

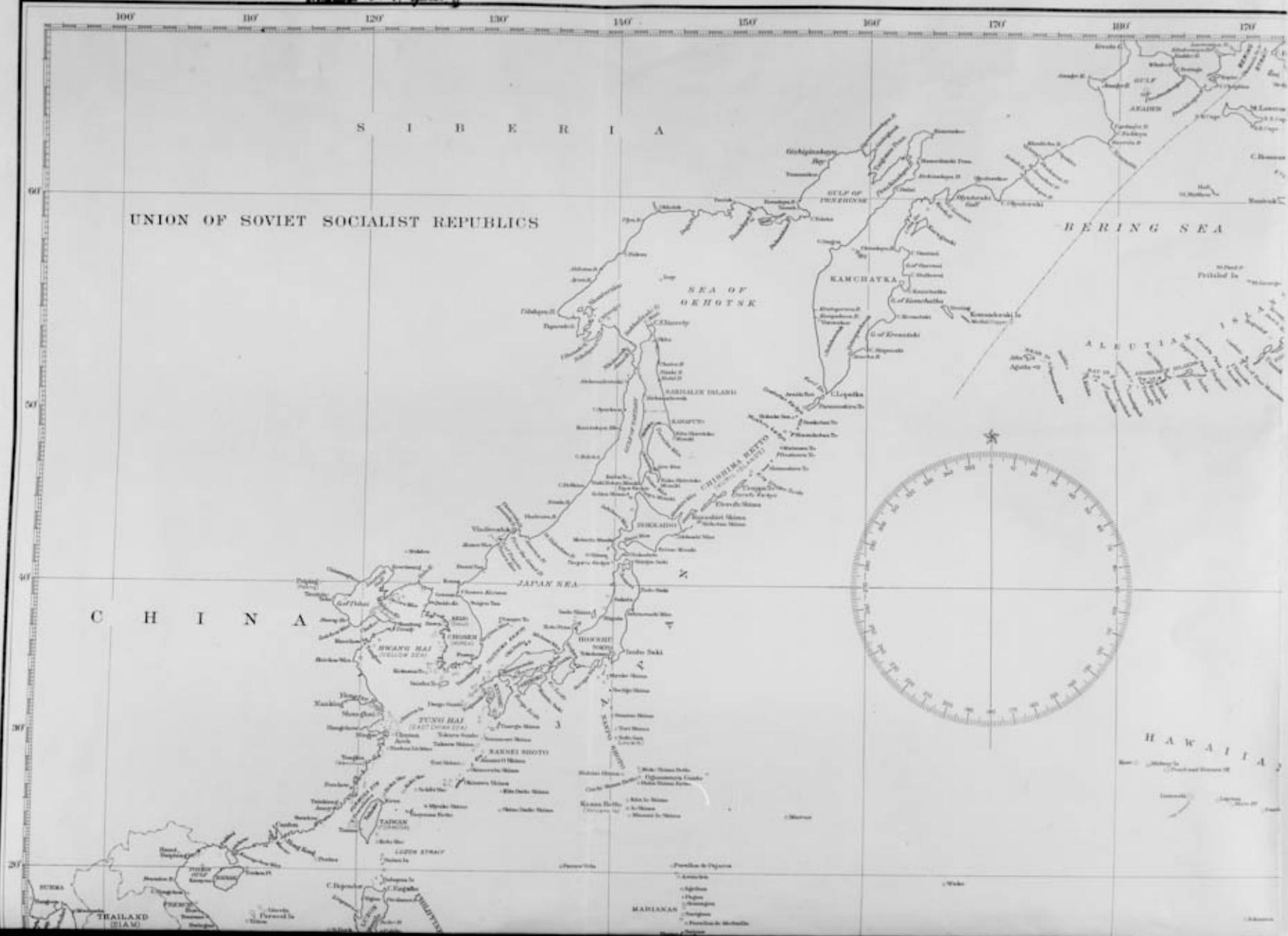
● PSF

Navy Dept.

Nov. - Dec. 1940

THIS OVERSIZING ITEM HAS BEEN MICROFILMED IN SECTIONS.

No. 1500
Price 60 cents





Corrected to N.M.

Chart No.	Page No.

THIS OVERSIZE ITEM HAS BEEN
MICROFILMED IN SECTIONS.



