ In Ottawa, Canadian

⁴⁵ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4872, Vol. 320, 271679–83, H.H. Wrong (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Letter, 11 Sep. 1941.

⁴⁶ FDRL, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers as President, President’s Secretary’s File, Box 25, File: ‘Canada: 1941’, W.L.M. King (Ottawa) to Roosevelt (Washington), Letter, 22 Sep. 1941; and CAC, CHAR 20/43/14–15, PM’s Personal Telegrams (T606), W.L.M. King (Ottawa) to Churchill (London), Telegram no. 193, 23 Sep. 1941.

⁴⁷ Ibid., FDRL, Roosevelt (Hyde Park) to W.L.M. King (Ottawa), Letter, 27 Sep. 1941.

⁴⁸ QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Archive no. 2150, Ministerial Files C, Box 59, D1030, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circulars M319 and M320, 11 Oct. 1941. These letters are also found in NAC, RG 24, D11, Vol. 11763, File PC 04–43–1.

⁴⁹ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4862, Vol. 303, 256442, PM Australia (Canberra) to SSDA (London), et al., Most Secret telegram no. 11, 17 Oct. 1941. Researchers should note that there is a gap in this file collection from 14 Nov. to 8 Dec. 1941.

⁵⁰ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), Canadian High Commission (Canberra) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 86, 20 Oct. 1941.

officials accepted the idea of a war telegram, but emphasized that the Cabinet War Committee would take the final decision regarding Canada's participation in a Pacific War. On 25 October, British officials informed Norman Robertson that further US consultation was essential in the event of war because the European Powers could not exert sufficient economic and naval control in the Pacific.⁵¹ Robertson was reminded that Britain, in a show of Allied support, would treat Japanese attacks on Dutch, French or American possessions in Southeast Asia in the same way as attacks on British possessions. All told, it still seemed wise to withhold British and Commonwealth military support for a Pacific campaign until US support was assured.

Throughout October, Canadian officials also had to consider the Soviet factor. If Russia faced conflict with Japan whilst still fighting Germany, then the results could be disastrous for the Allies. There was already friction between Moscow and London. Early in the month, Vincent Massey informed Mackenzie King that Stalin had accused the British Naval mission in Russia of 'indiscretions', which meant espionage.⁵² Massey had also explained that London regarded the Soviet occupation of northern Persia as an embarrassment.⁵³ Rather than simply occupying Persia to maintain safe Allied supply routes to Russia, the Soviets seemed to be supporting regional separatist movements in neighbouring Azerbaijan, with a view to possible annexation; the Persians were deeply displeased. Nonetheless, Canada and the Allies had to keep Russia in the war and that meant material

⁵¹ QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Archival no. 2150, Ministerial Files C, Box 59, D1030, British High Commission (Ottawa) to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Ottawa), Most Secret letter, 25 Oct. 1941. W.C. Hankinson, signing for Sir Patrick Duff, was the British official who had sent the letter to Robertson.

⁵² NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1810, Vol. 808, File 597, HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret letter no. A422, 2 Oct. 1941.

⁵³ Ibid., HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret letter no. A421, 30 Sep. 1941.

aid.⁵⁴ On 17 October, London reminded Ottawa that Russia had been promised Anglo-American military equipment.⁵⁵ On 25 October, London asked Ottawa about sending Canadian wheat shipments to Russia through both Pacific and Atlantic routes, stressing that Britain could not assist with shipments to Vladivostok.⁵⁶ Ottawa later met that request, as support for Russia was vital to Allied interests.

On 31 October, Mackenzie King advised London to delay a declaration of war against Finland, Hungary and Romania, an action that Moscow had requested the Allies to make, because he felt such action might indirectly affect Far East issues.⁵⁷ He argued that a declaration of war against countries attacking Russia might 'pre-judge' a future Allied decision over whether or not to declare war against Japan if Japan attacked Russia: the Allies did not want to be bound by precedent. He also believed that such a war declaration might affect US entry into the war by virtue of US public opinion and sympathy for American Finns, Hungarians and Romanians. London later acknowledged his views, although pressure from Moscow persisted.⁵⁸ For Mackenzie King, Soviet requests had to be entertained whenever possible, but not at the expense of Far East diplomacy or US participation in the war.

Meanwhile, Canadian officials made other preparations with respect to the Far East crisis. On 9 October, the Cabinet War Committee in Ottawa officially approved the July report on 'Measures to be taken in the Event of War with Japan'. On 18 October, the Canadian

⁵⁴ Mackenzie King also viewed Soviet participation as crucial to the war's outcome. On 16 October, he noted that 'with Russia and Japan on the verge of war, the whole situation might get very unsettled.' See NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 16 Oct. 1941.

⁵⁵ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret memorandum Z288, 17 Oct. 1941.

⁵⁶ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Secret telegram no. 185, 25 Oct. 1941.

⁵⁷ PRO, CAB 66/19, Government of Canada (Ottawa) to Dominions Office (London), Most Secret telegram no. 255 and 226, 31 Oct. 1941.

⁵⁸ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261214, Malcolm Macdonald, British High Commission (Ottawa) to W.L.M. King (Ottawa), Most Secret letter, 27 Nov. 1941.

Chiefs of Staff added their own approval to that report.⁵⁹ Furthermore, on 21 October, Norman Robertson advised the Cabinet War Committee of four decisions to be made if war broke out, which he posed in the form of questions. Should the Canadian armed forces engage Japan? Should Canada terminate communications with Japan? Should the RCMP intern a small number of Japanese Canadians 'for cause'? Should the Japanese Legation and Consulate be closed?⁶⁰ The next day, the Cabinet War Committee met and considered Robertson's advice, but also heard other views.⁶¹ Mackenzie King offered answers to the four questions: receipt of a British war telegram would not be taken as a signal for Canadian forces to attack Japan, unless they had already been attacked; termination of communications would depend on their nature; the RCMP *should proceed* with internments; and Japanese offices in Canada would be closed if Canadian offices had to close in Japan. Not surprisingly, the Cabinet War Committee adopted all of Mackenzie King's 'suggestions'. Some committee members also considered Japanese strategy. The Associate Minister of National Defence believed that hostilities would probably commence 'without any formal declaration of war, possibly by a Japanese attack on Vladivostock.'⁶² Canadian officials now took the threat of a Pacific War quite seriously.

Conclusions

As events unfolded in the Far East, Canadian strategists considered war with Japan to be an increasingly likely prospect. The January–February war scare compelled Canada to consider evacuations from Japan, although no concrete war preparations were made. The

⁵⁹ QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Archive no. 2150, Ministerial Files C, Box 59, D1030, Chiefs of Staff (Navy, Army, Air) to Cabinet Ministers (Ottawa), Secret report, 18 Oct. 1941.

⁶⁰ Ibid., N.A. Robertson, 'Memorandum for Cabinet War Committee', 21 Oct. 1941.

⁶¹ Ibid., Extract from Minutes of Cabinet War Committee: 'Measures to be taken in the event of war with Japan', 22 Oct. 1941.

⁶² Ibid.

Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact suggested that Japan was now free to move south, although the German-Soviet War seemed to leave it free to move either north or south. Both Japan and the democracies would watch the progress of that war with keen interest. Canadian strategists realized that Soviet performance was critical not only to the outcome of the European War, but also to the scope of Japan's expansionist policies. Japan's occupation of southern French Indochina seemed in part to confirm that assessment. They also noted that the Allies sought to offer Thailand assurances against Japanese encroachment as a means of imposing some form of limit on Japan. But active American support for the ADB Powers, an Allied objective and the absolute cornerstone of Canada's Far East policy, remained elusive. It was clear that the Roosevelt administration wanted to intervene in Far East affairs, having already imposed an asset-freeze against Japan and issued a fresh warning to Japan about further encroachment. Yet the American isolationist lobby would simply not capitulate: Mackenzie King recognized its potent force when he faced hostile US press reactions to his Mansion House speech. Canada and its allies would have to wait, particularly as Roosevelt promised Churchill a moratorium on Japanese-American negotiations. Even if Soviet-Japanese tensions in October had resulted in an early Pacific War, the Allies could not count on American belligerency. Seemingly, only a Japanese strike on American targets would provide that.

Apart from examining the thoughts of Canadian strategists, it is important to consider how Canada's own strategic role developed throughout the Far East crisis. Canada not only maintained constant contact with both Britain and America, often serving as a bridge between the two, but also attempted to dovetail its own policies with those of its allies. Again, Canada would not take actions that prejudiced its ability to avoid war with Japan until US support was

assured. That is why Mackenzie King advised British authorities to delay their war declarations against Finland, Hungary and Romania: such actions might pre-judge a future Allied war declaration against Japan if that nation attacked Russia. In terms of war preparations, Canada was treated as a full member of the Allied community during discussions over Thailand, economic warfare and the 'war telegram'. But the Atlantic Conference, which Canada was not invited to attend, indicated that Canada's role as Britain's senior ally was likely soon to end. Once the United States entered the war, Canada would play a more subordinate role. That moment, however, was still two months away. To complete our study, we will now examine Canada's response to the coming of war in the Pacific.

Chapter 9

Countdown to War: Canadian Strategy and Observations, November–December 1941

Canada had faced several Far East war scares in 1941, but in November tensions mounted to epic proportions as Japan and the United States entered the final stages of diplomatic deadlock. It had become quite apparent that Japan and the United States faced irreconcilable differences over Japan's occupation of China and French Indochina. Japan would not withdraw and the United States would not trade. Was there any hope of a diplomatic resolution? Or did anyone really want a peaceful settlement? How could secondary Pacific Powers like Canada ensure that they were not committed to war against Japan until the United States entered? In this final chapter, we will examine Canada's response to the coming of the Pacific War. We will discuss Canada's war predictions, interpretations of the Kurusu Mission, observations concerning the *modus vivendi*, assessments of Roosevelt's intentions, and advice to Britain during the Kra Isthmus war scare. We will also discuss how Canada ultimately prepared itself for the outbreak of war. In early December, Canada not only anticipated a war with Japan involving active American support, but also made several advance preparations for that eventuality.

Anticipating the Pacific War, November 1941

During his meeting with Roosevelt at Hyde Park on 1 and 2 November, Mackenzie King exchanged a number of views regarding the Far East crisis, according to Grant Dexter, a reporter with the *Winnipeg Free Press*. On 7 November, Dexter, who spoke to Mackenzie King's associates, wrote the following notes about the Hyde Park conversations:

King thinks conscription talk stupid and due largely [to] habits formed of riveting their eyes on Europe. They forget Pacific. Roosevelt told him that war between United States and Japan regarded as certain and almost certain to come within 30 days. This will mean radical changes in priorities and this was discussed. We will have to put two or three divisions, perhaps more, on the Pacific coast as they think Japan very likely to attempt a diversion for the purpose of compelling North America to ease off support for Britain and Russia and thus help Hitler. The national mobilization act will be used for this purpose. Many thousands of young men will be called up. We will have to equip them and therefore will have to cut down to some extent our aid to Britain. The realization of the Pacific peril, Mr. King thinks, will put an end to talk of conscription for overseas service.¹

If we accept Grant's evidence, then Mackenzie King not only received an estimate as to when hostilities with Japan would commence, but also planned to use the Pacific War as means to solve his conscription crisis.

Historian C.P. Stacey has commented on Grant's second-hand evidence. Stacey noted that Mackenzie King did not discuss the matter in his diary, but suggested that under fatigue he may not have included all material. However, Stacey may have overlooked two diary entries that appear to support Grant's evidence. On 6 November, Mackenzie King recorded his thoughts about the Far East: 'It is now perfectly clear that Japan intends to fight and that, very soon.'² On 17 November, he wrote about his conversation that day with Lord Halifax: 'I said I would be amazed if before the month was out, there was not war with Japan in the Pacific.'³ Despite his doubts about the diary entries, Stacey seemed to accept Grant's evidence and offered the following explanation:

This would indicate that the policy followed in British Columbia can hardly be called a military policy at all. King's pervading concern with the political question of overseas conscription seems to have been a controlling factor. We have here a striking example of that wishful exaggeration of the direct threats to Canada which was characteristic of King and his civilian advisors . . .⁴

¹ Quoted in Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments*, 47.

² NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 6 Nov. 1941.

³ *Ibid.*, 17 Nov. 1941.

⁴ Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments*, 48.

Mackenzie King was going to fight a war of limited liability, and that meant retaining some Canadian men for home defence, particularly if they were potential overseas conscripts.

The threat of war invited much more discussion in November. Early in the month, Churchill informed Roosevelt, Stalin and all Commonwealth leaders that Britain was sending HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse* to the Far East in order to deter Japan.⁵ Furthermore, Churchill emphasized the need to maintain supply shipments to Russia through Archangel, Persia and Vladivostok because he thought that Japan would not act unless Russia was broken. Jan Smuts, Prime Minister of South Africa, was also influential in Allied discussions because of his long political experience. On 6 November, Ottawa learned of Smuts' full support for Chiang Kai-Shek's appeal for assistance from Britain and the United States.⁶ Smuts believed that assistance to China was absolutely vital as a check on Japanese aggression in Southeast Asia. He noted that Japan would have to cut the Burma Road before advancing north or south, although such action would invite Anglo-American intervention: 'Burma Road is the rubicon for Japan'.⁷ He also thought that it was necessary to place British and American air support in China, an action that might have other welcome consequences: 'Indeed this may be the easier and shorter way to get America actively into the war.'⁸ Smuts may have been correct in believing that any American support for China increased the likelihood of US belligerency.

Following Smuts' correspondence, more discussion ensued over the reinforcement of the Far East. On 13 November, Ottawa learned that Churchill had contacted Chiang Kai-Shek

⁵ CAC, CHAR 20/44/119, PM's Personal Telegrams, Churchill to UK High Commissioners in New Zealand and South Africa, Telegram T765, 31 Oct. 1941; Former Naval Person to President, Telegram T773, 1 Nov. 1941; Churchill to Stalin, Telegram T776, 4 Nov. 1941; and Churchill to UK High Commissioner in Canada, Telegram T789, no. 1920, 5 Nov. 1941.

⁶ QUA, C.G. Power Papers, Ministerial Files C, Box 46, File: 'China, 1940-1944', HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 2057, 6 Nov. 1941; and N.A. Robertson to C.G. Power, Most Secret letter, 7 Nov. 1941.

⁷ CAC, CHAR 20/44/126-7, PM's Personal Telegrams, UK High Commissioner in South Africa to Churchill, Telegram T789, no. 1351, 7 Nov. 1941.

⁸ Ibid.

and offered more support, but advised him that Japan might strike south China at Kunming.⁹ Roosevelt, in response to Churchill's initiative, pledged to 'increase and expedite Lend Lease aid to China and build up [the] American volunteer air force.'¹⁰ He also believed that reinforcement of Singapore and the Philippines would help deter Japan. In that regard, on 14 November, the Prime Minister of New Zealand reported that American engineers based in his country were establishing US air bases on Christmas Island, Fiji, Western Samoa and Noumea to provide an 'outer route' to Singapore and the Philippines for Allied bombers.¹¹ Furthermore, on 17 November, London informed the Dominions that Thailand needed Allied support to keep it independent of Japan, particularly if Japanese forces occupied the Kra Isthmus.¹²

In terms of diplomatic moves, Ottawa learned that London had rejected a Japanese proposal to have British diplomats participate in the Washington conversations as a moderating influence. Both Cordell Hull and Sumner Welles supported Britain's decision to stay out of the talks.¹³ On 17 November, London offered its own explanation in a telegram sent to Ottawa:

When we joined United States and Netherlands at the end of July in imposing freezing measures against Japan, we realized that probable result would be to force her within a comparatively short time to choose whether to make a genuine effort to reach a settlement . . . or to undertake the gaining of her ambitions by force. . . . The maintenance of our present policy admittedly involves a risk of war though with a good prospect of active American participation.¹⁴

In essence, London had no intention of altering the course of American-Japanese diplomacy that had been established by the asset-freeze because US belligerency had to be assured. On

⁹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M360, 13 Nov. 1941.

¹⁰ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 195, 14 Nov. 1941.

¹¹ Ibid., HCCNZ (Wellington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 56, 14 Nov. 1941.

¹² Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M365, 17 Nov. 1941.

¹³ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M362, 13 Nov. 1941.

¹⁴ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M364, 17 Nov. 1941.

22 November, Hume Wrong wrote to Norman Robertson from Washington and explained the British view: 'They feel that, if war comes in the Pacific after the collapse of these discussions, it is very much in our interest that the complete responsibility for breaking off negotiations should rest with Washington.'¹⁵ Mackenzie King had long preached the merits of waiting for guaranteed American support before committing the British Commonwealth to war in the Pacific. Britain and its allies would stay out of the Washington conversations and bide their time.

Nonetheless, Canadian officials continued to receive reports on the talks between Cordell Hull and Japanese diplomats Nomura and Kurusu. On 17 November in Ottawa, Mackenzie King dined with Lord Halifax, who expressed the view that Kurusu's US visit was really meant to determine whether or not the United States would go to war if Japan continued its aggression.¹⁶ According to Halifax, the Japanese thought the Americans were bluffing, and Mackenzie King replied that the present affair was a repeat of Germany's diplomacy just before the outbreak of war in Europe. Other reports came in from London and Washington. On 22 November, several messages informed Ottawa that Hull had adopted an intransigent attitude towards the Kurusu Mission and would not compromise over Japan's occupation of China and French Indochina.¹⁷ Hume Wrong reported from Washington that Hull had insisted that Japan leave the Axis: 'He had told Mr. Kurusu that the Government of the United States would not go six inches in a thousand years to do anything which would assist the greatest

¹⁵ Ibid., H.H. Wrong (Washington) to N.A. Robertson (Ottawa), Most Secret letter, 22 Nov. 1941

¹⁶ NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 17 Nov. 1941.

¹⁷ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circulars M374 and M375, 22 Nov. 1941.

international butcher of all time.’¹⁸ Kurusu offered a compromise involving withdrawal of some Japanese troops in exchange for limited US trade, but Hull would have none of that.

Privately, however, Hull wanted to gain time so that the United States could improve its position in the Far East. On 24 and 25 November, Hume Wrong wrote to Norman Robertson, explaining what he had learned about Hull’s proposed *modus vivendi*.¹⁹ Initially, Wrong had to rely upon information from the British Embassy in Washington, including a telegram that Lord Halifax had sent to Anthony Eden, because Cordell Hull had failed to invite him to a recent meeting on the subject. According to Wrong, on 22 November Hull met twice with ABCD representatives including Lord Halifax (Britain), Mr. Casey (Australia), Mr. Soong (China) and Dr. Loudon (the Netherlands). Hull explained to them that he wanted to gain valuable time, perhaps two or three more months, for the reinforcement of the Philippines. To achieve that objective, he proposed a *modus vivendi* that included several actions: Japan would stop its military advances; it would evacuate troops from south French Indochina and reduce troops in the north; the United States would accept Japanese imports, particularly silk; and Japan would use its export proceeds to buy oil, food, cotton and medical supplies from the United States, Australia and the NEI. Hull sought the agreement of the ABCD representatives before offering such a counterproposal to Japan, but Mr. Soong was very apprehensive about any compromise: the Chungking government did not want to see Japan gain a free hand to continue its brutal occupation of China. Despite Soong’s reservations, Hull persisted in pursuing the *modus vivendi*.