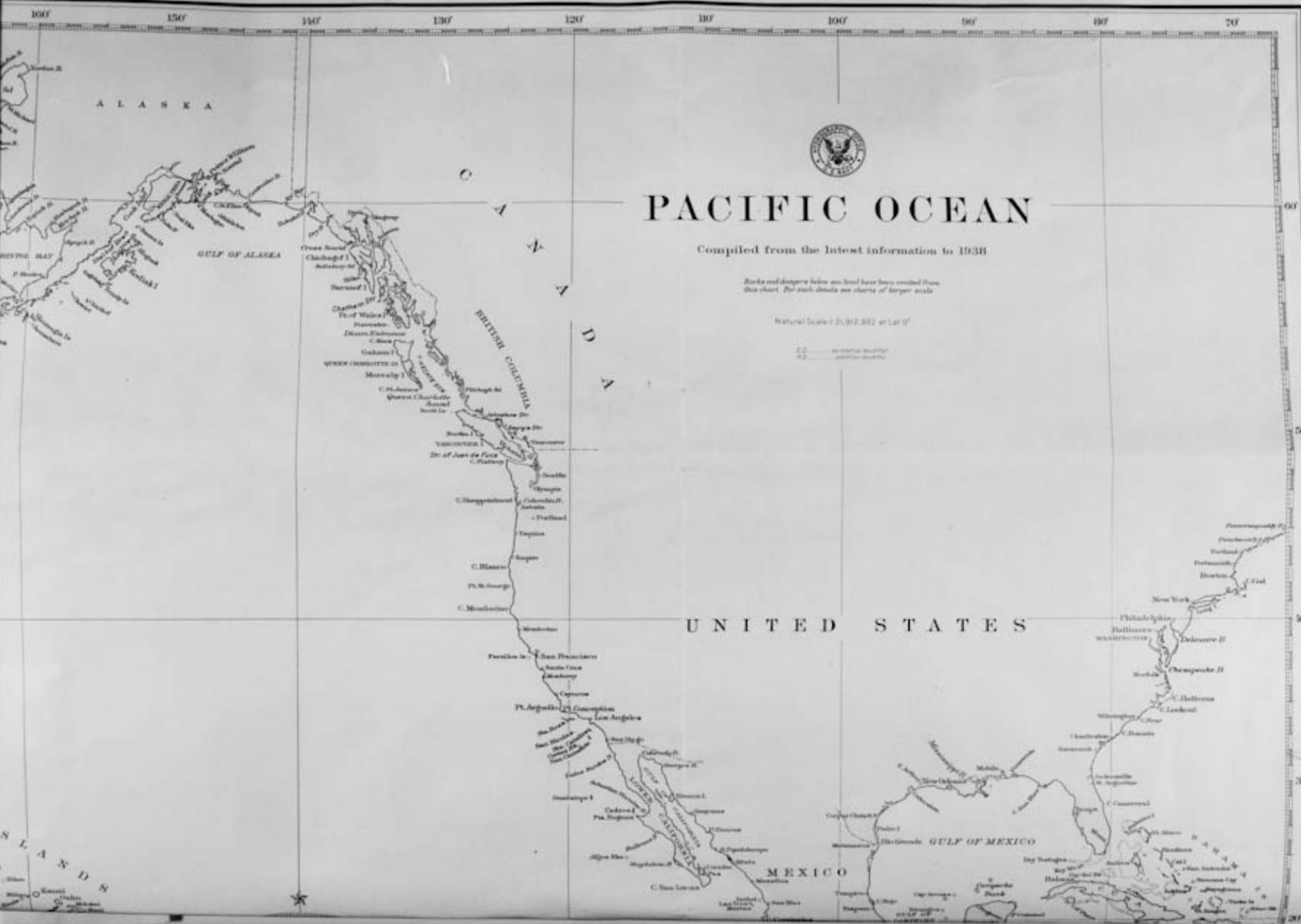
PACIFIC OCEAN

Compiled from the latest information to 1938

*Becks and dangers below sea level have been omitted from
this chart. For such details see charts of larger scale.*

Natural Scale 1:21,912,502 at Lat 0°

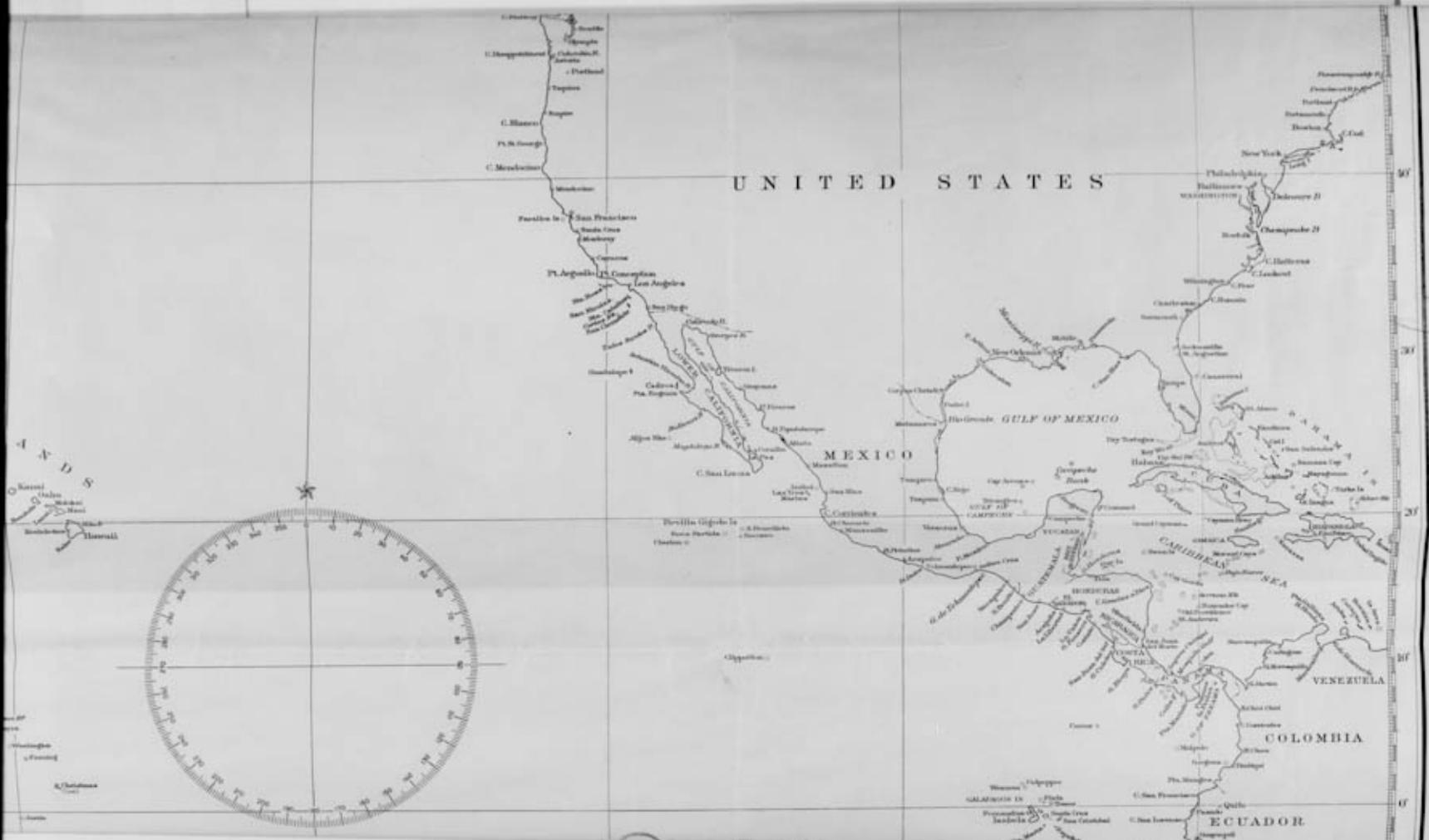
C.G. ————— water depth
A.S. ————— soundings