¹⁸ Ibid., Wrong to Robertson, Most Secret letter, 22 Nov. 1941.

¹⁹ Ibid., Wrong to Robertson, Most Secret letters, 24 and 25 Nov. 1941.

Mackenzie King was furious that the Canadian Legation had not been represented at Hull's *modus vivendi* meetings.²⁰ He reminded Wrong that the press and radio had reported a meeting of the 'Pacific Powers' in Washington, but that Canada had not been mentioned, and asked Wrong to discuss the matter with Hull because such an oversight was *not* to occur again. On 25 November, Wrong sent Hull a telegram on the subject and the State Department issued an apology that day, promising that Canada would be represented at subsequent meetings.²¹ Hull explained that he had thought Mackenzie King's close contact with Roosevelt precluded the need for representation, particularly as the meeting had no authority anyway. A few days later, Wrong noted that Hull felt the need to offer a further apology: 'He said with his usual southern politeness that he had "never been more distressed" by anything than by the message which I transmitted to him on November 25th . . . and added that he would do everything he could for his Canadian friends, who occupied a very select place in his feelings.'²² Putting aside Hull's calculated charm, it was clear that the State Department knew that the Canadians resented such oversights and wanted the same consideration that they had received throughout 1941. Only twice had Canada missed out on important discussions: the Atlantic Conference, because it dealt with future Anglo-American cooperation in a post-war context, and the ABCD *modus vivendi* meetings, because of a simple oversight. All told, the Mackenzie King government would not be marginalized until after the United States entered the war.

Meanwhile, Canadian officials continued to gather information on the Washington talks through their British contacts, although at times the State Department was reluctant to share information even with the British Embassy. On 26 November, London reported on Lord

²⁰ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, SSEA (Ottawa) to CMUS (Washington), Telegram, 24 Nov. 1941.

²¹ Ibid., CMUS (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram, 25 Nov. 1941.

²² NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4872, Vol. 320, 271799–804, H.H. Wrong (Washington) to N.A. Robertson (Ottawa), Most Secret message, 29 Nov. 1941.

Halifax's prior interview with Cordell Hull about the proposed *modus vivendi*.²³ Hull emphasized that Stimson and Knox had been pressing him to buy time for the improvement of US defences in the Far East: three months would be regarded as having 'immense value'. Hull believed that there was only a slight chance of Japan accepting his proposal, but that it was necessary to make the effort. He also disagreed with Halifax's view that the Japanese might take action any day next week. But on 26 November, Hull suddenly dropped the *modus vivendi* and issued a final note to the Japanese, a note that was rumoured to be a general declaration of US principles regarding the Far East, or even an ultimatum.

On 28 November, Canadian officials tried to assess the meaning of Washington's sudden diplomatic reversal. In a Most Secret telegram sent from the Canadian Legation in Washington to Ottawa, it was noted that Hull's *modus vivendi* had been dropped 'mainly because of strenuous Chinese opposition expressed to the President'.²⁴ Reportedly, the State Department also recognized that British and Dutch officials had not been enthusiastic about the proposal. Moreover, American observers in the Far East had reported large Japanese naval movements near Indochina, possibly in preparation for an attack on the Kra Isthmus: it might be too late for a *modus vivendi*. Canadian officials remarked that Hull's note had not been shown to Allied representatives, although its text might be made public shortly. It was known that it contained 'a broad statement of general principles acceptable to Pacific settlement' and that it had been 'badly received by Kurusu'.²⁵ That day, H.L. Keenleyside also sent Norman Robertson a Most Secret memorandum entitled 'The United States and Japan'.²⁶ Keenleyside

²³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M388, 26 Nov. 1941.

²⁴ Ibid., CMUS (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 523, 28 Nov. 1941.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., H.L. Keenleyside to N.A. Robertson, Most Secret memorandum: 'The United States and Japan', 28 Nov. 1941.

summarized the American-Japanese negotiations of the past week, with an emphasis on Hull's proposed *modus vivendi*, and explained that the turning point in negotiations had apparently been reached on 27 November, when the Chinese Ambassador and Mr. Soong visited Roosevelt. The Chinese representatives had delivered a message from Chiang Kai-Shek, which explained how the *modus vivendi* would damage Chinese morale and strengthen Japan's hand in China. Reportedly, that message had 'greatly disturbed' Roosevelt, who did not wish to pass the *modus vivendi* without complete ABCD approval.

There may have been other messages that 'greatly disturbed' Roosevelt in the last week of November. On 29 November, Hume Wrong wrote to Norman Robertson explaining that the *modus vivendi* had been mainly defeated by Roosevelt, and that the President had been influenced not only by Chinese representations, but also by a message from Churchill on 25 November; Churchill had pointed out that Chiang Kai-Shek faced a 'thin diet' in China without more Allied support.²⁷ According to Wrong, Roosevelt's Secretary for War had also suddenly changed his mind: 'Until a day or two ago Stimson was urging Hull to play for time so that the U.S. forces in the Far East could be strengthened, but he is now saying that they must not let the Chinese down.'²⁸ Did China's plight inspire such a shift in US policy or did the Americans know something else?

According to personal diaries and memoirs, in the last week of November some Washington officials believed war with Japan was now imminent. On 25 November 1941, Secretary of War Stimson made the following entry in his diary: 'we were likely to be attacked perhaps next Monday, for the Japanese are notorious for making an attack without

²⁷ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4872, Vol. 320, 271799–804, Wrong to Robertson, Most Secret message, 29 Nov. 1941. Researchers should note that there is a gap in this file collection from 30 Nov. to 11 Dec. 1941 inclusive. The original 'thin diet' message is found in CAC, CHAR 20/45/100–103, Churchill to Roosevelt, 25 Nov. 1941.

²⁸ Ibid.

warning, and the question was what we should do. The question was how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without too much danger to ourselves.’²⁹ On 29 November, Cordell Hull offered this explanation to Lord Halifax: ‘The diplomatic part in our relations with Japan is virtually over. . . . The matter will now go to officials of the Army and Navy. . . . Japan may move suddenly and with every element of surprise.’³⁰ Stimson’s and Hull’s observations suggest that Washington had received some kind of special intelligence regarding Japan’s intentions.

Some historians, such as John Costello, believe that Churchill’s ‘thin diet’ message of 25 November may have been accompanied by another message, presumably still classified, in which Churchill offered Roosevelt more specific information concerning the Far East crisis.³¹ Some revisionist writers have conjectured that such a message may have compelled the President to terminate diplomacy with Japan and to prepare for war in the Pacific. Others have suggested that such a message, which may have been based on a decrypt of Admiral Yamamoto’s order for the Strike Force to rendezvous in the mid-Pacific, warned of a strike on Pearl Harbor. To continue that line of thought, it could even be suggested that sympathy for China’s predicament was merely a ‘cover’ for dropping the *modus vivendi* because Roosevelt now intended to end negotiations in the belief that Japan planned to strike Pacific targets in the event of failed diplomacy, which would ensure US entry into the war. Rejecting all the conjecture, however, it may be said at the very least that after 25 November Roosevelt abandoned the *modus vivendi*, ostensibly because it harmed China’s interests, and Hull issued

²⁹ Quoted in Bryden, *Best-Kept Secret*, 97–8. Bryden quoted from Russell Buchanan, *The United States and World War II, Vol. 1* (1962), 51.

³⁰ Quoted in Hyde, *The Quiet Canadian*, 214. Hyde quoted from Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, Vol. II* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1948), 1088.

³¹ Costello, *Days of Infamy*, 311–12, and note 37, 415.

his famous 'note', which contributed to the end of constructive diplomacy between the United States and Japan.

On 29 November, Ottawa received several messages that reported on the Washington scene. Hume Wrong informed Norman Robertson that he would stop his running commentary of the Hull–Nomura talks because Ottawa was now receiving full reports from London, as demonstrated by documents that Lester Pearson brought to Washington that week.³² Wrong also reported that Hull was upset over the negotiations and the lack of unanimity that his proposed *modus vivendi* had received. Hornbeck, who was in complete disagreement with Hull, informed Wrong that he saw the Kurusu Mission as simple Japanese manoeuvring designed to gain time whilst a military build-up proceeded in the Far East. Hornbeck believed that nothing but force would stop the Japanese. Wrong learned from Lord Halifax that Hull was still non-committal about how Washington would respond to a Japanese invasion of Thailand, but had promised to give Halifax a copy of his 26 November note.

The same day, London sent the Dominions a series of updates. One message contained the text of a telegram that London had sent to Lord Halifax, advising him of British policy. Reportedly, London had not been surprised by China's reaction to the proposed *modus vivendi*, but had been willing to reach an interim agreement 'to avoid war in the Pacific if possible and otherwise to gain maximum time'.³³ London hoped that Cordell Hull would take Britain into his confidence with any new proposals before they were given to Japan. Another message from London revealed that Sumner Welles had informed the Australian Minister that 'the

³² NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4872, Vol. 320, 271799–804, Wrong to Robertson, Most Secret message, 29 Nov. 1941.

³³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M402, 29 Nov. 1941.

Japanese had started their military operations at least some days ago.³⁴ In the next message from London, it was reported that Sumner Welles had told Lord Halifax that there had been no further developments in American-Japanese diplomacy since the Hull note, but that he thought Japan would probably move in the next few days.³⁵ Welles could not say what action the US government would take if Japan attacked Thailand.

In the final days before the Japanese attacks, Mackenzie King made certain arrangements. On 29 November, in a Secret telegram sent to the Canadian Legation in Tokyo, he outlined preparations to be made in the event of war with Japan.³⁶ His telegram made reference to a similar message dating from October 1940, but now there was far more urgency. Legation staff were to place Canadian interests in the hands of the 'protecting power' (Argentina); draft the necessary note to the Japanese government; inventory all Canadian government property and then dispose of it; destroy all 'cyphers and secret documents'; and arrange for the departure of Canadian officials.

On 30 November, several messages pointed to US-Allied preparations for war. London informed Ottawa that Japan might attack Thailand and seize strategic points on the Kra Isthmus.³⁷ The RAF had begun reconnaissance flights out of Kota Bharu the day before and now requested that the Americans do the same out of Manila. Another London-Ottawa message confirmed that the USN had agreed to Britain's request for 'recon' patrols.³⁸ British Far East Command requested to intervene on the Kra Isthmus if a Japanese invasion appeared imminent, according to an earlier plan called 'Operation Matador'.³⁹ Lord Halifax spoke to

³⁴ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M404, 29 Nov. 1941.

³⁵ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M405, 29 Nov. 1941.

³⁶ Ibid., SSEA (Ottawa) to Canadian Charge d'Affaires (Tokyo), Secret message no. 169, 29 Nov. 1941.

³⁷ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M406, 30 Nov. 1941.

³⁸ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M408, 30 Nov. 1941.

³⁹ As early as 1937, Major-General William Dobbie, Officer Commanding Malaya, had noted that enemy landings could be made on the east coast of Malaya and the Kra Isthmus during the monsoon season from October

Washington authorities about possible British pre-emptive action in the Kra Isthmus, but did not receive any firm US commitment: 'In view of United States constitutional difficulties, any prior guarantee of such support is most unlikely.'⁴⁰ London also informed Ottawa that the USN and the US War Department had issued war alerts to all US bases in the Pacific.⁴¹ It was noted that Sumner Welles had informed Lord Halifax that Cordell Hull's note would be unacceptable to Japan and that the USN had based its instructions on this expectation. Reportedly, USN war alerts issued between 24 and 28 November indicated that US-Japanese negotiations had broken down and that Japan was expected to make an 'aggressive move' within the next few days. It was believed that Japan might attack the Philippines, Thailand, the Kra Isthmus and possibly Borneo. Furthermore, USN bases had been warned about acts of sabotage. Considering all these messages, it seems clear that the British wanted pre-emptive action, whereas the Americans wanted to wait on guard for a Japanese first strike.

In Ottawa, Mackenzie King and his External Affairs staff surveyed all reports received on 30 November and arrived at a number of conclusions. The Canadian Legation in Washington confirmed that US authorities were reluctant to promise support in the event of British occupation of the Kra Isthmus: Roosevelt was away in Warm Springs and said that he would take no decision until he returned to Washington next day and consulted with his

to March. He had predicted that landings could be made at Songkhla and Pattani in Thailand, and at Kota Bharu in Malaya. In August 1941, Air Chief Marshal Robert Brooke-Popham, CinC of British Far East Command, incorporated those ideas into a plan entitled Operation Matador, in which British forces would advance across the Malay-Thai border into the Kra Isthmus if Japanese landings there appeared to be imminent (see PRO, FO 371/28163). However, there were certain obstacles to using the plan: in 1940, Britain and Thailand had concluded a Non-Aggression Pact, and in January 1941, requests from Far East Command for additional military resources (which the plan called for) had not been approved. On 5 December 1941, London finally gave Brooke-Popham permission to decide whether or not to use the plan, although he ultimately decided not to launch a pre-emptive move into the Kra Isthmus. Politically, his decision ensured that Britain would not appear as an aggressor in the Far East at a moment when the Allies were still waiting for America's entry into the war. Militarily, however, his decision was unfortunate as Japanese forces later overran the Kra Isthmus and Malaya.

⁴⁰ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M406, 30 Nov. 1941.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M407, 30 Nov. 1941.

advisors.⁴² It seemed as though Roosevelt was either applying delay tactics or assuming that the Kra Isthmus would not be attacked after all. H.L. Keenleyside sent Norman Robertson a Most Secret memorandum on the subject, offering several conclusions: on 27 November, Roosevelt had not made progress in the US-Japanese talks; a Japanese naval force had been moving south since 26 November, which was *before* the US-Japanese talks had come to an impasse; Britain was still pushing to occupy the Kra Isthmus in anticipation of Japanese attacks; and Lord Halifax had asked both US and Canadian authorities for ‘an urgent expression’ of their respective views on the subject.⁴³

On the same day, Mackenzie King reflected on the prospect of war in the Far East. In his diary, he condemned Britain’s plan to intervene in the Kra Isthmus before Japan had even attacked:

I took strongly the view that on no account should Britain allow any action to be taken which would have it appear that the war was between G.B. and Japan rather than the U.S. and Japan, or any step to be taken until the U.S. itself was prepared to begin hostilities. The U.S. have been scrupulously careful to make no commitments. I have said right along that they would be prepared to let Britain begin hostilities but heaven knows when Congress, if at all, would consent to the U.S. going into the war.⁴⁴

The question of US participation weighed heavily in his mind, but Mackenzie King now seemed to believe that war in the Pacific was inevitable. He later noted that he had offered an estimate to one Ottawa official on Sunday, 30 November: ‘Dandurand’s honed to know what had been done and reminded me that I had said last Sunday that before another Sunday was over, we would be at war with Japan.’⁴⁵ Next Sunday would be 7 December 1941.

⁴² Ibid., CMUS (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegrams 530 and 531, 30 Nov. 1941.

⁴³ Ibid., H.L. Keenleyside to N.A. Robertson, Most Secret memorandum: ‘The United States and Japan’, 30 Nov. 1941.

⁴⁴ NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 30 Nov. 1941.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 7 Dec. 1941.

On 30 November, Mackenzie King finally telegraphed both Winston Churchill and the Dominions Office in London to offer his own views: 'I cannot express too strongly my view that so long as there is any uncertainty about the degree and immediacy of United States support it would be a terrible mistake to permit any course of action which might result in war between Japan and the British Commonwealth of Nations.'⁴⁶ He pointed out that US isolationists must be persuaded to see Singapore as an object of strategic importance to both the United States and Britain. Furthermore, he emphasized that Washington should offer public assurances of support for Britain before any occupation of the Kra Isthmus was even considered. The message from Ottawa was crystal clear: US support for the anticipated Pacific War had to be guaranteed and under no circumstances should the British Commonwealth risk any unilateral action. Ultimately, the Allies gained a temporary respite because the Japanese decided not to attack the Kra Isthmus.

The Coming of the Pacific War, December 1941

On 1 December, Ottawa tried to anticipate US reaction to the developing crisis. London reported that Churchill had contacted Roosevelt and asked that he issue one last warning to Japan, indicating that further aggression would lead to war.⁴⁷ London also stated that Lord Halifax was meeting again with Cordell Hull to ask for US support in the event of British intervention in Thailand. Halifax believed that the US government would soon offer support for Britain in the event of hostilities: 'There would be much less difficulty with public

⁴⁶ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), SSEA (Ottawa) to SSDA (London), Most Secret & Personal telegram no. 242, 30 Nov. 1941. Another copy of this message is found in NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570.

⁴⁷ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret & Personal telegram no. 208, 1 Dec. 1941. See also SSEA (Ottawa) to CMUS (Washington), Most Secret & Personal telegram no. 489, 1 Dec. 1941.

opinion over war with Japan than with Germany.⁴⁸ In Washington, Hume Wrong spoke to Halifax, who commented on Roosevelt's views.⁴⁹ Apparently, the President wanted air patrols to continue over Thai waters and had asked Sumner Welles to question Kurusu over the purpose of Japanese troop movements. Significantly, Roosevelt said that he would support British action 'even if this means shooting', although he needed a few days to 'shape' the politics. Furthermore, he believed that Tokyo and Berlin had a 'complete understanding' and that Japan was acting at the 'dictation of the Axis.' Canadian officials could now entertain the possibility that US entry into the war was imminent, for Roosevelt would hardly have offered an assurance of US support for Britain unless he anticipated that the United States would be at war in the Pacific within a few days. Moreover, he seemed committed to the wider war effort because he regarded Japan's actions as a product of Axis planning.

Even so, Mackenzie King noted in his diary that day how he had disagreed with the Cabinet War Committee over the prospect of Britain taking action in the Far East without a more definite promise of US support.⁵⁰ Along with C.D. Howe, he believed that Britain could not yet act unilaterally in the Far East, but several Committee members including Ilesley, Macdonald and Ralston believed that Britain had a responsibility to stop Japanese expansionism. For Ralston, the question was about 'incurring a great responsibility' rather than deciding whether or not a particular course of action was a mistake. It may be argued, however, that these Committee members now supported unilateral British intervention in the Far East because they believed that US entry into the war was certain. As we have seen, Canadian officials were aware that the Washington talks had effectively ceased after Roosevelt

⁴⁸ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret & Personal telegram no. 409, 1 Dec. 1941.

⁴⁹ Ibid., CMUS (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Immediate & Most Secret telegram no. 534, 1 Dec. 1941.

⁵⁰ NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 1 Dec. 1941.

dropped the *modus vivendi*, that Japanese forces were on the move in Southeast Asia, and (according to post-war anecdotal evidence) that some reports pointed to a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

For Mackenzie King, however, US participation had to be assured beyond all doubt, regardless of any pre-war intelligence or strategic estimates. That participation was almost entirely conditional on a Japanese first strike, but it was one thing to estimate Japan's intentions and quite another to guarantee Japan's actions. Despite incoming intelligence concerning Japan's intentions in Southeast Asia and the North Pacific, the Prime Minister awaited further signs that US-Japanese diplomacy was terminated.