UNITED STATES

MEXICO

ISLANDS



UNITED STATES

MEXICO

GULF OF MEXICO

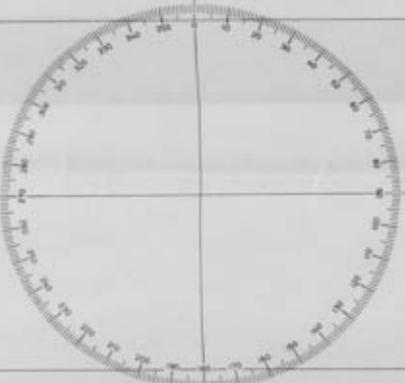
CARIBBEAN SEA

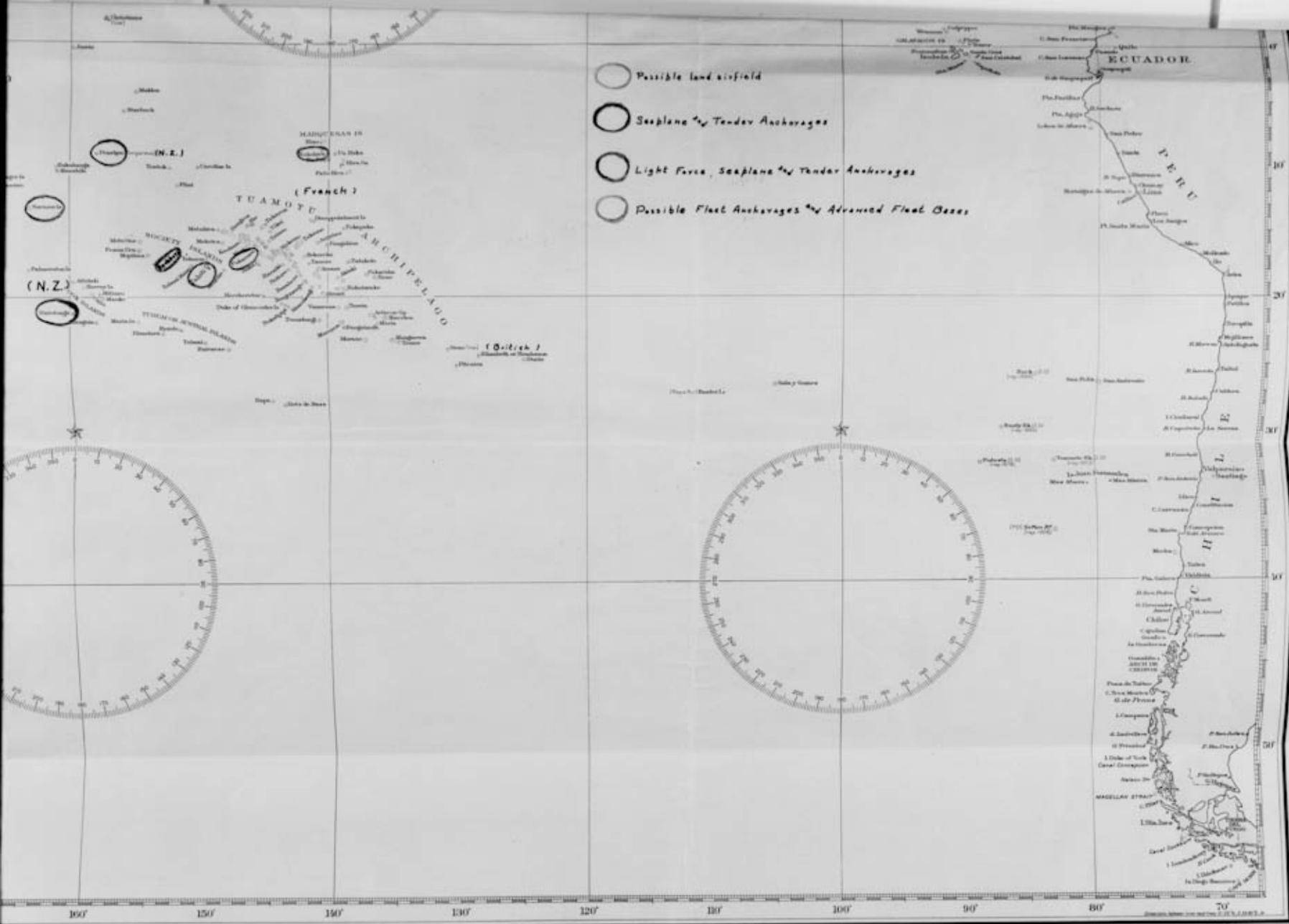
VENEZUELA

COLOMBIA

ECUADOR

ISLANDS





PSF: Navy

In reply refer to Initials
and No.

Op-12-CTE

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~
D. Nelson, J. C. N. O.
2/14/56

November 4, 1940

Memorandum for the Secretary.

Referring to my very brief touch in a recent conference as to the desirability of obtaining at once some light upon the major decisions which the President may make for guiding our future naval effort in the event of war, and in further immediate preparation for war, you may recall my remarks the evening we discussed War Plans for the Navy. I stated then that if Britain wins decisively against Germany we could win everywhere; but that if she loses the problem confronting us would be very great; and, while we might not lose everywhere, we might, possibly, not win anywhere.

As I stated last winter on the Hill, in these circumstances we would be set back upon our haunches. Our war effort, instead of being widespread, would then have to be confined to the Western Hemisphere.

I now wish to expand my remarks, and to present to you my views concerning steps we might take to meet the situation that will exist should the United States enter war either alone or with allies. In this presentation, I have endeavored to keep in view the political realities in our own country.

The first thing to consider is how and where we might become involved.

The immediate war alternatives seem to be:

(a) War with Japan in which we have no allies. This might be precipitated by Japanese armed opposition should we strongly reinforce our Asiatic Fleet or the Philippines Garrison, should we start fortifying Guam, or should we impose additional important economic sanctions; or it might be precipitated by ourselves in case of overt Japanese action against us, or by further extension of Japanese hegemony.

(b) War with Japan in which we have the British Empire, or the British Empire and Netherlands East Indies, as allies. This might be precipitated by one of the causes mentioned in (a), by our movement of a naval reinforcement to Singapore, or by Japanese attack on British or Netherlands territory.

(c) War with Japan in which she is aided by Germany and Italy, and in which we are or are not aided by allies. To the causes of such a war, previously listed, might be added augmented American material assistance to Great Britain, our active military intervention in Britain's favor, or our active resistance to German extension of military activities to the Western Hemisphere.

(d) War with Germany and Italy in which Japan would not be initially involved, and in which we would be allied with the British. Such a war would be initiated by American decision to intervene for the purpose of preventing the disruption of the British Empire, or German capture of the British Isles.

(e) We should also consider the alternative of now remaining out of war, and devoting ourselves exclusively to building up our defense of the Western Hemisphere, plus the preservation by peaceful means of our Far Eastern interests, and plus also continued material assistance to Great Britain.

As I see it, our major national objectives in the immediate future might be stated as preservation of the territorial, economic, and ideological integrity of the United States, plus that of the remainder of the Western Hemisphere; the prevention of the disruption of the British Empire, with all that such a consummation implies; and the diminution of the offensive military power of Japan, with a view to the retention of our economic and political interests in the Far East. It is doubtful, however, that it would be in our interest to reduce Japan to the status of an inferior military and economic power. ~~xxx~~ ~~the Far East~~. A balance of power in the Far East is to our interest as much as is a balance of power in Europe.