In his diary entry of 1 December, Mackenzie King revealed his sense of despair over the prospect of war in the Far East:

I fear, however, that matters have gone too far, and that Japan herself has come to the conclusion that it is her moment to strike. The U.S. clearly is not ready; will not be for at least another 4 or 5 months, according to their own communication. Britain certainly has her hands more than full. I should think that in every way, the right course was to exhaust every possible means of avoiding war before permitting any step which would precipitate it.⁵¹

Mackenzie King was fighting a war of limited liability for Canada, but Allied leaders approached their wartime problems from other perspectives. The Churchill government needed the active participation of the United States to guarantee Britain's survival during wartime, whereas the Roosevelt government needed participation in the war to guarantee US national security and future economic prosperity. Given that war in the Pacific appeared to be imminent, all Mackenzie King could do was encourage Britain to let the United States or Japan make the first move.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Over the next three days, Canadian officials had to bide their time because the Washington talks were now stalled and it seemed that less information was available. It is difficult to know exactly what was discussed at the time because so many archival file collections have gaps in that period. However, on 2 December, Ottawa received London's account of Lord Halifax's recent meeting with Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins.⁵² London had forwarded the contents of a telegram from Halifax that offered a more detailed version of the information that Wrong had received from him a day before in Washington. Reportedly, Roosevelt had rejected Japan's request for a renewal of an interim agreement and wanted to plan for different contingencies in the Far East, including action in Indochina, Thailand and the Philippines. He suggested that a Japanese attack on British or Dutch possessions meant that 'we should obviously all be together'. Once again, Halifax noted that Roosevelt offered US support for Britain in the event of a British occupation of Thailand, although 'it might take a short time, he spoke of a few days, to get things into political shape here.' Roosevelt also considered sending a direct communication to Emperor Hirohito. Canadian officials could now only wait and see.

Behind the scenes, Roosevelt seemingly attempted to secure the United States' entry into a war against Japan. On 2 December, he ordered the USN Asiatic Fleet to charter three small vessels, all to be established as American 'warships', to embark on a 'defensive information patrol' across the path of Japanese convoys in the West China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand.⁵³ The vessels *Lanikai*, *Molly Moore* and *Isabel* were chosen to attempt that voyage,

⁵² NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M412, 2 Dec. 1941. See also, Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman (eds.), *War Diaries, 1939-1945: Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), 205-6. On 3 December 1941, Alanbrooke attended a Cabinet Defence Committee meeting in which Halifax's report concerning Roosevelt's promise of support generated some discussion: 'Here we discussed means of ensuring that the USA comes into Far East war in event of Japanese aggression.'

⁵³ Layton, et al., *And I Was There*, 246-8.

but none drew fire from Japanese ships, which may have been the purpose of their assignment. Complicating matters further was the fact that, on 4 December, Japanese ships had moved southwest of the point 10°N, 100°E, in the Gulf of Thailand, a movement that the ADB Agreement, which American officials had signed in April 1941, declared to be an act of war.⁵⁴ It seemed that Roosevelt was committed to war with Japan, but preferred Japan to make the first strike.

Related difficulties arose on 4 December, when the *Chicago Tribune* published the US Rainbow-5 War Plan, which included a detailed outline for an American invasion of Europe. Historians continue to speculate as to how and why the plan was leaked to *Tribune* columnist Chesly Manly. The press leak disclosed US interventionist designs and could only damage German-American relations. It is known that when Hitler declared war on the United States a week later, he told the *Reichstag* that his decision had been influenced by the American press, which a week earlier had published US plans to attack Germany. Historian Thomas Fleming has suggested that Roosevelt may have leaked the plan to the press in a bid to ensure a German war declaration because he knew that even if Japan attacked the United States, the Tripartite Pact did not require the Axis Powers to declare war.⁵⁵ Fleming's speculation is quite interesting, but no firm evidence is available to link Roosevelt with the *Tribune* story.

On 5 December, Ottawa received more strategic assessments from London and Washington. London believed that Roosevelt's attitude now allowed the Allies to enter into a formal military understanding with the NEI, rather than just an oral understanding.⁵⁶ Significantly, London reported that the US government had now issued an assurance of armed

⁵⁴ *Hearings*, part 15, ADB Conversations, 27 Apr. 1941, 1564.

⁵⁵ Thomas Fleming, *The New Dealers' War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the War within World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 35–45.

⁵⁶ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M425, 5 Dec. 1941.

support for Britain in the event of hostilities in the Far East.⁵⁷ US support would be offered if British forces forestalled a Japanese landing in the Kra Isthmus, even if British forces occupied that area in advance, or if Japan attacked either British or Dutch possessions. In Washington, Hume Wrong confirmed that information and reported to Ottawa: 'President told Halifax last night that United States would join in warning to Japan against further aggression, warning includes attack on Thailand, Malaya, or the Netherlands East Indies.'⁵⁸ Wrong commented that Roosevelt had suggested sending separate warnings to Tokyo, first from Washington and then from London and Batavia. Moreover, the President had authorized sending a message to Thailand guaranteeing US support in the event of war. The pledge of support he had given on 1 December had become a fact on 4 December. Again, Roosevelt must have anticipated a Japanese attack on US possessions or he would not have declared his unequivocal support for the Allies. In terms of British preparations, London sent the Dominions a copy of instructions issued to the British Commander in Chief of the Far East: he would coordinate defence plans and assume strategic control over all British land and air forces in British possessions throughout the Far East.⁵⁹ Both Britain and the United States were preparing for the Pacific War.

These preparations compelled Mackenzie King to send a telegram to McCreer in Tokyo. On 5 December, he informed McCreer that he had asked British authorities to arrange for the Swiss government to take care of Canadian interests in Thailand and occupied China in the event of war with Japan.⁶⁰ Mackenzie King still considered Argentina as a suitable agent,

⁵⁷ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M424, 5 Dec. 1941.

⁵⁸ Ibid., CMUS (Washington) to SSEA (London), Most Immediate & Most Secret telegram no. 547, 5 Dec. 1941.

⁵⁹ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M429, 5 Dec. 1941.

⁶⁰ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261546, SSEA (Ottawa) to Charge d'Affaires (Tokyo), Secret telegram no. 170, 5 Dec. 1941.

but wanted Switzerland to serve in a supporting role, if necessary. His latest message simply complemented the one he had sent to McGreer six days earlier, which concerned steps to be taken when closing down the Canadian Legation in Tokyo. Mackenzie King was ready to pull his staff out of Japan.

On 6 December, several incoming telegrams informed Ottawa of Roosevelt's plans. Lord Halifax noted that a day earlier the President had changed his mind about assurances to Thailand and wanted to wait until he decided on a message to Emperor Hirohito.⁶¹ Halifax was annoyed, but believed that American attitudes toward a Japanese invasion of Thailand were now clear. Hume Wrong made enquiries in Washington and reported on the matter: 'Hull mentioned constitutional difficulties for the first time to Halifax last night, but this may not reflect President's views. I understand United Kingdom assurance to Thais is being delivered.'⁶² Roosevelt had already promised to support Britain and the NEI, but offering assurances to Thailand before Japan had committed an overt act might push the constitutional envelope to the extreme. Accordingly, he wanted to make one last appeal to Japan before making a potentially unconstitutional promise to Thailand. That course of action would also allow him to appear moderate in his diplomacy whilst waiting for a Japanese first strike.⁶³

On the same day, the Canadian Legation in Washington sent Ottawa several important messages that appear to have been related to a possible emergency. A Legation record book listing outgoing despatches to External Affairs shows two despatches listed under the topic heading 'Nat. Def. – U.S.: Office for Emergency Management' and another listed under the

⁶¹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circulars M434 and M435, 6 Dec. 1941.

⁶² Ibid., CMUS (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 553, 6 Dec. 1941.

⁶³ According to the war diary of Captain Johan E.M. Ranneft, Netherlands Naval Attaché in Washington, Admiral Turner at the US Navy Department believed that 'a sudden Japanese attack on Manila' could start at any moment. See FDRL, John Toland Papers, Series V: Infamy, Box 122, File: 'Ranneft, Johan E.M.', Ranneft War Diary, 6 Dec. 1941 (English translation by Ranneft).

topic heading 'World War: Effects on Canadian offices abroad'.⁶⁴ Gaps in several archival collections relating to Canadian diplomacy in late 1941 prevent us from examining all of the Legation's correspondence, but the topic headings in the Legation record book suggest that preparations were being made for a possible crisis, including the prospect of closing Canadian offices in a new theatre of war.

Meanwhile, in his diary entry for 6 December, Mackenzie King reflected on how the Far East crisis had developed. He first noted that the Cabinet War Committee had finally decided to declare war against Romania, Hungary and Finland, effective 12:01 EST on Sunday, 7 December. Given that Mackenzie King had originally opposed such a declaration because it might 'pre-judge' a similar decision with respect to Japan, it was significant that he now supported the move: he knew war with Japan was imminent in any case. He also noted that he had asked Norman Robertson several days before to have External Affairs prepare press statements about war with those countries, as well as war with Japan. In response to Angus Macdonald's comment that the Allies were drifting into a war with Japan in a seemingly casual way, Mackenzie King offered another explanation: 'In fact, the fault begins in Britain allowing Japan to get at variance with herself. Secondly, I think she should not have left all negotiations with Japan so exclusively to the U.S. Moreover, she should not have left to the last moment getting defence assurance from the U.S.'⁶⁵

Mackenzie King also assigned some blame to the Americans for manoeuvring the Allies into the present crisis:

Another thing which impresses one deeply is that far too much of all these matters are left in the hands of far too few men. From the correspondence, they never have been wholly for pacification. . . . The real mistake goes back to the breakup of the Anglo-

⁶⁴ NAC, RG 25, B3, Vol. 2456, Canadian Legation (Washington), Record Book: 'Legation Despatches to External Affairs, 1941', Entries for despatch nos. 3657, 3658 and 3662, 6 Dec. 1941, 123.

⁶⁵ NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 6 Dec. 1941.

Japanese alliance. For that the U.S. and Nomura have taken full credit. As far as the U.S. is concerned, it is pretty much the story of the League of Nations. They have brought the institution into being but have not, as a nation, been prepared to take on the obligations which their course of action have involved.⁶⁶

Mackenzie King had correctly seen that insufficient effort had gone into averting war, but had perhaps misjudged American motives. Unlike the 'story of the League of Nations', Washington was prepared to assume many obligations in the event of war with Japan. It was just a question of waiting until Japan committed the first overt act so that US public opinion would support active US intervention in the war. More cynically, it was a question of manoeuvring Japan into firing the first shot, a process that Allied strategists had considered since late 1940, but had implemented since the asset-freeze of July 1941. Allied leaders anticipated that conflict with Japan would create the necessary conditions for America's entry into the war.

On 7 December, the Far East crisis exploded and Canadian officials had to deal with a stream of communiqués. The day began with discussions over Allied-American warnings to Japan. In the early morning, at 1:33 AM, Ottawa received a London telegram on the matter: 'Since possibility remains open that immediate destination of the Japanese convoys is another port in Indo China, there may still be time for warning to Japan by United States, Dutch and ourselves'.⁶⁷ But Norman Robertson believed that the movement of convoys would lead to military action, on the basis of an important message-decrypt that he had received from the Examination Unit a day earlier: a German agent in Rio de Janeiro had sent a message to Hamburg on 3 December, informing his handlers that the USN promised to intercept a

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M438, 7 Dec. 1941.

Japanese convoy heading towards Indochina.⁶⁸ Robertson planned a Sunday morning meeting to discuss the prospect of war with Japan. Other messages from London informed Ottawa that Roosevelt had taken two important actions in the evening of 6 December: he sent his final warning to Emperor Hirohito and he informed the Thai Prime Minister that 'the United States will regard it as a hostile act if the Japanese invade Thailand, Malaya, Burma or the Netherlands East Indies.'⁶⁹ Certainly, Churchill was relieved to hear of this support and said as much in a telegram to General Auchinleck: 'This is an immense relief as I had long dreaded being at war with Japan without or before United States. Now I think it is all right.'⁷⁰ Roosevelt's actions confirmed that he now believed a Japanese strike against American and Allied targets was imminent.

British officials also informed Ottawa that they wanted Craigie in Tokyo to deliver a warning note to Japanese officials on behalf of all five Commonwealth governments, although the Canadian and the Australian Charge d'Affaires were welcome to accompany him. Separate warning notes were discouraged: 'We very much hope that Canadian Government will not think it necessary that Canadian Charge d'Affaires at Tokyo should present a similar communication separately from Craigie's.'⁷¹ Not surprisingly, Mackenzie King immediately sent telegrams to McCreer in Tokyo and to the Dominions Office in London indicating that

⁶⁸ Bryden, *Best-Kept Secret*, 93–4. As noted before, Bryden cited Examination Unit decrypt no. 295, dated 6 December 1941, which concerned message nos. 423, 424 and 425.

⁶⁹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circulars M442 and M443, 7 Dec. 1941.

⁷⁰ CAC, CHAR 20/46/37, PM's personal telegrams (T933), War Office to General Auchinleck, Most Secret despatch 1825/7/12/41, 7 Dec. 1941. Even so, on 7 December, until it was known that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, the British Chiefs of Staff continued to discuss means of ensuring America's entry into the war. See Alanbrooke's remarks in Danchev and Todman (eds.), *War Diaries*, 208–9.

⁷¹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, 'Telegram dictated by Mr. Shuckburg', 7 Dec. 1941.

Canada *would* deliver its own warning note separately from Craigie's.⁷² Mackenzie King supported British war objectives, but would never surrender Canadian independence. Even on the eve of the Pacific War, he felt the need to showcase Canadian sovereignty.

But no more warning notes needed to be issued. Later in the day, as we will recall, the Dominions Office informed Mackenzie King that Japan had launched an assault on British Malaya, just south of the Malay-Thai border: 'Report timed 5:40 p.m., G.M.T. today received from Commander-in-Chief of China that Japanese were attempting to land from five ships at Kota Bharu (on the east coast of Malaya immediately south of Siam-Malayan frontier).'⁷³ Significantly, Japan had attacked a British possession at least 45 minutes *before* it attacked Pearl Harbor. The Pearl Harbor attack occurred at about 7:55 AM, Honolulu Time, which was 1:25 PM, Ottawa–Washington Time, and 6:25 PM, Greenwich Mean Time in London. According to Allied thinking, as we have noted, under no circumstances could the British Commonwealth be at war with Japan until the United States was involved. Therefore, British hostilities could not be declared against Japan until after the United States was attacked, which was exactly what occurred.

The Admiralty seemed to take matters a step further, however. A day later, the Admiralty apparently corrected all official timekeeping in its brief summary of the Japanese attacks against Malaya, Pearl Harbor and Singapore: 'At 2143 7th hostilities against Japan commenced. At 1846 7th Japanese attempted to land troops KOTA BAHRU Northeast Malaya.

⁷² NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), SSEA (Ottawa) to Charge d'Affaires (Tokyo), Telegram no. 172, 7 Dec. 1941; and SSEA (Ottawa) to SSDA (London), Most Secret telegram no. 253, 7 Dec. 1941.

⁷³ NAC, RG 25, F7b, Vol. 2003, File: 'D.W. Telegrams #10', Circular DW1005, 7 Dec. 1941. Ottawa received another message that seemed to indicate the timing of Japanese attacks in the Far East, but Canadian analysts regarded its brief text, which read 'Easfar Too 01:40', as incomprehensible: 'Naval Intelligence says "Easfar Too" means nothing to it. Mills Walker thinks it is a code signature for CinC Far East garbled. If so, this leaves nothing in the message. Code room are trying to get a repeat.' See NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), Singapore to PM of Canada, Most Immediate En Clair message, 7 Dec. 1941.

. . . Pearl Harbour Honolulu heavily attacked 1830 7th by large numbers of aircraft. . . . At 2130 7th 18 aircraft attacked Singapore Island; no damage H.M. ships or establishments.’⁷⁴ According to that summary, Japan attacked British possessions sixteen minutes *after* the attack on US forces at Pearl Harbor, although Britain only commenced hostilities against Japan about three hours later. The Admiralty’s new summary not only reinforced the view that Japan had attacked the United States first, before attacking British possessions, but also made clear that Britain had not offered a military response until well after Pearl Harbor. For Allied strategists, the United States had to be in the Pacific War before Britain, despite Japan’s unwelcome timekeeping.

Ottawa responded swiftly to news of the attacks. On 7 December, Norman Robertson sent two reports to Mackenzie King, informing him of information received from the Canadian Legation in Washington.⁷⁵ It was reported that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor as well as a US transport vessel located 1,300 miles southwest of San Francisco. Distress calls had been received from another vessel located 700 miles from that city. Moreover, the Japanese had attempted a landing in Malaya and had sunk a British gunboat in Shanghai. Roosevelt had ordered war plans against Japan to be made effective at once. It was noted that Japan had not offered any declaration of war, but had simply launched simultaneous attacks against Malaya, Manila, Hong Kong and Pearl Harbor. Washington officials were already trying to link Japan’s actions with the Axis: ‘Mr. Hull told Halifax this afternoon that he thought it quite probable that Germany and Italy would declare war against the United States tonight. He felt that Japan’s aggression had been concerted with its Axis Allies, and timed to coincide with an initiative on

⁷⁴ NAC, RG 24, D20, Vol. 12147, Admiralty Basegram GR189 to NSHQ (Ottawa), Message no. 1948A/8, 8 Dec. 1941. Brian Villa has uncovered documents in other archival collections that also demonstrate Britain’s interest in reporting a Japanese first strike against American, rather than British, targets. I am grateful to Professor Villa for sharing his observations on the matter.

⁷⁵ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), N.A. Robertson, ‘Memorandum for the Prime Minister’ (two documents, each with the same title), 7 Dec. 1941.

their part.’⁷⁶ In Ottawa, Canadian officials responded with an immediate declaration of war against Japan. The resulting Order-in-Council, which received Royal Assent from King George VI the next day, proclaimed that a state of war between Canada and Japan had existed since 7 December.⁷⁷ At 11 PM, EST, on 7 December, Canadian radio stations broadcasted Mackenzie King’s press statement announcing Canada’s state of war with Japan.⁷⁸ His statement also offered assurances that security measures were being taken with respect to Japanese Canadians. Thus Canada was the first nation in the world to declare war on Japan. Why?

To answer that question, we need to examine the motives of Mackenzie King, who directed Canadian foreign policy in his capacity as both Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs. He almost never made a decision with respect to war policy until British or Commonwealth officials had set the pace. He usually deferred to Allied wartime decisions because he took a greater interest in domestic policy, whilst delivering occasional expressions of Canadian sovereignty within the Commonwealth. But in the case of the Pacific War, his declaration of war preceded that of both Britain and the United States, even though he had been adamant about first securing active American participation.

It is clear that Mackenzie King had anticipated Japanese strikes against American and Allied targets. On 27 November, he had made the following observation: ‘I feel they will attack Burma Road from Indo-China, or possibly Thailand but that war in the Pacific is practically inevitable.’⁷⁹ On 30 November, according to Murton Seymour’s post-war account, the Air Ministry had summoned Seymour to Ottawa, where he learned the next day that British

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 309, 261547, SSEA (Ottawa) to Charge d’Affaires (Tokyo), Telegram no. 175, 7 Dec. 1941.

⁷⁸ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), ‘Information on Japan given press by P.M., Dec. 7 (Mears’ report)’, 7 Dec. 1941.

⁷⁹ NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 27 Nov. 1941. Mackenzie King predicted a costly war: ‘with supplies cut off, Japan must lose in the end but there will be again an appalling sacrifice of life before she does, and a world left more than ever in ashes.’

Intelligence anticipated a Japanese air attack against Pearl Harbor on 8 December. It is possible that Mackenzie King had been privy to such intelligence estimates. But even if we question post-war anecdotal evidence from such a credible witness, we may look to other contemporaneous evidence. As previously noted, Mackenzie King had told an Ottawa official on Sunday, 30 November, that ‘before another Sunday was over, we would be at war with Japan.’⁸⁰ Between 29 November and 5 December, he had instructed McGreer to prepare for withdrawal from Tokyo. He also knew that Roosevelt had offered concrete assurances of US support to Britain on 4 December and to the NEI on 6 December, a sure sign that he believed war between the United States and Japan was imminent. On 6 December, Mackenzie King had instructed Norman Robertson to prepare a press release about war with Japan. He seemed as prepared as any Allied leader could possibly be for the outbreak of the Pacific War on 7 December.

In his diary entry for 7 December, Mackenzie King offered further explanation. In the afternoon that day, before the timing of Japan’s attacks on British and American targets was clear, he accepted rumours of attacks on Manila and Pearl Harbor as examples of a Japanese first strike against America: ‘It was an immense relief to my mind, however, to know that their attack had been upon the U.S. in the first instance, and that the opening shots were not between Great Britain and Japan.’⁸¹ Mackenzie King, unlike Norman Robertson, expressed no surprise or incredulity over the Pearl Harbor attack. Washington’s belief that Germany and Italy might declare war on the United States also gave him confidence that US entry was assured: ‘This is the most crucial moment of all the world’s history but I believe the result will be, in the end, to

⁸⁰ Ibid., 7 Dec. 1941.

⁸¹ Ibid.

shorten the war.’⁸² Furthermore, although no British ‘war telegram’ had been received all day because London was waiting for Washington to declare hostilities, an evening message indicated that Britain would declare war against Japan on 8 December: Mackenzie King wanted to declare war on the 7th to show independent action on Canada’s part, even whilst showing solidarity with the British Commonwealth. In essence, he was the first to declare war against Japan because he was absolutely sure of US entry and he wanted to showcase Canadian sovereignty.

On 8 December, the Allies planned their respective declarations of war against Japan. Mackenzie King instructed McGreer to present Tokyo officials with Canada’s war declaration, which had received Royal Assent at 1:10 PM GMT that day but had been in effect since 7 December, and advised him that Argentina would serve as Canada’s ‘protecting power’ in Japan and Manchukuo.⁸³ Canada’s war declaration made reference to Japan’s attacks on both British *and* US targets, but stated that Japan’s actions posed a threat to the security of the British Commonwealth without mentioning US security. The Cabinet War Committee, which had drafted the declaration, wanted to emphasize Canada’s ties with the Commonwealth over its ties with America. That day, Mackenzie King also informed Churchill of Canada’s war declaration.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, London informed the Dominions that Britain would delay its own war declaration: ‘United States hostilities have now broken out. We do not, repeat not, intend

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), SSEA (Ottawa) to Charge d’Affaires (Tokyo), Telegram, 8 Dec. 1941. For information on the Royal Assent, see Ibid., HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 2309, 8 Dec. 1941. The declaration offered to the Japanese read as follows: ‘I am instructed by my Government to inform you that news of the wanton and treacherous attack by Japanese armed forces on British territory and British forces and also on United States territory and United States forces reached Canada on Dec. 7, and that Japan’s actions are a threat to the defence and freedom of Canada and the other nations of the British Commonwealth. Consequently, I have the honour to inform the Imperial Japanese Government, in the name of His Majesty’s Government in Canada, that a state of war exists between Canada and Japan as and from the seventh day of December, 1941.’

⁸⁴ CAC, CHAR 20/46/43, PM’s personal telegrams (no. 254), Prime Minister, Canada, to Prime Minister, 8 Dec. 1941.

ourselves to declare war on Japan immediately.’⁸⁵ London explained that Britain’s war declaration would follow that of the United States, which was expected later in the day. Both Australia and New Zealand decided to postpone their respective war declarations until Britain had acted.⁸⁶ By the end of the day, America, Britain and the NEI had all declared war against Japan. Australia, New Zealand and China (which declared war against all Axis nations) followed suit the next day. With the exception of Canada, the Allies had delivered their war declarations after the US declaration, as per Allied strategy.

On 9 December, Japan finally declared war against Canada and the Allies. Canadian officials also learned that Japan had coerced the Thai government into allowing Japanese troops to pass through Thailand in order to attack Malaya or Burma.⁸⁷ The Thai Foreign Minister stated that Thai troops would not resist British forces, but the main point was that Allied assurances of support for Thailand were now meaningless in the face of overwhelming Japanese opposition. Nonetheless, London informed Ottawa that it had asked the Japanese government whether it was prepared to adhere to the Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use of ‘gas and bacteriological warfare’, in an attempt to limit the scope of Japanese aggression.⁸⁸ That request had also been extended to Finland, Hungary and Romania, which had also received Allied war declarations. Fortunately, during the Second World War, the Allies never faced that form of warfare, although Japan practised it against the Chinese. In the same message, London revealed that several Latin American nations had declared war against Japan in a show of solidarity with the United States. That day, Ottawa also received a seven-page US

⁸⁵ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1–3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M444, 8 Dec. 1941.

⁸⁶ Ibid., HCCA (Canberra) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 107, 8 Dec. 1941; and HCCNZ (Wellington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 69, 8 Dec. 1941.

⁸⁷ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M455, 9 Dec. 1941.

⁸⁸ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular D730, 9 Dec. 1941.

press release, in which Roosevelt linked Japanese aggression and strategy to that of Germany and Italy.⁸⁹ It seemed quite clear that Roosevelt, like Churchill and Mackenzie King, was preparing the public for a US declaration of war against the Axis because he was not yet completely certain that the Axis would declare war on America. US participation in the Far East was now guaranteed, but the real object of Allied strategy was to gain US participation in Europe.

Meanwhile, news of the devastation at Pearl Harbor reached Ottawa. On 9 December, C.G. Power received a message concerning the losses at USN and US Army bases in Hawaii. Mackenzie King read the message to his colleagues and also reflected on the losses: 'When shown to me first by Power I felt it was an appalling blow, one which might well signify a sweep through the British and American possessions in the Orient, like that of Hitler's army through Europe, that it certainly would bring a long extension of the war.'⁹⁰ It is significant that Mackenzie King had expressed no surprise or incredulity over the Pearl Harbor attack when it was first announced, but now expressed surprise at the level of destruction that the Japanese were able to inflict. Seemingly, Japan's choice of target was less surprising than its ability to perform well in military operations. Perhaps Allied observers had underestimated Japan's capability even whilst anticipating its moves.

On 11 December, Canada and its Allies continued to discuss the prospect of widening the alliance against the Axis Powers. London informed Ottawa that Chiang Kai-Shek urged the United States to join in a common declaration of war against Germany and Italy. In terms of the war against Japan, Chiang wanted a common military alliance, under American leadership, between China, Russia, America, the NEI, Britain, Canada, Australia and New

⁸⁹ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 308, 260809-15, Stephen Early (Secretary to President Roosevelt), 'Press Release', 9 Dec. 1941.

⁹⁰ NAC, MG 26 J13, W.L.M. King Diary, 9 Dec. 1941.

Zealand. Chiang supported his point by highlighting the apparent duplicity of the Japanese: 'This latest act of international brigandage on the part of Japan has taken even us by surprise.'⁹¹ Not surprisingly, Russian support in the Pacific would have to wait: London informed Ottawa that Russia had shown no inclination to declare war against Japan.⁹² London also reported Churchill's statement in the House of Commons concerning Axis collusion: 'It seems to me quite certain that Japan when she struck her treacherous and dastardly blow at the United States counted on the active support of the German Nazis and of the Italian Fascists. It is therefore very likely that the United States will be faced with the open hostility of Germany, Italy and Japan.'⁹³ As we will recall, Allied decrypts of Axis diplomatic traffic sent in early December confirmed that Japan was working on an Axis Treaty with Germany and Italy: Churchill's remarks had some substance. That very day, Allied aspirations were fulfilled when Germany and Italy declared war on America.

In messages sent from 11 to 15 December, the Dominions Office informed Ottawa of Latin America's growing support for the Allied cause.⁹⁴ That support was shown in a variety of ways. Chile maintained neutrality with the United States, whereas Paraguay declared pro-American 'solidarity'. Argentina not only maintained neutrality with Canada and Britain, but also safeguarded those nations' interests in Japan. Nicaragua declared war on Japan. Cuba, Honduras and El Salvador declared war on Germany and Italy. Mexico severed relations with the Axis Powers and joined Venezuela and Honduras in imposing an asset-freeze. Brazil imposed controls on Axis banks, but did not declare war. It is clear that Latin America's

⁹¹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1792, Vol. 776, File 365 (pt. 1-3), SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Secret telegram no. 216, 11 Dec. 1941.

⁹² Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular D732, 11 Dec. 1941.

⁹³ Ibid., SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular D735, 11 Dec. 1941.

⁹⁴ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1809, Vol. 805, File 570, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegrams, 11, 13 and 15 Dec. 1941.

various declarations provided the Allies with political rather than military support. They also had some economic value because Axis trade in that region was now quite restricted.

Meanwhile, Canadian officials learned of further efforts to strengthen the alliance against Japan. On 13 December, Hume Wrong reported that Cordell Hull expected the 'loss of the Philippines and perhaps Singapore' and that Roosevelt now wanted full Anglo-American cooperation.⁹⁵ The Americans had not changed their view of Japan's strength because of the successful attacks on 7 December. Even during the ABC-1 talks in February, as we will recall, US strategists had predicted the temporary loss of the Philippines. Unfortunately, their British counterparts had usually expressed the view that Singapore was impregnable, a view that the Japanese would soon prove to be incorrect. Wrong also informed Ottawa that Washington officials were trying to secure 'Soviet belligerency', particularly with respect to Soviet raids against Japan launched from Vladivostok.⁹⁶ However, those efforts were in vain. Later in the month, London reported a failed British attempt to secure a Soviet declaration of war against Japan. Stalin remarked that the Soviet Union was not ready for a long struggle in the East and that such a conflict would be more popular with the Soviet people if Japan declared war first.⁹⁷ Ultimately, Japan and the Soviet Union held to their Non-Aggression Pact: the United States had to shoulder most of the responsibility for the destruction of the Japanese Empire.

On 14 December, Hume Wrong recorded his impressions of the war's outbreak from his vantage point in Washington. He noted that even though the Pearl Harbor attack had eased the tension over the question of active American participation, it had been the Axis war

⁹⁵ NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 308, 260826, CMUS (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 579, 13 Dec. 1941.

⁹⁶ Ibid. See also Ibid., CMUS (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Most Secret telegram no. 582, 15 Dec. 1941. Roosevelt spoke to Stalin and Chiang Kai-Shek about the possibility of an 'Inter Allied Military Conference' as well as the posting of Allied representatives at Chungking and Singapore.

⁹⁷ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1810, Vol. 808, File 597, SSDA (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Circular M480, 24 Dec. 1941.

declarations that brought relief to everyone in Washington: 'I heard of the German and Italian declarations of war on the U.S. Thank heaven they were brought in in this unequivocal way. Roosevelt, Hull and Miller (?) had all assured us they had been expecting it. The news was taken calmly; the Japanese attack had made the public ready to *accept* further shocks.'⁹⁸

Wrong observed that British military officials were privately critical of the Americans, believing that they thought in terms of continental defence and were 'grabbing' planes and ships from everywhere, notably the Atlantic, to repair the damage at Pearl Harbor. Wrong learned from Lord Halifax that Roosevelt and Hull wanted a more daring approach rather than mere defensive measures. Wrong also discussed strategy with Halifax: the Allies needed to get Russia in the war against Japan, decide on an immediate course of military action, and 'ensure unified strategy on a more permanent basis.'⁹⁹ He learned from Halifax that 'important visitors' (Churchill and staff) were soon to arrive in Washington. But Wrong noticed how quickly attitudes had changed towards Canada since the United States had entered the war: 'I fear that Halifax thinks of the war now as a U.S.-U.K. affair, with Russia as a distant partner on our front. He leaves Canada out as a principal. We deserve this, but it irritates me.'¹⁰⁰

Canada had been Britain's senior wartime partner, but after Pearl Harbor it had become a subordinate member of the alliance.

The final week of December brought news of setbacks, along with news of the developing alliance against the Axis. On 22 December, Massey informed Mackenzie King that London presumed the fall of Hong Kong to be imminent and had asked the Swiss government

⁹⁸ NAC, MG 30, Series E101, Vol. 8, File: 'Hume Wrong – Personal Notes', H.H. Wrong to unknown addressee, Letter, 14 Dec. 1941, 4.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

to assume care of British interests there.¹⁰¹ The next day, Mackenzie King asked Swiss authorities to take care also of Canadian interests in Hong Kong. On Christmas Day, Canadian and British forces in Hong Kong surrendered to the Imperial Japanese Army, signifying the beginning of Britain's withdrawal from the Far East. The Allies, however, were planning in earnest for a stronger coalition of forces. Churchill arrived in Washington on 22 December to discuss war strategy with Roosevelt in the 'Arcadia Conference', which lasted until 14 January. On 30 December, Hume Wrong informed Mackenzie King of the final draft of a joint declaration of 'United Nations' subscribing to the objectives of the Atlantic Conference.¹⁰² In total, 26 nations including Canada agreed to defeat the Axis and to establish a new world order. The Pacific War had originated in disagreement between Japan and the Anglo-American Powers over the destiny of China and the resources of the Far East, but now served as a means to unite the democratic powers in a campaign against totalitarianism. The price, however, would be acceptance of American foreign policy and trade for years to come.

Conclusions

Canada not only anticipated the coming of the Pacific War, but also made various important preparations for that eventuality. According to several diary entries, Mackenzie King seemed to be aware that war would break out in early December 1941, possibly by Sunday, 7 December. He also knew that defence requirements on the Pacific Coast might help to alleviate a potential overseas conscription crisis. Canadian officials monitored the decline in US-Japanese

¹⁰¹ NAC, RG 25, A2, Reel T1793, Vol. 777, File 365 (pt. 4), HCCGB (London) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram no. 2458, 22 Dec. 1941.

¹⁰² NAC, MG 26 J1, Reel C4865, Vol. 308, 260917-19, CMUS (Washington) to SSEA (Ottawa), Telegram, 30 Dec. 1941. The participating nations included the USA, UK, USSR, China, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, South Africa and Yugoslavia.

diplomacy, noting that Britain wisely stayed out of the negotiations so as to shift responsibility for a possible conflict onto the United States. Through an oversight, Canadian officials had missed Cordell Hull's *modus vivendi* meetings, but nonetheless learned that the *modus vivendi* was meant to allow the Americans to buy time, so that they could send further reinforcements to the Far East. Canadian officials also knew that Roosevelt suddenly dropped this approach, ostensibly in response to China's protests, and substituted for it a final note to Japan, one that appeared to signal that meaningful negotiations were over. In light of that diplomatic reverse and the Kra Isthmus war scare, Mackenzie King issued final orders to the Canadian Legation in Tokyo, including plans to shut up the office and to destroy codebooks, and cautioned Churchill against intervening in the Far East until American support was guaranteed. Canadian officials also became aware that Roosevelt promised active US support to Britain on 4 December and to Thailand on 6 December; such commitments now made US entry into the war seem absolutely certain. Accordingly, Mackenzie King planned for the withdrawal of staff from Tokyo, ordered press statements concerning war with Japan to be prepared, and met with his staff on the morning of 7 December to discuss the prospect of war.

Canada became the first nation to declare war against Japan because active US participation in the Pacific War was believed to be certain, and because the government wanted to demonstrate independent action as a sovereign nation. Relevant intelligence, careful strategic assessments and cautious policy decisions had all contributed to Canada's timely war declaration. Britain wanted to wait for the United States' own war declaration, even though British Malaya had been attacked before Pearl Harbor, but Canada was confident of its actions. As we have noted in earlier chapters, its preparations had also included Pacific Coast defence improvements, the protection of Allied shipping in the event of naval emergencies in the North

Pacific, and the invocation of ABC-1. As an important member of the Anglo-Allied community in 1941, Canada prepared for all eventualities in the Far East and the North Pacific. Like its allies, however, Canada underestimated Japan's capabilities as a Pacific Power. Japan's stunning military successes across the Pacific surprised Canada, even if Japan's choice of targets did not. But Japan's attacks secured the US entry into the war, the greatest Allied prize of all. Throughout 1941, Canada had studied the Far East crisis not only because it anticipated war with Japan, but also because it knew how that crisis might create the necessary conditions for the creation of the Grand Alliance.

Conclusion:

Canada's Response to the Far East Crisis

Our present understanding of Canada's response to the Far East crisis raises questions that merit further discussion. Before addressing those questions, a summary of the present study will be offered to emphasize how Canada coped with the Far East crisis in terms of intelligence and strategy. As shown, in 1941 Canada avoided conflict with Japan until American participation was assured, but fully anticipated action in Southeast Asia and the North Pacific, making a range of preparations for national and imperial defence. The significance of this study will then be discussed with reference to new findings, the relationship between intelligence and strategy, and the nature of Canada's influence during the Far East crisis. Next, other possible interpretations of the evidence presented in this study will be discussed with respect to traditionalist and revisionist models. Finally, a discussion of methodology for historians of the Second World War will be offered, with particular emphasis on the selection of evidence.

A Summary of this Study

The Far East crisis presented Canada and its allies with enormous challenges throughout 1941. Disputes over the destiny of China and the control of Far East resources compelled the Pacific Powers to adopt strategies and alliances that made war seem inevitable. Japanese militarists were committed to resolving the China Incident on their own terms, and favoured expansion into Southeast Asia whilst the Allies faced defeat in Europe. The Allies were exposed in the Far East, but could not afford to face the Empire of Japan without active support from America. Moreover, Allied strategists knew that both China and Russia had to be kept in the war

as a check against Japan's ability to wage unrestricted war throughout Southeast Asia. At times, no immediate or expedient solution seemed to present itself. American isolationism remained a potent force during that critical year. Soviet endurance was deemed critical to the war's outcome, but until late 1941 it remained unclear whether or not Russian troops could hold out against the German war machine. Despite those unresolved questions, the Allies intensified their preparations for a Pacific War. Apart from concerns over security in the Far East, Allied strategists regarded the Pacific as the key to American co-belligerency in the greater global conflict. All the while, Canada sought to understand the Far East crisis on its own terms using its labyrinth of domestic and international intelligence networks.