The questions that confront me are concerned with the preparation and distribution of the naval forces of the United States, in cooperation with its military forces, for use in war in the accomplishment of all or part of these national objectives.

I can only surmise as to the military, political, and economic situation that would exist in the Atlantic should the British Empire collapse. Since Latin-America has rich natural resources, and is the only important area of the world not now under the practical control of strong military powers, we

can not dismiss the possibility that, sooner or later, victorious Axis nations might move firmly in that direction. For some years they might remain too weak to attack directly across the sea; their effort more likely would first be devoted to developing Latin American economic dependence, combined with strongly reinforced internal political upheavals for the purpose of establishing friendly regimes in effective military control. The immediacy of danger to us may depend upon the security of the Axis military position in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, the degree of our own military preoccupation in the Pacific, and the disturbing influence of unsatisfied needs of Latin-America.

The present situation of the British Empire is not encouraging. I believe it easily possible, lacking active American military assistance, for that empire to lose this war and eventually be disrupted.

It is my opinion that the British are over-optimistic as to their chances for ultimate success. It is not at all sure that the British Isles can hold out, and it may be that they do not realize the danger that will exist should they lose in other regions.

Should Britain lose the war, the military consequences to the United States would be serious.

~~SECRET~~

If we are to prevent the disruption of the British Empire, we must support its vital needs.

Obviously, the British Isles, the "Heart of the Empire", must remain intact.

But even if the British Isles are held, this does not mean that Britain can win the war. To win, she must finally be able to effect the complete, or, at least, the partial collapse of the German Reich.

This result might, conceivably, be accomplished by economic starvation through the agency of the blockade. It surely can be accomplished only by military successes on shore, facilitated possibly by internal antagonisms developed by the Axis conquests.

Alone, the British Empire lacks the man power and the material means to master Germany. Assistance by powerful allies is necessary both with respect to men and with respect to munitions and supplies. If such assistance is to function effectively, Britain must not only continue to maintain the blockade, but she must also retain intact geographical positions from which successful land action can later be launched.

Provided England continues to sustain its present successful resistance at home, the area of next concern to the British Empire ought to be the Egyptian Theater.

Should Egypt be lost, the Eastern Mediterranean would be opened to Germany and Italy, the effectiveness of the sea blockade would be largely nullified; Turkey's military position

~~SECRET~~

would be fully compromised; and all hope of Russian intervention would vanish.

Any anti-German offensive in the Near East would then become impossible.

The spot next in importance to Egypt might be Gibraltar, combined with West and Northwest Africa. From this area an ultimate offensive through Portugal and Spain might give results equal to those which many years ago were produced by Wellington. The western gate to the Mediterranean would still be kept closed, provided Britain holds this region.

This brief discussion naturally brings into question the value to Britain of the Mediterranean relative to that of Hong Kong, Singapore and India. Were the Mediterranean lost, Britain's strength in the Far East could be much augmented without weakening home territory.

Japan probably wants the British out of Hong Kong and Singapore; and wants economic control, and ultimately military control, of Malaysia.

It is very questionable if Japan has territorial ambitions in Australia and New Zealand.

But does she now wish the British out of India, thus exposing that region and Western China to early Russian penetration or influence? I doubt it.

It would seem more probable that Japan, devoted to the Axis alliance only so far as her own immediate interests are involved, would prefer not to move military forces against Britain, and possibly not against the Netherlands East Indies, because, if she can obtain a high degree of economic control over Malaysia, she will be in a position to improve her financial structure then

by increased trade with Britain and America. Her economic offensive power will be increased. Her military dominance will follow rapidly or slowly, as seems best at the time.

The Netherlands East Indies has 60,000,000 people, under the rule of 80,000 Dutchmen, including women and children. This political situation can not be viewed as in permanent equilibrium. The rulers are unsupported by a home country or by an alliance. Native rebellions have occurred in the past, and may recur in the future. These Dutchmen will act in what they believe is their own selfish best interests.

Will they alone resist aggression, or will they accept an accommodation with the Japanese?

Will they resist, if supported only by the British Empire?

Will they firmly resist, if supported by the British Empire and the United States?

Will the British resist Japanese aggression directed only against the Netherlands East Indies?

Should both firmly resist, what local military assistance will they require from the United States to ensure success?

No light on these questions has been thrown by the report of the proceedings of the recent Singapore Conference.

The basic character of a war against Japan by the British and Dutch would be the fixed defense of the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, and Java. The allied army, naval, and air forces now in position are considerable, and some future reenforcement may be

expected from Australia and New Zealand. Borneo and the islands to the East are vulnerable. There is little chance for an allied offensive. Without Dutch assistance, the external effectiveness of the British bases at Hong Kong and Singapore would soon disappear.

The Japanese deployment in Manchukuo and China requires much of their Army, large supplies and merchant tonnage, and some naval force. It is doubtful if Japan will feel secure in withdrawing much strength from in front of Russia, regardless of non-aggression agreements. The winter lull in China will probably permit the withdrawal of the forces they need for a campaign against Malaysia. The availability of ample supplies for such a campaign is problematical.