It is clear that Canada was in no way operating on the periphery of Allied intelligence operations as war approached in the Pacific. It benefited from participation in several intelligence networks, including Britain's 'Pacific Naval Intelligence Organisation' and 'Far East D/F Organisation'. Along with the other British Dominions, Canada produced and exchanged D/F intercepts, call sign data, radio propagation data, ship movement reports and intelligence assessments. Canada's RCN network included three Pacific D/F stations, eight Atlantic D/F stations and seven 'Y' stations. Canadian intelligence networks used techniques such as wiretapping, postal censorship, press and trade analysis, radio interception and cryptanalysis. Notably, the Examination Unit decrypted Japanese, German and Vichy diplomatic traffic. In addition, External Affairs and DND supported BSC operations in North America, which included a forgery workshop in Toronto, a communications centre at Camp X in Whitby, anti-Axis propaganda programmes and a covert campaign against American isolationism. Canadian, British and American intelligence authorities established strong links between Ottawa, London, New York and Washington. Participating service groups included DOT, NRC, RCMP, RCCS,

RCN, RCAF, the Examination Unit, Admiralty, British Army, BSC, COI, FBI and the USN.

Canada was well inside the Allied information 'loop'.

Canada's domestic intelligence networks revealed Japan's interest in Southeast Asia and the imminence of war in the Pacific. Postal censorship, trade and press analysis offered some information about public reaction to the Far East crisis, but agents recently arrived from the Far East furnished superior information to Canadian authorities, thereby permitting Pacific Command to produce timely and relevant intelligence assessments. Allied agents monitored Japan's preparations for war, predicted strikes against Burma Road, Singapore and the NEI, saw that Hong Kong was highly vulnerable, and believed Japan might launch surprise attacks, including nuisance raids along the Pacific Coast. One agent even considered the prospect of an attack on Hawaii, but concluded that Japanese air power was no match for US forces located there. Decrypts of Japanese diplomatic messages furnished information about Japan's growing concern over conflict with the Allies, as well as Tokyo's concern over American attitudes and Canada's war production, support for Russia and reinforcement of Hong Kong. On 6 December 1941, Canada learned from decrypted traffic that the Germans believed that the USN would attack a Japanese convoy heading to Indochina: a Pacific War appeared to be imminent.

Canada also received a massive amount of intelligence from its Allies and its own diplomatic missions abroad. Reports from Hong Kong, the British Army and the Admiralty all discussed Japan's preparations for war and confirmed in late November that Japan had decided upon southern targets in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, Foreign Office 'Political Intelligence Summaries' and British War Cabinet 'Weekly Resumes' provided Canadian authorities with a running commentary on Far East affairs. But Ottawa benefited more from Diplomatic Intelligence collected in London, Washington and Tokyo on a daily basis. This was furnished

mainly by the Dominions Office or Canadian Legations abroad, and offered timely, detailed information about the January–February war scares, the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact, China's resistance to Japanese occupation and Germany's attack on Russia; Canada also received advance warning of Japan's occupation of southern French Indochina. Diplomatic Intelligence also provided informed commentary on the Japanese-Soviet war scare of October, the motives of the Tojo government and the deterioration in US-Japanese diplomatic relations. Significantly, Canada's external sources provided advance warning of Japan's attack on Malaya, which heralded the coming of the Pacific War. Canada benefited from its global diplomatic contacts and its full membership in the Allied intelligence community.

It is also possible that Canada and its allies predicted the Pearl Harbor attack. Multiple contemporaneous primary sources demonstrate that the Allies became aware of Axis and Japanese interest in the Hawaii area between August and November 1941. Moreover, primary sources from 1941, including decrypts of Japanese diplomatic traffic, the *Akagi* intercept, Johan Ranneft's war diary entries for 2 and 6 December, Leslie Grogan's 10 December record and Cecil King's diary entry for 17 December, collectively suggest that both the Allies and the Americans may have predicted the Pearl Harbor attack. Predictions may have resulted from any combination of strategic analysis, human intelligence, D/F activity or cryptanalysis. Historians are not yet in a position to use archival records to verify or refute claims that D/F activity or cryptanalysis revealed the presence of the *Kido Butai* in the North Pacific. Nonetheless, post-war testimony and accounts from veterans of wartime intelligence and covert operations suggest that the Allies and the Americans may have had specific foreknowledge of the attack. It may have been such intelligence that caused the Canadians to shut down their covert air force recruiting programme in the States. The case for specific foreknowledge rests upon accounts

provided by William Casey, Victor Cavendish-Bentinck, Grace Garner, Leslie Grogan, Helen Hamman, Lester Pearson, Sir Julian Ridsdale, Murton Seymour and Peter Shepherd. It would seem rather simplistic to dismiss all those accounts as the mere product of hindsight or self-aggrandisement. Indeed, it would be academically unsound to dismiss an entire class of primary evidence in support of a particular thesis. Even those who conclude that the traditionalist thesis has the stronger case need to consider this evidence and deal with it in their accounts.

Considering the evidence in its entirety, Canada received enough incoming intelligence to make informed decisions about its own Far East policy in 1941. It participated in Allied strategies to contain Japan, always emphasizing that these strategies should promise deterrence rather than provocation. Canada sent observers to Allied-American conferences in Princeton and Washington to place its own interests in a wider perspective. Through the ABC-1 and ABC-22 agreements, it prepared for the eventuality of war against Japan, but with the provision of active American participation. To that end, Canada avoided confrontation with Japan until American support became more assured. In early 1941, for example, it blocked Britain's plan to intercept Japanese and Soviet vessels in the North Pacific. Moreover, Canada sought to avert the potentially damaging consequences of Japan's charges of espionage against both the Canadian Legation and the British Embassy in Tokyo, maintaining a façade of constructive diplomacy because it was not yet prepared to face conflict with Japan.

Notable amongst Canada's deterrent measures against Japan were strict economic sanctions and the reinforcement of Hong Kong. Canada was the first nation to declare public support for the American-led asset-freeze against Japan, but only because it had little to lose, either economically or politically: it had already stopped exporting wood, wheat and strategic metals to Japan, and US support for the freeze was both implicit and unequivocal. Many Allied

commentators knew that the asset-freeze might lead to war, but American co-belligerency now seemed more assured. In terms of military strategy, Canada reluctantly agreed to Britain's request for Hong Kong troop reinforcements, but only because that move was presented as having deterrent value. By the time conflict with Japan was certain, it was too late to withdraw the troops, owing to the twin principles of honour and imperial solidarity.

Canadian strategists also prepared for conflict in the North Pacific. All three armed services anticipated Japanese 'nuisance' raids along the Pacific Coast, although an actual invasion was not considered a likely prospect. Canadian and American authorities ensured that each country's aircraft and ships had reciprocal landing/docking rights along the coast. The RCN established a range of Pacific Coast defence measures, often in consultation with the USN, including anti-torpedo nets, sono-buoys, depth-charge throwers and aerial torpedo practice. More controversially, Canadian authorities registered the Japanese Canadians and made plans for their internment in the event of war, owing to hostile public opinion in British Columbia and to military reports indicating that Imperial Japanese agents were hiding amongst the *Nisei* community and engaging in espionage along the coast. In November 1941, Canada invoked ABC-1, Annex V, in anticipation of conflict in the Pacific. In the days leading up to the Pacific War, the RCN reported Pacific shipping movements to the highest intelligence authorities, including the *eastbound* journey of HMCS *Prince Robert* from Honolulu to Esquimalt, and set up refuge anchorages in the Aleutians for the *Komsomolsk* when it sought to cross the North Pacific. On the eve of the Pacific War, Canadian authorities believed that the North Pacific demanded as much vigilance as the Far East.

Throughout 1941, Canadian strategists regarded war with Japan as increasingly likely. Canada refrained from making concrete war preparations during the January–February war scare,

but could rely upon contingency plans made in October 1940 if necessary. Strategists worried about Japan's free hand in the Far East following the signing of the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact, and more particularly after Germany's assault on Russia in June. The question remained as to whether Japan would move south or north. Japan's movement into southern French Indochina made it clear that both ADB possessions and Thailand were as vulnerable as the Burma Road. Furthermore, strategists could not be sure that the United States would place a check on Japanese expansionism: US isolationism continued unabated, despite the best efforts of the Roosevelt administration, Allied diplomacy and BSC covert operations. Much to his regret, Mackenzie King learned all about US isolationism during the Mansion House speech debacle. The turning point in Canada's commitment to Allied containment strategies against Japan seemed to arrive during the American-led asset-freeze. Canada's enthusiasm for a measure that some strategists believed would either bring Japan to terms or compel it to go to war owed much to the fact that the United States had finally demonstrated its resolve. The Mackenzie King government had always favoured US cooperation and usually took the view that Canada was more an American nation than a British Dominion. British objectives that had been placed on hold could now be implemented with the United States' full backing. Moreover, the Atlantic Conference promised more US support for the Allies, even if it also demonstrated that Canada's role as Britain's senior ally would eventually expire.

Finally, in November and December 1941 Canada anticipated the coming of the Pacific War and made various important preparations. Following the Soviet-Japanese war scare in October, its strategists focused on the mounting crisis in American-Japanese diplomatic relations. It was clear that Washington regarded the Kurusu Mission with great suspicion, even if the new Tojo government portrayed it as an expression of diplomatic earnestness. Ottawa

watched the Washington proceedings as carefully as possible, because it was known that a final breach might occur at any moment. Through a simple oversight of the State Department, Canadian officials were not invited to Cordell Hull's *modus vivendi* meetings, but soon learned the purpose of the meetings through their American and British contacts. The *modus vivendi*, based on Japan's Plan B, was meant to allow the Americans to buy time so that further reinforcements could be sent to the Philippines. But Canadian officials learned that Roosevelt suddenly dropped the *modus vivendi*, replacing it with a final note to Japan: China's protestations and Churchill's 25 November correspondence seem to have inspired this sudden shift in policy.

The Canadians acted quickly in the face of the United States' diplomatic reversal as well as the Kra Isthmus war scare. Mackenzie King planned for the withdrawal of staff from Tokyo, advised Churchill against intervening in the Far East until US support was guaranteed, and ordered the preparation of advance press statements concerning war with Japan. He predicted that war would break out by Sunday, 7 December. This seemed to be confirmed when Canada was told that Roosevelt offered active US support to Britain on 4 December and to Thailand on 6 December. US belligerency was now completely assured. Canada's war declaration against Japan on the very first day of the Pacific War resulted from sound intelligence, absolute preparedness and a desire to showcase Canadian sovereignty. Canadian analysts had accurately predicted Japan's choice of targets and its timetable for war, although Canada, along with its allies, underestimated Japan's military capability. But above all, Canada had steered a careful course through Far East affairs until active American participation was assured. The Grand Alliance was now complete.

The Significance of Canada's Response to the Far East Crisis

This study has presented several new findings, demonstrated that intelligence affected strategic planning, and explained how Canada, as a minor Pacific Power, met its Allied commitments whilst maintaining a degree of influence during the Far East crisis. In terms of new findings, or observations that have not been emphasized in the relevant historiography, several important aspects of the Canadian experience during the Second World War have come to light. Canada received a wealth of information about the Far East crisis from its array of intelligence networks, which were more extensive than has sometimes been recognized. According to multiple sources, Canada received forewarning of Japan's intentions in Southeast Asia and its interest in Pearl Harbor. Canada participated in secret Allied conferences concerning the containment of Japan and knew that the ABC-1 conference was *originally* convened to discuss Anglo-American cooperation in the Pacific, rather than the Nazi threat. Canadian officials believed that clandestine Japanese transmissions along the BC coastline necessitated the internment of the Japanese Canadians, a point of fact that builds upon the work of Granatstein and Johnson. As well, it has been shown that the RCN made many preparations for a conflict in the North Pacific, including the invocation of ABC-1 on 26 November 1941. These findings contribute to our understanding of Canada's response to the Japanese challenge in Asia and the Pacific.

We have also seen that intelligence played a significant role in Canadian decision-making. Information gathered during the Far East war scare of early 1941 compelled Canada to engage in more cautious diplomacy and to plan for the evacuation of Canadian nationals from the Japanese Empire. Advance knowledge of the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact led to a timely analysis of Japan's renewed interest in southern objectives. Intelligence concerning

Germany's assault on Russia compelled strategists to reconsider Japan's intentions in both the north and the south. Early warning of Japan's intended move into southern French Indochina led to timely preparations for an asset-freeze. Knowledge of Japan's military preparations inspired Canadian military planners to improve Pacific Coast defences. Intelligence concerning a possible Soviet-Japanese conflict in October led to the establishment of emergency anchorages in the Pacific for Allied vessels; a plan that was used again during the crisis in early December. Information about the course of US-Japanese negotiations in late November compelled Canadian strategists to invoke ABC-1, increase surveillance in the North Pacific, and plan further improvements to Pacific Coast defences in consultation with the Americans. Incoming intelligence concerning a possible Japanese move into the Kra Isthmus led to Canadian protests against a pre-emptive British advance into the region. According to Murton Seymour, British intelligence pointing to a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor compelled an Ottawa official to instruct him to close down his covert air force recruiting programme in the United States. Intelligence collected in the first week of December prompted Canadian officials to convene a special emergency meeting in the morning of 7 December, so that they could discuss the prospect of war with Japan. Intelligence influenced strategy at several key moments during the Far East crisis.

It is also clear that Canada, as a minor Pacific Power, not only met its commitments to the Allies during the Far East crisis, but also maintained a degree of influence. The RCN coordinated all merchant shipping intelligence in the Pacific for the British Commonwealth, sharing its reports with both the Admiralty and FECB Singapore. The Gordon Head station monitored Japanese naval traffic and reported its findings to the Admiralty. The RCN 'shipping control' service rivalled BSC as the largest Allied intelligence network operating in the United

States in 1941. The RCN also sent advisors to Washington and Seattle to assist the USN with intelligence gathering. External Affairs exchanged intelligence with BSC and assisted with its staffing. Canadian representatives shared their views at several international conferences on Pacific affairs, including the Princeton Conference, ABC-1 and several economic summits. Canada imposed the strictest economic sanctions against Japan within the British Commonwealth. Canada blocked Britain's initiative to intercept neutral ships in the Pacific, thereby reducing the chances of an Anglo-Japanese conflict at a time when US intervention was unlikely. Finally, Canadian troops shared responsibility for the defence of Hong Kong.

Under certain circumstances, minor powers are able to project a measure of influence over international affairs. The Canadian experience suggests that intelligence gathering, strong economic policies and careful diplomacy are all instrumental in securing influence over foreign affairs, even if a nation is unable to project great military power. Successful minor powers enhance their strategic planning through participation in global intelligence networks. They also develop strong trade patterns and draw careful distinctions between economic cooperation, deterrence and containment. They develop strong strategic alliances, earn the trust of their diplomatic counterparts, and ensure that their foreign policy presents no obstacle to national unity. Clearly, the Mackenzie King government had a firm grasp of these principles in 1941.

Canada's response to the Far East crisis also raises questions that merit further discussion in future studies concerning democracies at war. How do domestic factors limit the range of war policies that are politically possible? How does the balance between executive authority and public accountability define the manner in which war may be waged? In the case of 'enemy aliens', how does the state justify the suspension of civil rights to satisfy public demand or even to protect the greater public interest along utilitarian lines? How did Canada's role develop

within the Anglo-American alliance throughout the entire course of the Second World War?

Historians may wish to explore these political and strategic issues in forthcoming studies.

Other Interpretations of the Evidence Presented in this Study

Undoubtedly, some historians will choose to apply other interpretations to the evidence presented in this study. Let us first consider how traditionalists might view matters.

Traditionalists will probably accept many of the cited intelligence reports because, for the most part, these concern Japan's intentions in Southeast Asia and are not controversial. It is clear that Allied intelligence authorities fully anticipated war in Southeast Asia and had identified many of the targets, including the Burma Road, Thailand, Malaya, Singapore, Borneo, the NEI, the Philippines and Hong Kong. The cited documents are contemporaneous primary sources and are largely beyond question. Similarly, Allied reports that underestimate Japan's capabilities or present a negative racial stereotype of Japanese people will be accepted as confirmation of the prevailing historical view that wartime Europeans and Americans grossly misjudged Asian peoples. Traditionalists may, however, question the meaning of primary sources concerning the North Pacific. It is clear that Canada and its allies prepared for the possibility of conflict in the North Pacific, although in the traditionalist view this tends to be seen as preparedness for a Pacific War originating in the Far East rather than in Hawaii. For traditionalists, Allied preparations throughout the Pacific indicate awareness of the imminence of war against Japan, rather than specific foreknowledge of Japan's choice of targets. It is difficult to argue with this view and it should be noted that the author did not place material concerning North Pacific defence preparations in the chapter on Pearl Harbor.

The evidence suggesting that Canada and its allies may have predicted the Pearl Harbor attack provokes more intense disagreement, and traditionalists will most certainly take exception to its implications. They cannot easily deny, however, that the Allies became aware of Japan's interest in the Hawaii area in August–November 1941, as there are contemporaneous primary sources including the Popov questionnaire and decrypted Tokyo–Honolulu diplomatic traffic. Considering the 1941 accounts offered by Cecil King, Leslie Grogan and Johan Ranneft, the thesis that Allied officials had the *ability* to predict a Pearl Harbor attack, is one that some traditionalists may accept. Yet they will correctly note that the case for firm predictions or specific foreknowledge is based mainly upon post-war accounts. For traditionalists, multiple post-war sources are not enough to support the revisionist position. They will nonetheless have to explain why several participants in wartime intelligence and covert operations made such claims, all quite independently. Traditionalists will have to work very hard to attribute hindsight, self-aggrandisement or pure error to remarks made by Victor Cavendish-Bentinck, William Casey, Grace Garner, Leslie Grogan, Helen Hamman, Lester Pearson, Sir Julian Ridsdale, Murton Seymour and Peter Shepherd. It will be a rather daunting task, but one that no sophisticated historians will avoid if they wish to maintain their standing within Pearl Harbor historiography. It is clear that an entire class of evidence cannot simply be ignored in support of a traditionalist thesis.

The most effective way for traditionalists to deal with pre-Pearl Harbor intelligence is to adopt Wohlstetter's 'signal and noise' thesis. They could argue that Allied strategists ignored signals heralding the Pearl Harbor attack because an overwhelming amount of contrary information pointed to a Japanese first strike in Southeast Asia. Incoming 'noise' may have compelled key decision-makers or entire departments to adopt a strategic outlook that focused

exclusively on Japan's objectives in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, a consensus in strategic outlook may have been perpetuated by any combination of strong leadership, shared rationalization or fear of ostracism. To build upon that argument, traditionalists may consider other variables that affect the decision-making process, such as interpersonal and interdepartmental rivalry, communications structure, command hierarchy and institutional bureaucracy. Those variables affect how intelligence is evaluated and disseminated by people, departments or institutions entrusted with intelligence duties.