Provided the British and Dutch cooperate in a vigorous and efficient defense of Malaysia, Japan will need to make a major effort with all categories of military force to capture the entire area. The campaign might even last several months. Whether Japan would concurrently be able successfully to attack Hong Kong and the Philippines, and also strongly to support the fixed positions in the Mid-Pacific, seems doubtful.

During such a campaign, due to her wide dispersion of effort, Japan would, unquestionably, be more vulnerable to attack by the United States (or by Russia) than she would be once Malaysia is in her possession.

This brings us to a consideration of the strategy of an American war against Japan, that is, either the so-called "Orange Plan", or a modification.

You have heard enough of the Orange Plan to know that, in a nutshell, it envisages our Fleet's proceeding westward through the Marshalls and the Carolines, consolidating as it goes, and then on to the recapture of the Philippines. Once there, the plan contemplates the eventual economic starvation of Japan, and, finally, the complete destruction of her external military power. Its accomplishment would require several years, and the absorption of the full military, naval, and economic energy of the American people. It must be understood that the Orange Plan was drawn up to govern our operations when the United States and Japan are at war, and no other nations are involved.

In proceeding through these Mid-Pacific islands, we have several subsidiary objectives in mind. First, we hope that our attack will induce the Japanese to expose their fleet in action against our fleet, and lead to their naval defeat. Second, we wish to destroy the ability of the Japanese to use these positions as air and submarine bases from which to project attacks on our lines of communication to the mainland and Hawaii. Third, we would use the captured positions for supporting our further advance westward.

Most of the island positions are atolls. These atolls, devoid of natural sources of water other than rainfall, and devoid of all supplies, are merely narrow coral and sand fringes around large shallow areas where vessels may anchor. Alone, they are indefensible against serious attack, either by one side or the other. They do, however, afford weak positions for basing submarines and seaplanes. Our Fleet should have no difficulty in

~~SECRET~~

capturing atolls, provided we have enough troops, but we could not hold them indefinitely unless the Fleet were nearby.

We know little about the Japanese defenses in the Mid-Pacific. We believe the real islands of Truk and Ponape in the Carolines are defended with guns and troops, and we believe that some of the atolls of the Marshalls may be equipped as submarine and air bases, and be garrisoned with relatively small detachments of troops.

The Marshalls contain no sites suitable for bases in the absence of the Fleet, though there are numerous good anchorages. With the Fleet at hand, they can be developed for use as seaplane and submarine bases for the support of an attack on real islands such as Ponape and Truk. With the Fleet permanently absent, they will succumb to any serious thrust.

Our first real Marshall-Caroline objective is Truk, a magnificent harbor, relatively easily defended against raids, and capable of conversion into an admirable advanced base. When we get this far in the accomplishment of the "Orange Plan", we have the site for a base where we can begin to assemble our ships, stores, and troops, for further advance toward the Philippines. It also would become the center of the defense system for the lines of communications against flank attack from Japan.

of the Marshall and Caroline groups, considered as a whole. If they are well defended, to capture them we estimate initial needs at 25,000 thoroughly trained troops, with another 50,000 in immediate reserve. If they are not well defended, an early advance with

Getting to Truk involves a strong effort, We would incur losses from aircraft, mines and submarines, particularly as the latter could be spared from the operations in Malaysia. We would lose many troops in assaulting the islands.

Going beyond Truk initiates the most difficult part of the Orange Plan, would take a long time, and would require the maximum effort which the United States could sustain.

You will not like that word "recapture" with reference to the Philippines, nor do I, but the Army has never felt that it long could hold them with the force we maintain there.

Truk is not looked upon as a satisfactory final geographical objective. It is too far away to support useful operations in the China Sea. It can not be held in the absence of fairly continuous Fleet support. No matter what gains are made in the Mid-Pacific, they would undoubtedly be lost were the Fleet to be withdrawn to the Atlantic. We would have then to choose between a lengthy evacuation process, and a major loss of men, material and prestige.

In advancing to the capture of Ponape and Truk, the Orange Plan contemplates proceeding promptly, delaying in the Marshalls only long enough to destroy Japanese shore bases, to capture the atolls necessary to support the advance, and to deny future bases to Japan.

We have little knowledge as to the present defensive strength of the Marshall and Caroline groups, considered as a whole. If they are well defended, to capture them we estimate initial needs at 25,000 thoroughly trained troops, with another 50,000 in immediate reserve. If they are not well defended, an early advance with

fewer troops might be very profitable. Several months must elapse from the present date before 75,000 troops could be made ready, considering the defense requirements of Alaska, Hawaii, and Samoa, and our commitments with respect to the internal political stability of the Latin-American countries.

We should consider carefully the chances of failure as well as of success. An immediate success would be most important morally, while a failure would be costly from the moral viewpoint. Before invading Norway, Germany trained for three months the veterans of the Polish campaign. Remembering Norway, we have the example of two methods of overseas adventure. One is the British method; the other is the German method.