On the matter of Canadian strategy, traditionalists will probably support most of the findings presented here. Indeed, Canada's principle deterrent measures against Japan, including economic sanctions and the reinforcement of Hong Kong, have received a rather orthodox treatment in this study. Economic sanctions were initially intended to deter Japan, although the asset-freeze brought the possibility of war. Traditionalists may question this study's interpretation of Britain's motives in proposing secret Allied economic conferences in December 1940: these could be regarded as instruments of deterrence rather than encirclement. On Hong Kong, traditionalists will agree that Allied strategists at one point believed that troop reinforcements might have deterrent value against Japan. This study presents no significant departure from conventional Hong Kong historiography. Regarding the story of the Japanese Canadians, most historians would agree that Canada's treatment of them was completely disproportionate to the actual security threat on the Pacific Coast in 1941–42. This study offers new evidence showing how Canadian intelligence authorities believed in the threat of clandestine transmissions along the Pacific Coast, but concludes that resident Japanese Canadians were completely innocent of any transgression. It is difficult to imagine historians viewing the situation otherwise.

Traditionalists will also accept primary evidence demonstrating Canada's state of preparedness for conflict in the Pacific. It is clear that Canada improved its coastal defences, protected shipping in the North Pacific, invoked ABC-1 and predicted war with Japan in early December 1941. Once again, however, traditionalists will interpret those actions as preparations for a war originating in the Far East rather than in the North Pacific. Moreover, they will regard Mackenzie King's comments about the imminence of war in early December (or for that matter, similar comments made by Roosevelt or Churchill) as accurate predictions rather than as specific foreknowledge. This study takes no exception to either view, but suggests that the latter explanation is more plausible.

Let us now consider how revisionists might view matters. For them, this study's interpretation of pre-war intelligence might seem too conservative. They may interpret most of the intelligence reports as expressions of Allied foreknowledge, rather than as a combination of predictions, informed opinion and foreknowledge. They may accept that the Allies grossly misjudged Japan's capabilities, if not its intentions. Revisionists will not only accept the view that the Allies fully anticipated war in Southeast Asia, but also advance the proposition that Allied preparations in the North Pacific were related to foreknowledge of the Pearl Harbor attack. For them, such preparations were a sign of preparedness for a Pacific War originating in both the Far East and Hawaii. They will fully accept all evidence suggesting that the Allies accurately predicted the Pearl Harbor attack and will attempt to buttress that interpretation with further archival and anecdotal evidence.

Revisionists may attempt to show that the Allies had formed an encirclement strategy against Japan at quite an early date. Some may see such strategies emerging as early as 1931, when Japan entered Manchuria, or 1937, when it began its war in China. Others may see Allied

encirclement strategies as beginning in earnest after the Fall of France in June 1940 or after the signing of the Tripartite Pact in September 1940. In this study, Allied contingency plans, which were drawn up in late 1940 to consider the possibility of Pacific naval deterrence and economic blockades against Japan, are presented more as expressions of insecurity over vulnerability in the Far East, as well as the need to contain Japan, than as an early attempt to ‘engineer’ a conflict in the Far East. The study demonstrates that such contingency plans began to be used as a basis for collective Anglo-American agreement after December 1940, but only reached their ultimate expression in the asset-freeze of July 1941, which was in direct response to Japan’s further encroachment in Southeast Asia. Revisionists, however, may regard Allied contingency plans formed in 1940 as evidence of a grand design to ‘bait’ Japan into a war as a means of securing active US participation in the Allied cause in both the Far East and Europe. Some may even argue that Allied intelligence operations sought to reveal Britain’s vulnerability in the Far East so as to embolden Japan. For example, revisionists may attempt to portray the *Automedon* incident as a planned leak of documents, although this seems rather speculative.

Revisionists may regard all Allied measures taken against Japan in 1941 as encirclement or provocation, rather than as deterrence. This study argues that Allied economic sanctions, which Canada supported enthusiastically, had originally been conceived as deterrent measures, although the Allies knew that the asset-freeze carried the risk of war. For revisionists, economic sanctions were *always* intended to provoke Japan. In terms of military measures, revisionists may see the reinforcement of Singapore, the Philippines and Hong Kong as provocative measures that also promised better defence when the anticipated war broke out in the Far East. Yet revisionists will agree with this study’s observation that Anglo-American strategists saw both the Philippines and Hong Kong as indefensible in the short-term: strategists planned to

‘retake’ those territories at a later stage during a war with Japan. Therefore, revisionists who reject the concept of deterrent measures will conclude that troop reinforcements were sent to those territories to ensure public sympathy for the Allied cause when Japan overran the area. In terms of Canada’s troop reinforcements, some may present the Fall of Hong Kong as a planned public relations exercise, one calculated to increase Commonwealth support for a new theatre of war, but this is a rather controversial view.

Finally, revisionists will endorse the view that Canada and its allies were fully prepared for all eventualities on 7 December 1941. They will build upon the evidence presented in this study to argue that the Allies had complete foreknowledge of Japan’s intentions in both Southeast Asia and Hawaii. They will also attempt to show that predictions made by Mackenzie King, Churchill and Roosevelt were the product of specific foreknowledge. It should be clear from the earlier assessment that this study avoids several of these revisionist conclusions, even though it may raise certain questions and serve as a foundation for further enquiry.

Methodology for Historians of the Second World War

The present study also raises questions about historical methodology, particularly with respect to the selection of evidence. At present, it is clear that historians of the Second World War are not privy to the entire range of relevant documents. A great number of papers have been released, but some file collections remain closed, and others are censored. Personal testimony and accounts from veterans of wartime operations offer further historical insight, but are they an acceptable substitute for withheld contemporaneous documents? Let us discuss why certain documents continue to be withheld and how historians can deal the available evidence.

To begin with, wartime intelligence documents may be related to current national security issues. A Canadian report dated 17 August 1945 justified the need to preserve all wartime code breaking secrets:

(a) No possible excuse must be given to the Germans or the Japanese to explain away their complete defeat by force of arms. They will seize upon any excuse to maintain that they were not well and fairly beaten and the uncanny success of ULTRA would offer them just such an excuse. (b) We need ULTRA for knowledge of German and Japanese Underground and Diplomatic activities. It is essential that their suspicions should not be aroused if we are to keep this knowledge. (c) Other enemies may arise in the future – were they to know what had been achieved by ULTRA in this war they would be on their guard lest the same thing befall them.¹

The report also underscored the importance of communications intelligence in the new atomic age: ‘These arguments were unassailable even before the invention of the atomic bomb, but this development, vastly increasing as it has done the future importance of intelligence, and in particular that of ULTRA, makes them still stronger.’² Clearly, government authorities were not going to release documents concerning wartime intelligence activities for some time. These activities were not regarded as ‘history’, but rather as ongoing current affairs.

A post-war NRC report written in October 1946 also emphasized the importance of wartime communications intelligence:

During the war an enormous effort was put into the work of examining the radio communications of the two enemy powers. . . . This effort was remarkably successful and resulted in the reading of large parts of the enemy’s most secret communications. As a result, it is no exaggeration to say (in fact it has been said by Winston Churchill and other allied leaders) that the war was materially shortened and thousands of lives saved by this means.³

¹ NAC, RG 24, Examination Unit Records (CSE Files), Vol. 29167, WWII-33: ‘Miscellaneous Wartime and Immediate Post-War Correspondence (1945–46)’, Group Capt. Eric M. Jones to Lt. Col. E.M. Drake, Memorandum, 17 Aug. 1945.

² Ibid.

³ NAC, RG 24, Examination Unit Records (CSE Files), Vol. 29165, WWII-15, pt. 1: ‘Joint Discrimination Unit – Organization (1942/01–1946/12)’, NRC (Communications Branch), Top Secret Cream 6-page report, 19 Oct. 1946.

Communications intelligence was seen as essential to Allied success. Again, government authorities could only wish to protect their intelligence secrets. For historians of the Second World War, the task is daunting. When do wartime secrets cease to have value in current affairs? When do wartime secrets become 'history'? If recent archival releases are any guide, then we may say that many documents are released after 50 years, although the most sensitive are withheld on a discretionary basis for some time to come.

R.V. Jones, a British scientist and intelligence specialist, commented on archival practices in his book *Reflections on Intelligence*. In terms of official policy regarding archival releases, Jones quoted from the Radcliffe Report, which had been prepared by a British government committee in 1976: 'Government is not to be conducted in the interests of history. That is an obvious proposition. But if that is so, the historian cannot have as of right a smooth highway constructed for him through the intricate paths of public administration and statecraft. He must make the most of his sources as he can find them'.⁴ Perhaps government documents are not always released to provide a complete account of events, but rather to provide an acceptable record for public consumption, one that ratifies or justifies past decisions. Jones offered a partial solution to the historian's difficulty, noting that memoirs are quite important and might complement government-released documents.

Memoirs and testimony are essential elements of any historical enquiry, but they seem to take on greater importance in enquiries concerning sensitive wartime topics. Quite often, historians approach their subject with a deeply ingrained belief in the superiority of the document in the archives and the comparatively low status of personal testimony, especially if it is reliant upon long-term memory, which is imperfect. Yet sophisticated historians have accepted that

⁴ Quoted in R.V. Jones, *Reflections on Intelligence* (London: Heinemann, 1989), 81. As a corollary, Jones also notes that historians should not rely too much on personal memories; a combination of personal testimony and public records is needed. See his section on 'Memory and History', 258–61.

there are occasions when personal testimony might well be preferred to the official record. David Reynolds, one of the foremost historians of our times, has made that point elegantly. He described a British Cabinet meeting attended, most unusually, by Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's personal envoy. With the Cabinet meeting seemingly over, everyone rose, collected their hats and coats and began to exit. Hopkins was swept onwards to his next venue. The British Cabinet members then sat down, minus Hopkins, to discuss sensitive issues, including the Far East, that were kept from the ears of their American guest. Reynolds described the Cabinet agenda as 'bogus' and the conclusions as 'terse', since they do not record the deception, whereas personal records seemingly illuminate what really happened. In this case, the personal testimony of two witnesses, Hugh Dalton and Alexander Cadogan, seems to offer greater insight than the material from the archives.⁵

It is important that historians studying wartime events compare and contrast archival material with all relevant testimony. They must not only pursue the release of relevant wartime documents, but also consider post-war anecdotal sources. With certain topics, however, we are unlikely to be in a position to choose between archives and recollection for some time. For example, let us consider the question of British Intelligence and Pearl Harbor. Any British warnings were probably passed to the Canadians and the Americans through BSC, and the relevant archives are currently closed; indeed, in 1997 the British Foreign Secretary announced that such records would be closed for the foreseeable future.⁶ It is therefore essential for historians to consider relevant testimony from veterans of wartime intelligence and covert operations.

⁵ David Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance 1937-41: A Study in Competitive Co-operation*, (London: Europa, 1981), 358.

⁶ Michael Smith, *Daily Telegraph*, 30 March 2000.

Meanwhile, historians should pursue archival releases. This study has shown that several relevant collections have been censored or withheld from public access in times past.

Researchers might consider the retrieval of the following Canadian documents through ongoing 'Access to Information Act' requests. From the Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH): 86/555, 'A History of the Examination Unit, 1941–1945', severed pages 139–46 and deleted Section 15. From the National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 24: Examination Unit Records (CSE), Vol. 29165, File WWII-20 (pt. 3), missing letters from 16 September to 5 December 1941, and File WWII-15 (pt. 3), missing letters from 25 July to 7 December 1941; RCN Messages, D20, Vol. 12155, missing COPC-COM13 message texts from December 1941; Pacific Command Records, D11, Vol. 11768, File PCS-019-2-8 (pt. 1), missing volume 1, which contains Pacific Coast security intelligence reports dating before March 1942; and finally, missing Gordon Head station records and logs from 1941. From NAC, RG 25: External Affairs Records, A2, Vol. 805, File 572: 'Japan – Strategic Position in Far East', missing documents from 12 October to 11 December 1941. From NAC, MG 26 J1: Mackenzie King Papers, Vol. 303, missing documents from 14 November to 8 December 1941, and Vol. 320, missing documents from 30 November to 11 December 1941. From the Queen's University Archives (QUA): C.G. Power Papers, Ministerial 'C' Files, Box 59, D1030: 'Event of War with Japan', missing documents from 26 November to 7 December 1941; and Box 52, File: 'USA, 1940–1943', missing documents from 9 November to 9 December 1941.

British and American archival collections also deserve attention. From British collections, researchers might pursue the release of 1941 BSC files, although these are probably kept in the MI6 files, which are still classified. Other relevant British documents yet to be seen include a complete collection of 1941 FECB files, Japanese message decrypts and Far East D/F

logs. In terms of American archival collections, researchers might pursue the release of the following 1941 documents: Grogan's report of 3 December, along with the seized *Lurline* logs; complete USN D/F logs from Pacific stations; JN-25B worksheets and decrypts, if they still exist; and the texts from intercepted messages alleged to be products of Japanese radio deception.

The search for evidence is worth the effort. Historians must continue to explain the causes and courses of the Second World War. To that end, intelligence studies offer a unique insight into the decision-making process. Through diligent research, historians must retrieve as many archival documents as possible, consider relevant anecdotal sources, and formulate an interpretation that integrates a majority of the available evidence. The present study has considered a wide range of sources in an attempt to explain how intelligence operations affected strategic planning in Canada during the Far East crisis, but further research is necessary.

Closing Remarks

In examining Canada's response to the Far East crisis in 1941, it becomes clear that Canada not only approached the crisis with remarkable insight, but also recognized how the anticipated Pacific War would alter its role within the Anglo-American alliance. Throughout the crisis, it stood as Britain's senior ally, sharing intelligence and strategic assessments with the Commonwealth. Canada and its allies understood Japan's designs in Southeast Asia and anticipated how Japan might launch its opening offensives across the Pacific. Canada also developed strong links with the United States, a nation that had so much to offer to the Allied cause. The Pacific War, which resulted from disagreement over the destiny of China and the Far East, transformed the global conflict that Canada and its allies first faced in 1939. With the

coming of the Pacific War, Canada's role as Britain's senior ally finally expired, but only because the Allies had achieved their greatest objective: the United States' participation in the Grand Alliance. For Canada, however, that objective had not been achieved without cost. The spectre of the dead at Hong Kong would haunt the government for years to come. The unjust internment of the Japanese Canadians would have long-lasting political and social consequences. Yet Canada participated in an Allied effort to end totalitarian rule in both Europe and the Far East. Canada also witnessed the creation of a new world order, one that sought to prevent another total war from ever again engulfing the world's population, from Europe to Asia and across the vast expanses of the Pacific.

Appendix

List of Abbreviations and Special Names

1 st Air Fleet	The Japanese aircraft carrier squadron that led the Strike Force, or <i>Kido Butai</i> , which attacked Pearl Harbor
1CSWG	Number One Canadian Special Wireless Group
ABC-1	American-British Conversations, signed on 27 Mar. 1941
ABC-22	American-Canadian extension of ABC-1, signed on 28 Jul. 1941
ADA Plan	Anglo-Dutch-Australian Plan, created in Feb. 1941
ADB	American-Dutch-British Agreement, signed on 27 Apr. 1941
ABCD Powers	American, British, Chinese and Dutch Powers
Admiralty	The headquarters of the Royal Navy
<i>Akagi</i>	The flagship carrier that led the 1 st Air Fleet within the Strike Force
BAD	British Admiralty Delegation (Washington)
Basegram	An Admiralty report sent to all Commonwealth naval bases
BCATP	British Commonwealth Air Training Plan
BSC	British Security Coordination
'C' Force	The Canadian military force that reinforced Hong Kong (two battalions)
Camp X	Secret Allied communications centre and SOE training camp (Canada)
CHATFOLD	Canadian reporting system for shipping intelligence
CMJ	Canadian Minister in Japan (Tokyo)
CMUS	Canadian Minister in Unites States (Washington)
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations (Washington)
COI	Coordinator of Information (Washington)
Combined Fleet	The principal operational fleet of the Imperial Japanese Navy
D/F	Direction Finding
DMO&I	Director of Military Operations and Intelligence (Canadian Army)
DND	Department of National Defence (Canada)
DNI	Director of Naval Intelligence
DOT	Department of Transport
Dominions Office	The British department in Whitehall responsible for correspondence with all British Dominions
Examination Unit	Canadian cryptanalysis centre located in Ottawa
External Affairs	The foreign affairs office in British Dominions
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FECB	Far East Combined Bureau
FEDO	Far East Direction-finding Organisation (British Commonwealth)
FEI	Far Eastern Intelligence (a section of FIS, RCN)
FIS	Foreign Intelligence Section (RCN)
GCCS	Government Code and Cypher School (Bletchley Park and London)
GNP	Gross National Product
Gordon Head	An RCN D/F and 'Y' radio intelligence station located near Esquimalt
HCCGB	High Commissioner for Canada in Great Britain (London)
HF	High Frequency radio signals, 3-30 MHz (short wave)
HFDF	High Frequency Direction Finding

HKIR	Hong Kong Intelligence Report
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
IJN	Imperial Japanese Navy
J-19	A Japanese consular code
JAЕ	A Japanese consular code
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
JN-25B	The principal Japanese naval operational code, known also as the 5-Numeral code or AN-1 code
<i>Kamer 14</i>	An NEI intelligence unit located in Bandung, Java
<i>Kana</i>	A Japanese telegraphic code used for the phonetic expression of the Japanese language; known more properly as <i>Kata Kana</i>
<i>Kido Butai</i>	The Japanese term for the Strike Force, which attacked Pearl Harbor
LF	Low Frequency radio signals, 30-300 kHz (long wave)
Magic	The American term for decrypts of diplomatic messages
Matador	A 1941 British plan that called for a pre-emptive move across the Malay-Thai border into the Kra Isthmus, if Japanese landings there appeared to be imminent
<i>Maru</i>	Japanese merchant vessel
MI5	British home-security intelligence
MI6	British foreign intelligence
NEI	Netherlands East Indies
NID	Naval Intelligence Division
<i>Nisei</i>	Second-generation Japanese settlers in North America
NRC	National Research Council (Canada)
NRMA	National Resources Mobilization Act (Canada)
NSA	National Security Agency
NSHQ	Naval Service Headquarters (RCN)
NEI	Netherlands East Indies
ONI	Office of Naval Intelligence (USN)
OPNAV	Naval Operations (USN)
OP-20-G	Intelligence Section of the USN Office of Naval Communications
OSS	Office of Strategic Services (Washington)
PJBD	Permanent Joint Board on Defence (US-Canadian)
PNIO	Pacific Naval Intelligence Organization (British Commonwealth)
Purple	The American term for the principal Japanese diplomatic code
Radar	Radio detecting and ranging
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCCS	Royal Canadian Corps of Signals
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
RDF	Radio Direction Finding; the British term for Radar
R/E	Range Estimation
RMC	Royal Military College (Canada)
RN	Royal Navy

RFP	Radio Fingerprinting
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)
SOE	Special Operations Executive
SO (I)	Staff Officer (Intelligence); a title used in Commonwealth naval services
SSDA	Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (Britain)
SSEA	Secretary of State for External Affairs (title used in British Dominions)
TINA	An operator-analysis technique whereby an operator's Morse-sending style is recorded for use in later re-identification
ULTRA	British term for intelligence derived from cryptanalysis
USN	United States Navy
VESCA	Canadian reporting system for shipping intelligence
W/T	Wireless Telegraphy
'Y' Station	British or Commonwealth cryptanalysis centre

List of Historical Persons

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- Brand, Commander Eric S. Director of Naval Intelligence (Canada), 1941.
- Breadner, Air Marshal L.S. Chief of Air Staff (Canada), 1940-43.
- Campbell, Sir Gerald. British High Commissioner in Canada, 1938-41.
- Chiang Kai-Shek, Generalissimo. Director-General of *Kuomintang* in China, 1938-49.
- Christie, Loring C. Canadian Minister in United States, 1939-41.
- Churchill, Winston S. Prime Minister and Minister of Defence (Britain), 1940-45.
- Craigie, Sir Robert L. British Ambassador in Japan, 1937-41.
- Cranborne, Viscount. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (Britain), 1940-42.
- Crerar, Major-General H.D.G. Chief of General Staff (Canada), 1940-41.
- Curtin, John. Prime Minister (Australia), 1941-45.
- DeCarteret, S.L. Deputy Minister of National Defence for Air, 1941-44.
- De Marbois, Lieutenant-Commander John M.B.P. (Jock). Head of Foreign Intelligence Section, RCN (Canada), 1941.
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- Eden, Anthony. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Britain), 1940-45.
- Fraser, Peter. Prime Minister (New Zealand), 1940-49.
- Godfrey, Rear Admiral John H. Director of Naval Intelligence (Britain), 1941.
- Grew, Joseph C. US Ambassador in Japan, 1932-41.
- Halifax, Viscount. British Ambassador in United States, 1941-46.
- Hankinson, W.C. Principal Secretary to the British High Commission, 1939-41.
- Hickerson, John D. Assistant Chief, Division of European Affairs, US Department of State, 1937-44.
- Hitler, Adolf. Chancellor of Nazi Germany, 1933-1945.
- Hopkins, Harry L. US Secretary of Commerce, 1938-40.
- Howe, C.D. Minister of Munitions and Supply (Canada), 1940-45.
- Hull, Cordell. US Secretary of State, 1933-44.
- Jolliffe, F.E. Chief Postal Censor (Canada), 1941.
- Keenleyside, H.L. Counsellor, External Affairs (Canada), 1940-41; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Canada), 1941-44.
- Kenny, W.R. Air Attaché, Canadian Legation in Washington, 1940-41.
- Kimmel, Rear Admiral Husband E. Commander-in-Chief of the USN Pacific Fleet (Pearl Harbor), 1941.
- King, W.L. Mackenzie. Prime Minister (Canada), 1935-48; Secretary of State for External Affairs (Canada), 1935-46.
- Konoye, Prince Fumimaro. Prime Minister (Japan), 1940-41.
- Lapointe, Ernest. Minister of Justice and Attorney-General (Canada), 1935-41.
- Macdonald, Angus. Minister of National Defence for Naval Services (Canada), 1940-45.
- MacDonald, Malcolm. British High Commissioner in Canada, 1941-46.
- Mahoney, Merchant M. Counsellor, Canadian Legation in Washington, 1938-45.

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Matsuoka, Yosuke. Minister of Foreign Affairs (Japan), 1940-41.

Mauborgne, General Joseph. Head of US Army Secret Intelligence Service, 1941.

McCarthy, Leighton. Canadian Minister in United States, 1941-43.

McGreer, E. d'Arcy. Charge d'Affaires, Canadian Legation in Japan, 1939-41.

Menzies, Robert G. Prime Minister (Australia), 1939-41.

Menzies, Stewart G. Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (Britain), 1941.

Moffat, J. Pierrepont. US Minister in Canada, 1940-43.

Morgenthau, Henry, Jr. US Secretary of the Treasury, 1934-45.

Murray, Captain L.W. Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Canada), 1939-41.

Nelles, Rear Admiral P.W. Chief of Naval Staff (Canada), 1938-44.

Nomura, Admiral Kichisaburo. Japanese Ambassador in United States, 1941.

Pearson, Lester B. Counsellor and Secretary, Canadian High Commission in Great Britain, 1939-41; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, 1941-42.

Pope, Brigadier Maurice. Assistant Chief of General Staff (Canada), 1941-42.

Power, Charles G. Minister of National Defence for Air and Associate Minister of National Defence (Canada), 1940-44.

Ralston, J.L. Minister of National Defence (Canada), 1940-44.

Read, John E. Legal Advisor, External Affairs (Canada), 1929-46.

Reid, Escott. Second Secretary, Canadian Legation in United States, 1939-41; Second Secretary, External Affairs (Canada), 1941-44.

Robertson, Norman A. Acting Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Canada), Jan.-Jun. 1941; Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Canada), 1941-46.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. President of the United States, 1933-45.

Seymour, Murton A. President of Dominion Aeronautical Association (Canada), 1941.

Short, Lieutenant-General Walter S. Commander of the US Army Hawaiian Department (Pearl Harbor), 1941.

Skelton, O.D. Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Canada), 1925-41.

Smuts, General Jan Christiaan. Prime Minister of South Africa, 1939-48.

Stalin, Joseph. General Secretary of the Soviet Union, 1929-1953.

Stephenson, William S. Head of British Security Coordination (New York), 1941-45.

Stimson, Colonel H.L. US Secretary of War, 1940-45.

Stone, T.A. First Secretary, External Affairs (Canada), 1939-43.

Stuart, Brigadier K. Deputy Chief of General Staff (Canada), 1940-41.

Togo, Shigenori. Minister of Foreign Affairs (Japan), 1941-42.

Tojo, General Hideki. Prime Minister and Minister of War (Japan), 1941-44.

Tomii, Baron. Japanese Minister in Canada, 1938-40.

Welles, Sumner. US Under-Secretary of State, 1937-43.

Wood, S.T. Commissioner, RCMP (Canada), 1938-51.

Wrong, H. Hume. Special Economic Advisor, Canadian High Commission in Great Britain, 1939-41; Minister-Counsellor, Canadian Legation in Washington, 1941-42.

Yoshizawa, S. Japanese Minister in Canada, 1940-41.

Chronology of the Far East Crisis

18 Sep.	1931	Japan attacks Mukden and begins its invasion of Manchuria, which it later renames Manchukuo
25 Mar.	1933	Japan withdraws from League of Nations
	1934	Japan abrogates its naval treaties with the West
21 Oct.	1934	Mao Tse-Tung's Communist forces in China begin their 'Long March' to the Shensi province; the march ends one year later
25 Nov.	1936	Japan joins Germany and Italy in the Anti-Comintern Pact
7 Jul.	1937	Japan attacks Chinese at Marco Polo Bridge thus beginning the 'China Incident', which results in an eight-year war
14 Dec.	1937	Japan takes Nanking
Oct.	1938	Chiang Kai-Shek government withdraws to Chungking
May-Sep.	1939	Battle of Nomonhan between Japan and Soviet Union
Jun.-Aug.	1939	Tientsin Crisis between Japan and Britain
30 Mar.	1940	Wang Ching-Wei puppet government created in Nanking
Jun.	1940	Defeat in Western Europe leaves Allies exposed in the Far East
Jul.-Oct.	1940	Britain closes the Burma Road in the face of pressure from Japan
Aug.	1940	Japan proposes a 'Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere'
23 Sep.	1940	Japan occupies bases in northern French Indochina
26 Sep.	1940	US imposes embargo on iron and scrap steel to Japan
27 Sep.	1940	Japan signs the Tripartite Pact
11 Nov.	1940	German merchant raider sinks British vessel SS <i>Automedon</i> , capturing documents indicating Britain's weakness in the Far East; Germans share <i>Automedon</i> documents with the Japanese a month later
Dec.	1940	Britain proposes secret Allied-American conferences concerning the economic containment of Japan, as well as Anglo-American naval cooperation in the Pacific
Jan.	1941	Anglo-American Pacific Naval Conference begins in Washington, but talks expand into general war strategy concerning both Europe and the Far East; talks become ABC-1
Jan.	1941	USN Pacific Fleet becomes officially based at Pearl Harbor
31 Jan.	1941	Thailand and French Indochina accept Japanese mediation in their border dispute
Feb.	1941	ADA Conversations held in Singapore (Anglo-Dutch-Australian)
13 Feb.	1941	Canada restricts wheat shipments to Japan
14 Mar.	1941	Canada rejects Britain's plan for neutral ship inspections in the Pacific
27 Mar.	1941	ABC-1 Agreement signed in Washington (American-British Conversations)
14 Apr.	1941	Japan and the Soviet Union sign a Non-Aggression Pact
27 Apr.	1941	ADB Agreement signed in Singapore (American-Dutch-British)
22 Jun.	1941	Germany attacks Russia; Japan considers further expansion in the Far East
27 Jul.	1941	Japan occupies bases in southern French Indochina
28 Jul.	1941	American-led asset-freeze against Japan begins; British Commonwealth and NEI offer full support
28 Jul.	1941	ABC-22 Agreement signed in Montreal (US and Canada)

9-12 Aug.	1941	Roosevelt and Churchill meet at the Atlantic Conference and decide on mutual war aims; Roosevelt proposes a moratorium on negotiations with Japan
17 Aug.	1941	Roosevelt warns Japan against further encroachment in the Far East
Sep.	1941	Japan finally drops its espionage charges against the Canadian government
2 Oct.	1941	Canada informs Britain that Canadian troops will reinforce Hong Kong
17 Oct.	1941	Tojo replaces Konoye as Prime Minister of Japan
Oct.	1941	Soviet-Japanese war scare at the Manchukuo-Soviet border
5 Nov.	1941	Tokyo Imperial Conference decides on continuing war plans, but sets 25 Nov. as a diplomatic deadline; date later extended
16 Nov.	1941	Two Canadian Battalions ('C' Force) arrive in Hong Kong
mid-Nov.	1941	Kurusu and Nomura offer the Americans Plans A and B; Plan B forms basis of Hull's <i>modus vivendi</i> , which is meant to buy time
26 Nov.	1941	Hull issues final note to Japan after Roosevelt rejects the <i>modus vivendi</i>
30 Nov.	1941	Kra Isthmus war scare, although Japan does not invade
4 Dec.	1941	Roosevelt promises US support for Britain in the event of Japanese attacks
6 Dec.	1941	<u>Roosevelt promises US support for NEI in the event of Japanese attacks</u>
7 Dec.	1941	Japan attacks Malaya, Pearl Harbor, the Philippines and Hong Kong; Japan enters Thailand at the Kra Isthmus
7 Dec.	1941	Canada declares war on Japan
8 Dec.	1941	US, Britain and Commonwealth declare war on Japan
9 Dec.	1941	China officially declares war on Japan and Axis Powers
9 Dec.	1941	Japan declares war on the Allies
10 Dec.	1941	Japanese forces sink <i>Prince of Wales</i> and <i>Repulse</i>
10 Dec.	1941	Japan captures Guam
11 Dec.	1941	Japan attacks Burma
17 Dec.	1941	Japanese forces land in British Borneo
20 Dec.	1941	Japan attacks the Netherlands East Indies
24 Dec.	1941	Fall of Wake Island to Japanese forces
25 Dec.	1941	Fall of Hong Kong to Japanese forces
30 Dec.	1941	Final draft of a joint declaration by 26 'United Nations' is prepared; the draft is based on the Atlantic Charter and pledges to defeat the Axis Powers and to establish a new world order
1 Jan.	1942	'United Nations' joint declaration is signed

Chronology of Japanese Canadian Events

Oct.	1940	Canadian government considers both voluntary and enforced repatriation schemes for Japanese Canadians
8 Jan.	1941	Japanese Canadians excluded from military service
4 Mar.	1941	Registration of all Japanese Canadians
12 Aug.	1941	Japanese Canadians required to carry registration cards with thumbprint and photo
8 Dec.	1941	1200 Japanese-Canadian fishing boats impounded; Japanese newspapers and schools close
16 Jan.	1942	Japanese immigrant males begin to be removed from coastal areas
24 Feb.	1942	All male Japanese Canadians, ages 18-45, ordered to be removed from a 100-mile zone along the BC coast
26 Feb.	1942	Mass evacuation of Japanese Canadians begins; curfew imposed; cars, cameras and radios confiscated
4 Mar.	1942	Japanese Canadians ordered to turn over property to Custodian of Enemy Alien Property
16 Mar.	1942	Japanese-Canadian mail censored; first arrivals at Vancouver pooling station
25 Mar.	1942	BC Security Commission begins plans to force men into road camps and women/children into detention camps
Apr.-May	1942	Japanese Canadians arrive at several detention camps in the BC interior
29 Jun.	1942	Director of Soldier Settlement assumes authority to buy or lease confiscated farms
19 Jan.	1943	Custodian of Enemy Alien Property granted right to dispose of property without owners' consent
Jan.-May	1945	150 Japanese Canadians volunteer to serve in Canadian Army (Far East)
13 Apr.	1945	Japanese Canadians in BC urged to move to eastern Canada or face deportation to Japan
31 May	1945	Repatriation scheme begins; 3964 Japanese Canadians are forced to go to Japan
24 Jan.	1947	Repatriation scheme repealed following civic protests across Canada
15 Jun.	1948	Japanese Canadians receive the franchise
1 Apr.	1949	Japanese Canadians are permitted right to move anywhere in Canada
	1967	Canadian immigration rules eliminate 'race' as a selection category
22 Sep.	1988	Canadian government offers an official apology to all Japanese Canadians for wrongful disenfranchisement, internment and confiscation of property during wartime

British Decrypts of Japanese Diplomatic Messages

Decrypts of Japanese diplomatic messages sometimes formed the substance of British 'Circular' telegrams sent to the Dominions throughout the Far East crisis. Historians may find it useful to compare and contrast the 'raw' information revealed in Britain's original intelligence summaries with the reports that the Dominion Office sent to Canada and its allies. Special Intelligence summaries, produced by Rear Admiral John H. Godfrey, Director of Naval Intelligence (RN), outlined the content of Japanese diplomatic messages transmitted in important codes such as PURPLE and J-19. Throughout 1941, British diplomatic intelligence revealed that Japan desired a more secure position in Southeast Asia and that Japan would almost certainly go to war with the Western Powers to achieve its aims.

During the early stages of the Far East crisis, British decrypts of Japanese messages offered several important indications. In December 1940, diplomatic intercepts indicated that the Japanese Consul General in North Borneo had been told that 'offensive action would be extended to North Borneo after Manila.'¹ In February 1941, Japanese diplomats in London were ordered to limit their interaction with the British and 'to be prepared to quit London at short notice.'² On 5 July, high-level diplomatic intercepts showed that Japan decided not to act immediately against Soviet Siberia, but rather 'to secure advanced bases in South Indo-China so as to increase her pressure on Great Britain and U.S.A.'³ An intelligence report of 15 July confirmed Japan's decision to occupy bases in south French Indochina, which in fact occurred on 24 July.⁴ On 25 August, intercepts revealed Japanese concern over American shipments of supplies for Russia sent through the nearby port of Vladivostok, and also revealed German overtures of support for Japan: 'The Japanese Ambassador, Berlin told Tokyo on the 15th Aug. that if there was war between Japan and U.S.A., Germany would declare war on U.S.A.'⁵ Considering such intelligence from the Allied perspective, it was not inconceivable that a Japanese advance into Southeast Asia, including strikes on American targets, would bring America into the war in both the Pacific and Europe.

In late 1941, British diplomatic intelligence continued to serve as a barometer of tensions in the Pacific. A report of 22 October explained that Japanese consuls at Singapore and Batavia were returning shortly to Tokyo. The same report highlighted the many assurances and recommendations that Germany offered to Japan: Germany would soon defeat Britain and Russia, so it was essential that Japan 'remove the Russian danger in the north' and simultaneously seize key points in Southeast Asia.⁶ In late October, a war between Japan and the Soviet Union appeared possible. Reports dated 7 and 11 November confirmed that the last Japanese ship to call at Singapore would leave there on 16 November and that the Japanese Consul General at Singapore was ordered home without replacement.⁷ Throughout November, diplomatic intelligence revealed that Japan showed increasing interest in targets within Southeast Asia (which led the British to believe that Thailand might be threatened) and that Japan no

¹ PRO, ADM 223/296, Naval Intelligence Division (NID) 12, History, 1940-1945, *Report on First Volume of Special Intelligence Summaries Nos. 6-548, 21st September, 1940 to 31st December, 1941*, Section 10: Japanese Policy and Intentions.

² Ibid.

³ PRO, ADM 223/321, Special Intelligence no. 266, 5 Jul. 1941.

⁴ Ibid., Special Intelligence no. 278, 15 Jul. 1941.

⁵ Ibid., Special Intelligence no. 313, 25 Aug. 1941.

⁶ Ibid., Special Intelligence no. 372, 22 Oct. 1941.

⁷ Ibid., Special Intelligence no. 390, 7 Nov. 1941; and no. 395, 11 Nov. 1941.

longer believed in the likelihood of conflict with the Soviet Union in the north.⁸ By 23 November, the British learned that Japan was quite aware of the despatch of British ships to Malayan waters, notably the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*.⁹ On 25 November, a Special Intelligence summary discussed Japan's 'Winds Set-up' message, sent from Tokyo to London on 19 November, which outlined how Japanese weather broadcasts would include special code phrases that indicated the international situation in the event of war.¹⁰ Although there is no record dated before 7 December 1941 showing that the Allies intercepted a 'Winds Execute' message, in which a war warning was conveyed through code phrases buried in a Japanese weather broadcast, the 'Winds Set-Up' message at least demonstrated that Japan was preparing for a conflict in the near future.

The reports of December were even more ominous. On 2 December, a Special Intelligence summary indicated that the Japanese were definitely seeking German and Italian support in the event of war, which now looked certain in the aftermath of failed negotiations between Japan and the United States.¹¹ It seemed possible that the United States would be drawn into a war in Southeast Asia via the Philippines. On 3 December, it was reported that four days previously the Thai government had invited the Japanese to attack Kota Bharu in the Kra Isthmus, so that British forces would be compelled to attack Japanese forces through Thailand.¹² That sequence of events would allow Thailand to declare war on Britain, just as Japan wanted. Special Intelligence reports from 3 to 6 December showed that Tokyo had instructed Japanese embassies and consulates not only in British and Dutch territories, but also in American territories, to destroy all codes, cyphers and cryptographic machines.¹³ Moreover, it was reported on 8 December that the Japanese ambassador in Berlin told Tokyo on 5 December about a proposed Axis treaty, soon to be ratified, whereby Germany and Italy would declare war on the United States following the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States.¹⁴ Ultimately, in 1941, British diplomatic intelligence confirmed that war with Japan in Southeast Asia was imminent, and that American participation in the Pacific War would likely lead to a German declaration of war against the United States.