The question of jumping directly from Hawaii to the Philippines has often been debated, but, so far as I know, this plan has always been ruled out by responsible authorities as unsound from a military viewpoint. Truk is 1900 miles from Yokohama, 5300 miles from San Francisco, 3200 miles from Honolulu, and 2000 miles from Manila. I mention this to compare the logistic problem with that of the Norway incident.

Of course the foregoing, (the Orange Plan), is a major commitment in the Pacific, and does not envisage the cooperation of allies. Once started the abandonment of the offensive required by the plan, to meet a threat in the Atlantic, would involve abandoning the objectives of the war, and also great loss of prestige.

A totally different situation would exist were the Philippines and Guam rendered secure against attack by adequate troops, aircraft, and fortifications. The movement of the Fleet across the Pacific for the purpose of applying direct pressure upon Japan, and

its support when in position, would be less difficult than in the existing situation.

Should we adopt the present Orange Plan today, or any modification of that plan which involves the movement of very strong naval and army contingents to the Far East, we would have to accept considerable danger in the Atlantic, and would probably be unable to augment our material assistance to Great Britain.

We should, therefore, examine other plans which involve a war having a more limited objective than the complete defeat of Japan, and in which we would undertake hostilities only in cooperation with the British and Dutch, and in which these undertake to provide an effective and continued resistance in the Malaysia.

Our involvement in war in the Pacific might well make us also an ally of Britain in the Atlantic. The naval forces remaining in the Atlantic, for helping our ally and for defending ourselves, would, by just so much, reduce the power which the United States Fleet could put forth in the Pacific.

Good strategy

The objective in a limited war against Japan would be the reduction of Japanese offensive power chiefly through economic blockade. Under one concept, allied strategy would comprise holding the Malay Barrier, denying access to other sources of supply in Malaysia, severing her lines of communication with the Western Hemisphere, and raiding communications to the Mid-Pacific, the Philippines, China, and Indo-China. United States defensive strategy would also require army reenforcement of Alaska and the Hawaiian Islands, the establishment of naval bases in the Fiji - Samoan and Gilbert Islands areas, and denial to Japan ~~of the use of the Marshall and New Caledonia bases.~~

of the use of the Marshalls as light force bases. We might be able to re-enforce the Philippine garrison, particularly with aircraft. I do not believe that the British and Dutch alone can long continue to hold the Malay Barrier without direct military assistance by the United States. In addition to help from our Asiatic Fleet, I am convinced that they would need further reenforcement by ships and aircraft drawn from our Fleet in Hawaii, and possibly even by troops.

Besides military aid for the allied defense forces, our intervention would bring them a tremendous moral stimulus.

An alternative concept of the suggested limited war would be to provide additional support from the main body of the Fleet either by capturing the Marshalls, or by capturing both the Marshalls and Carolines. This, or a similar fleet activity, would be for the purpose of diverting away from Malaysia important Japanese forces to oppose it, and thus reducing the strength of their assault against the Dutch and British.

But we should consider the prospect that the losses which we would incur in such operations might not be fruitful of compensating results. Furthermore, withdrawal of the Fleet from captured positions for transfer to the Atlantic would be more difficult.

It is out of the question to consider sending our entire Fleet at once to Singapore. Base facilities are far too limited, the supply problem would be very great, and Hawaii, Alaska, and our coasts would be greatly exposed to raids.

Good strategy

One point to remember, in connection with a decision to adopt a limited offensive role, as in both of the alternative plans just mentioned, is that, in case of reverses, public opinion may require a stronger effort. For example, should Japanese success in the Far East seem imminent, there would be great pressure brought to bear to support our force there, instead of leaving it hanging in the air. Thus, what we might originally plan as a limited war with Japan might well become an unlimited war; our entire strength would then be required in the Far East, and little force would remain for eventualities in the Atlantic and for the support of the British Isles.

Let us now look eastward, and examine our possible action in the Atlantic.

In the first place, if we avoid serious commitment in the Pacific, the purely American Atlantic problem, envisaging defense of our coasts, the Caribbean, Canada, and South America, plus giving strong naval assistance to Britain, is not difficult so long as the British are able to maintain their present naval activity. Should the British Isles then fall we would find ourselves acting alone, and at war with the world. To repeat, we would be thrown back on our haunches.

Should we enter the war as an ally of Great Britain, and not then be at war with Japan, we envisage the British asking us for widespread naval assistance. Roughly, they would want us, in the Western Atlantic Ocean from Cape Sable to Cape Horn, to protect shipping against raiders and submarine activities. They would also need strong reinforcements for their escort

~~SECRET~~

and minesweeping forces in their home waters; and strong flying boat reconnaissance from Scotland, the Atlantic Islands, and Capetown. They might ask us to capture the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands. To their home waters they would have us send submarines and small craft, and to the Mediterranean assistance of any character which we may be able to provide. They would expect us to take charge of allied interests in the Pacific, and to send a naval detachment to Singapore.