⁸ Ibid., Special Intelligence no. 400, 14 Nov. 1941; no. 404, 16 Nov. 1941; and no. 415, 21 Nov. 1941.

⁹ Ibid., Special Intelligence no. 421, 23 Nov. 1941.

¹⁰ Ibid., Special Intelligence no. 429, 25 Nov. 1941. See also Best, *Britain, Japan and Pearl Harbour*, 186-8.

¹¹ Ibid., Special Intelligence no. 446, 2 Dec. 1941.

¹² Ibid., Special Intelligence no. 450, 3 Dec. 1941.

¹³ Ibid., Special Intelligence no. 452, 3 Dec. 1941; no. 456, 4 Dec. 1941; and no. 460, 6 Dec. 1941.

¹⁴ Ibid., Special Intelligence no. 468, 8 Dec. 1941. British intelligence learned that Germany and Italy honoured their commitments to Japan on 8 December 1941. See Special Intelligence no. 469, 8 Dec. 1941.

Political Intelligence Summaries from the Foreign Office

Throughout 1941, the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa received 'Weekly Political Intelligence' summaries from Britain's Foreign Office. These secret reports, which Ottawa usually received a month later, surveyed international politics and always included information concerning the Far East. Historians studying pre-war intelligence concerning the Far East may wish to compare the contents of these political gazettes with other forms of Allied intelligence. In January, much was reported about Japan.¹ It was noted that any Japanese 'southward advance' or support for Germany against Britain would precipitate war in the Pacific. The Soviets were suspected of encouraging Japan to strike south, possibly to avert danger in the north, and Von Ribbentrop also attempted to broker a Soviet-Japanese non-aggression pact. Reportedly, Japan helped German ships raiding the Pacific. It also entered the Thai-Indochina dispute as a mediator to gain influence. The report included a summary of US public opinion and isolationism. In February, one summary considered whether Japan would synchronize a 'coup' with Germany's spring offensive and discussed Japan's demands for NEI oil concessions in the face of growing 'encirclement'.² In March, it was reported that Anglo-Japanese relations were deteriorating, although 'candid' talks in London and Tokyo were somewhat helpful.³ Australian Prime Minister Menzies played down the idea of inevitable conflict with Japan in a speech he delivered in London. Collectively, the reports clearly expressed growing concern over Japan's ties with Germany and Russia, along with anxieties over Anglo-Japanese diplomacy. Britain and the Commonwealth could not risk war in the Far East without US support.

Those concerns were echoed in reports distributed throughout the spring. In April, it was reported that Matsuoka's Berlin conversations demonstrated growing Axis ties; the recently ratified Soviet-Japanese pact was probably meant to keep the United States out of the Far East and to distance it from Britain. As well, Roosevelt barred certain Pacific areas to foreign ships, including Subic Bay, Philippines, and Kodiak Island, Alaska. According to the report, the Nanking-Chungking 'currency war' between banks seemed an important aspect of the Sino-Japanese conflict. Commentators also noted that Japan's interest in regional influence over the south, including Burma and Malaya, might be the reason for its mediation of the Thai-Indochina settlement.⁴ In May, one political summary offered the following observations: Britain was suspicious of Japan's attempts to drive a wedge between Britain and America; Japan's 'tug-of-war' with Thailand continued because it sought Thai rubber along with bases from which to threaten Burma and Malaya; and friction between the NEI and Japan was continuing as the NEI sought to limit its exports to Japan.⁵ It seemed obvious that Japan needed more resources from Southeast Asia to support its war in China, and British interests in the region still had to be protected without US support, given the state of American isolationist opinion (which the summaries always emphasized).

By July, events had taken a turn for the worse. The reports discussed whether or not Japan would break the Soviet-Japanese pact in the face of Germany's assault on Russia in late

¹ NAC, RG 25, F7e, Vol. 2511, Foreign Office (Political Intelligence Dept.), 'Weekly Political Intelligence Summary', No. 66, 8 Jan. 1941, 17-19; and No. 69, 29 Jan. 1941, 19-22.

² Ibid., No. 70, 5 Feb. 1941, 17-18.

³ Ibid., No. 74, 5 Mar. 1941, 17-19.

⁴ Ibid., No. 78, 2 Apr. 1941, 17-20; and No. 82, 30 Apr. 1941, 16-17.

⁵ Ibid., No. 86, 28 May 1941, 16-18.

June.⁶ Most certainly, Soviet entry into the Allied bloc was seen as beneficial and it was noted that the United States had lifted its freeze on Soviet assets in response to 'Barbarossa', but was advised to 'steer a middle course' in Soviet relations to avoid driving Japan further into the Axis bloc. Significantly, it was noted that the Roosevelt administration was hoping to keep Russia out of a war with Japan. Japan's invasion of southern French Indochina drew further comment: the move placed its forces 400 miles further south than Hainan Island and within 750 miles of Singapore, North Borneo, Manila and Hong Kong. Japan seemed free to move either north or south, threatening either the Burma Road or ADB possessions in Southeast Asia. Roosevelt's asset-freeze against Japan, announced on 25 July, was regarded as an effective form of 'economic warfare', particularly as Britain, the Dominions and the NEI all took parallel action. The reports offered more praise for US actions: US purchases of Thai rubber and tin demonstrated US-Thai cooperation, and the Philippines were being reinforced as Lieutenant General Douglas MacArthur assumed command of 180,000 Filipino soldiers.

Over the next two months, British commentators reported a lull in Far East activities, but continued to offer news. In August, one report commented on Japan's protests over US shipments to the Soviet Union via Vladivostok and observed that Japan was building a strike force to threaten the port.⁷ The same report highlighted Roosevelt's fresh warning to Japan on 17 August, as well as Churchill's broadcast of 24 August, in which he warned that Japanese aggression 'has got to stop'. It was also noted that the US isolationists criticized the Atlantic Conference and US war production. In September, one report revealed that the first US oil cargoes had reached Vladivostok, even whilst Japan protested the asset-freeze and ABCD encirclement.⁸ The report also suggested that Japan would wait for Soviet failure before acting: 'In the end it is probably the course of events in Russia which will decide that in the Far East.' For many political commentators, Soviet participation was seen as pivotal to the war's outcome.

In October, the new Tojo government in Tokyo drew comment.⁹ British commentators saw Tojo's appointment as a political compromise to moderate the extremists, but reminded readers that he was anti-Russian, pro-Tripartite and an expansionist regarding Southeast Asia, and that China would remain a stumbling block in US-Japanese relations. It was also thought that Tojo might continue negotiations to buy time for naval expansion and to impress Japanese anti-militarists that diplomatic efforts had been made. Yet it remained unclear what military moves the Tojo government might make in the south, north or in China. It was reported that the Australians were very concerned over Japan's intentions, particularly as Japan had recently established an air service from Palau to Dilli, Timor. In terms of US reactions, one report suggested that both the State Department and Admiral Stark 'were prepared to go far to placate Japan, whereas the younger Navy men were all for a showdown'.

Reporting intensified in November.¹⁰ Political Intelligence reported renewed German pressure on Japan to attack Russia, although it was still unclear in early November what direction Japan would take. Later in the month, commentators speculated on the possible targets of Japanese attacks, including the Burma Road, Siberia, Thailand, Singapore, Borneo

⁶ Ibid., No. 91, 2 Jul. 1941, 20-1; and No. 95, 30 Jul. 1941, 17-20.

⁷ Ibid., No. 99, 28 Aug. 1941, 15-17.

⁸ NAC, RG 25, F7e, Vol. 2512, Foreign Office (Political Intelligence Dept.), 'Weekly Political Intelligence Summary', No. 101, 11 Sep. 1941, 17-21.

⁹ Ibid., No. 107, 22 Oct. 1941, 16-17; and No. 108, 29 Oct. 1941, 18-21.

¹⁰ Ibid., No. 109, 5 Nov. 1941, 17-19; No. 110, 12 Nov. 1941, 17-20; No. 111, 19 Nov. 1941, 16-20; and No. 112, 26 Nov. 1941, 19-20.

and the NEI. The US-Japanese diplomatic crisis received attention, but British commentators only stated the obvious: the Washington conversations might break down and then Japan would face ongoing ADB economic restrictions and the possibility of Anglo-American military action. Reports highlighted Allied preparations, including the revision of the US Neutrality Act, the movement of British warships to the Far East, the transfer of Canadian troops to Hong Kong, and the reinforcement of Singapore. British commentators also discussed the Kurusu Mission to Washington, concluding that the secret US-Japanese talks were unlikely to solve the crisis despite Japan's final diplomatic offer to Cordell Hull.

In December, Political Intelligence could now only recount the inevitable descent into war. The US government had revealed some details regarding Japan's final diplomatic offer, including withdrawal from Indochina in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.¹¹ The general terms of Cordell Hull's note of 26 November were also discussed. One report expressed Chungking's concerns that the Washington talks might turn into a 'second Munich'. Furthermore, persistent rumours pointed to a Japanese attack on Thailand. Following the Japanese attacks on 7 December, British commentators discussed Japan's diplomatic treachery and also focused on the emerging alliances.¹² It was reported that Thailand had signed an agreement under duress to allow Japanese troops through its territory on the way to Malaya or Burma, and that Japan expected the Soviet-Japanese Pact to hold and anticipated a German declaration of war against America. One explanation offered for Japan's attacks was that Germany had wanted Japan to create a 'large-scale diversion' in the Pacific to draw Anglo-American resources away from Europe.

US public opinion was now reported as being totally in support of war.¹³ Only Senator Nye remained 'intransigent' and was quoted as saying 'the Japanese attack is just what Britain planned for us. Britain has been getting ready for this since 1938.' Roosevelt's 'fireside chat' of 9 December assured Americans that Germany and Italy 'consider themselves at war with the United States' just as they were with Britain and Russia. Roosevelt also said that he regarded the hostilities as a world war, 'apart from any formal declarations of belligerency.' Seemingly, Roosevelt was preparing the American public for US entry into the war in Europe, regardless of whether or not Germany and Italy declared war.

The last 'Weekly Political Intelligence Summary' sent to Ottawa in December was understandably sombre in tone. It commented gravely on the fall of Hong Kong: 'The moral effect of the fall of Hong Kong, which has been for a century the embodiment of British power in the Far Eastern area, is bound to be great both in China and Japan.'¹⁴ Other points of discussion included China's vulnerability in the aftermath of Hong Kong, and Japan's assured adherence to the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact.

Throughout 1941, the Foreign Office had offered British and Commonwealth authorities a readable political gazette that attempted to assess wartime events, including the Far East crisis. At times, these summaries were more descriptive than analytical, but they nonetheless offered Ottawa a survey of political issues. In terms of the Far East crisis, the summaries reflected British fears of war with Japan before US entry was assured, but also reflected British uncertainty over Japan's intentions after US entry appeared more likely.

¹¹ Ibid., No. 113, 3 Dec. 1941, 16–18.

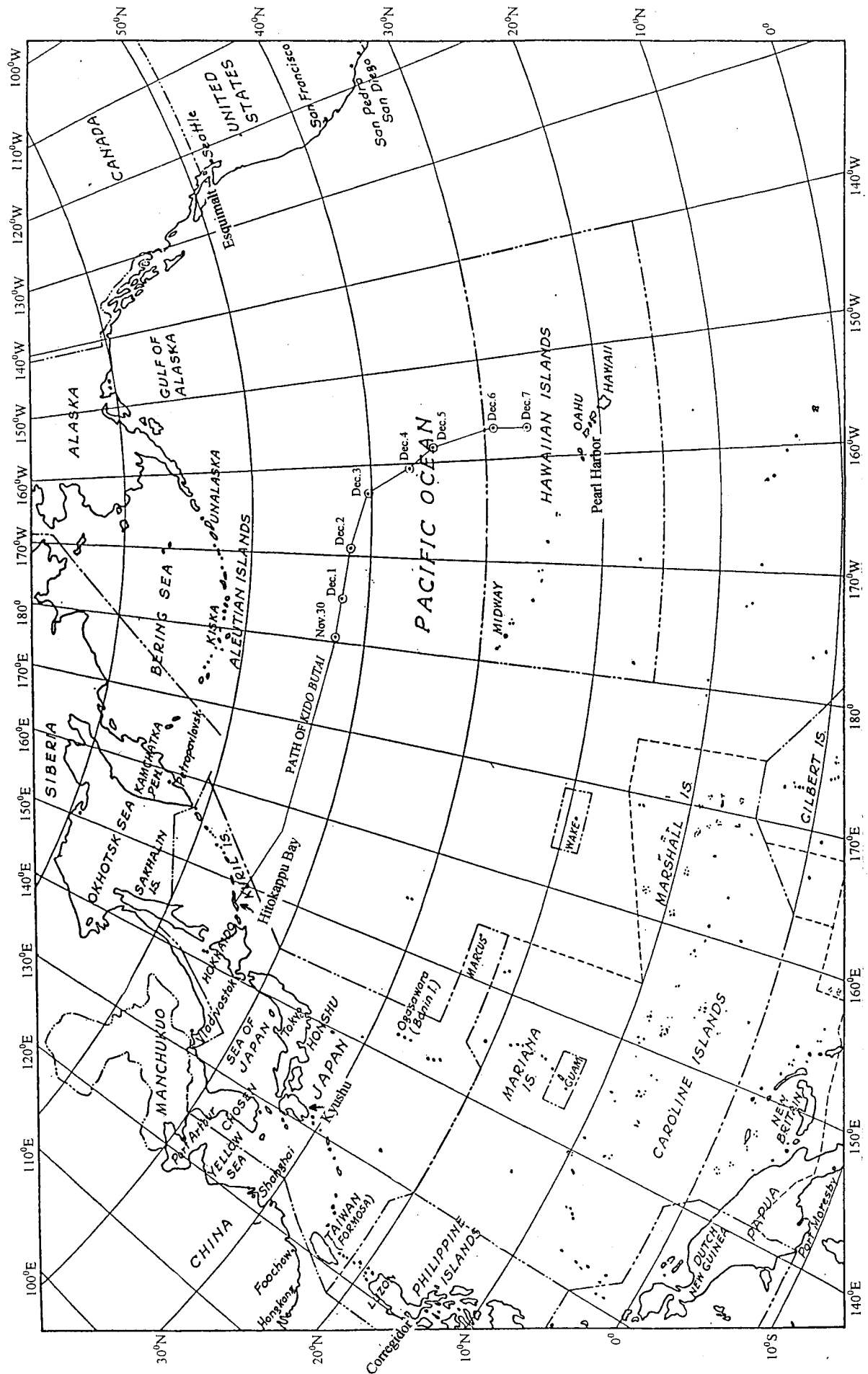
¹² Ibid., No. 114, 10 Dec. 1941, 1, 17–21.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., No. 117, 31 Dec. 1941, 15.

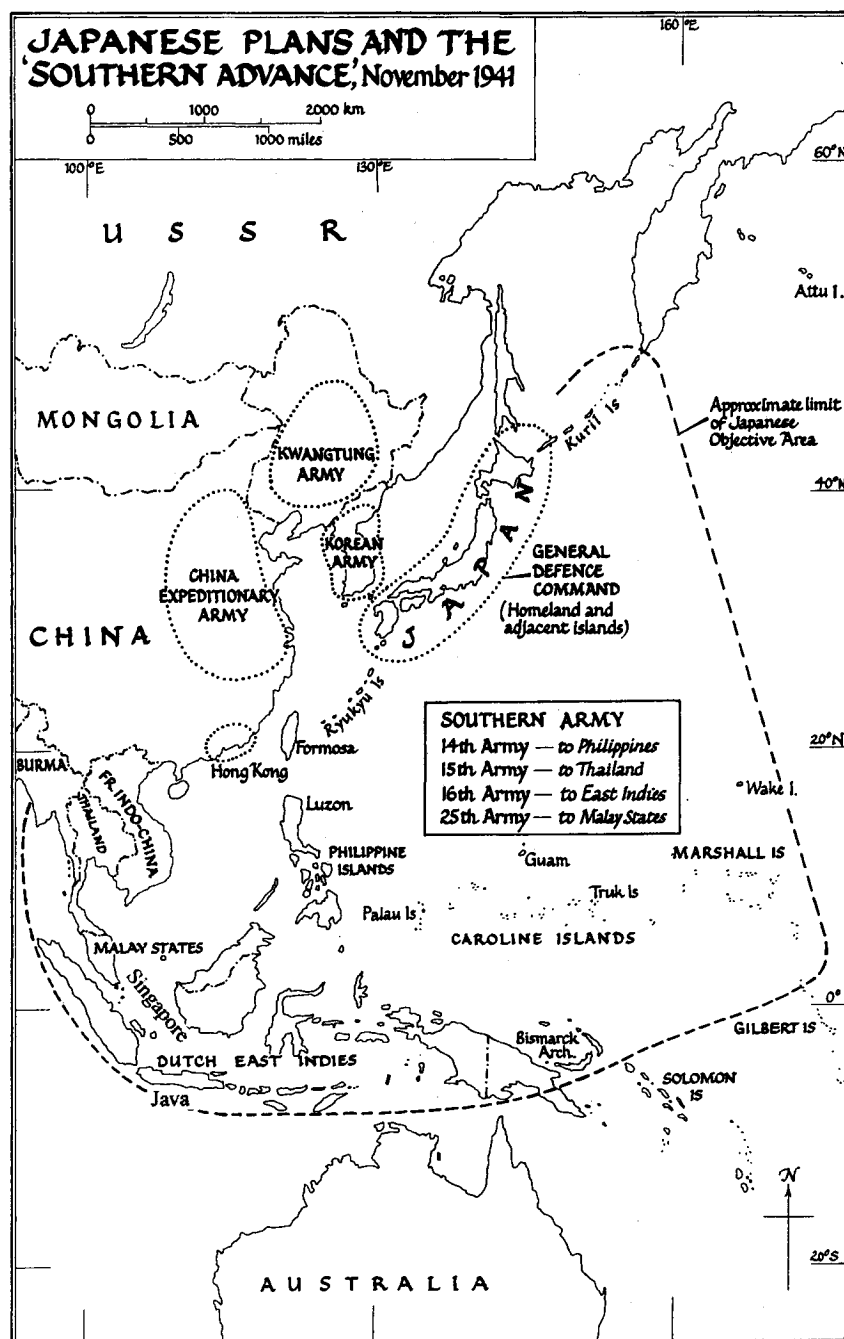
Great Circle Map of the Pacific

Source: Bernard Brodie, *The Layman's Guide to Naval Strategy*, 1st ed. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1942), 108



Map of Japan's planned advance into Southeast Asia

Source: Peter Calvocoressi, Guy Wint and John Pritchard, *Total War: The Causes and Courses of the Second World War*, rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 922.



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