True

This purely naval assistance, would not, in my opinion, assure final victory for Great Britain. Victory would probably depend upon her ability ultimately to make a land offensive against the Axis powers. For making a successful land offensive, British man power is insufficient. I believe that the United States, in addition to sending naval assistance, would also need to send large air and land forces to Europe or Africa, or both, and to participate strongly in this land offensive. The naval task of transporting an army abroad would be large.

To carry out such tasks we would have to exert a major naval and military effort in the Atlantic. We would then be able to do little more in the Pacific than remain on a strict defensive.

Were we to enter the war against German and Italy as an ally of Great Britain, I do not necessarily anticipate immediate hostile action by Japan, whatever may be her Axis obligation. She may fear eventual consequences and do nothing. We might be faced with demands for concession as the price of her neutrality. She might agree to defer her aggressions in the Netherlands East Indies for the time being by a guarantee of ample economic access to the Western Hemisphere and to British and Dutch possessions. But we should not

~~SECRET~~

ignore the possibility that she might also insist upon complete cessation of British and American assistance to China. Our final decision as to what measures we should take in response to demands so sweeping in scope, should be conditioned by a recognition of the necessity for ultimately reducing our operations in the Pacific to a minimum, if we are to expect success in a major Atlantic offensive.

The strong wish of the American government and people at present seems to be to remain at peace. In spite of this, we must face the possibility that we may at any moment become involved in war. With war in prospect, I believe our every effort should be directed toward the prosecution of a national policy with mutually supporting diplomatic and military aspects, and having as its guiding feature a determination that any intervention we may undertake shall be such as will ultimately best promote our own national interests.

We should see the best answer to the question: "Where should we fight the war, and for what objective?" With the answer to this question to guide me, I can make a more logical plan, can more appropriately distribute the naval forces, can better coordinate the future material preparation of the Navy, and can more usefully advise as to whether or not proposed diplomatic measures can adequately be supported by available naval strength.

That is to say, until the question concerning our final military objective is authoritatively answered, I can not determine the scale and the nature of the effort which the Navy may be called upon to exert in the Far East, the Pacific, and the Atlantic.

It is a fundamental requirement of our military position

that our homeland remain secure against successful attack. Directly concerned in this security is the safety of other parts of the Western Hemisphere. A very strong pillar of the defense structure of the Americas has, for many years, been the balance of power existing in Europe. The collapse of Great Britain or the destruction or surrender of the British Fleet will destroy this balance and will free European military power for possible encroachment in this hemisphere.

I believe that we should recognize as the foundation of adequate armed strength the possession of a profitable foreign trade, both in raw materials and in finished goods. Without such a trade, our economy can scarcely support heavy armaments. The restoration of foreign trade, particularly with Europe, may depend upon the continued integrity of the British Empire.

It may be possible for us to prevent a British collapse by military intervention.

Our interests in the Far East are very important. The economic effect of a complete Japanese hegemony in that region is conjectural. But regardless of economic considerations, we have heretofore strongly opposed the further expansion of Japan.

We might temporarily check Japanese expansion by defeating her in a war in the Far East, but to check her permanently would require that we retain possession of, and militarily develop, an extensive and strategically located Asiatic base area having reasonably secure lines of communication with the United States. Retaining, and adequately developing, an Asiatic base area would mean the reversal of long-standing American policy.

Whether we could ensure the continued existence of a strong

British Empire by soundly defeating Japan in the Far East is very questionable.

Lacking possession of an Asiatic base area of our own, continued British strength in the Far East would doubtless prove advantageous to us in checking Japan permanently.

The military matters discussed in this memorandum may properly receive consideration in arriving at a decision on the course that we should adopt in the diplomatic field. An early decision in this field will facilitate a naval preparation which will best promote the adopted course. As I see affairs today, answers to the following broad questions will be most useful to the Navy:

Indelicate

(A) Shall our principal military effort be directed toward hemisphere defense, and include chiefly those activities within the Western Hemisphere which contribute directly to security against attack in either or both oceans? An affirmative answer would indicate that the United States, as seems now to be the hope of this country, would remain out of war unless pushed into it. If and when forced into war, the greater portion of our Fleet could remain for the time being in its threatening position in The Pacific, but no major effort would be exerted overseas either to the east or the west; the most that would be done for allies, besides providing material help, would be to send detachments to assist in their defense. It should be noted here that, were minor help to be given in one direction, public opinion might soon push us into giving it major support, as was the case in the World War.

Under this plan, our influence upon the outcome of the European War would be small.

(B) Shall we prepare for a full offensive against Japan,

Answer

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

premised on assistance from the British and Dutch forces in the Far East, and remain on the strict defensive in the Atlantic? If this course is selected, we would be placing full trust in the British to hold their own indefinitely in the Atlantic, or, at least, until after we should have defeated Japan decisively, and thus had fully curbed her offensive power for the time being. Plans for augmenting the scale of our present material assistance to Great Britain would be adversely affected until Japan had been decisively defeated. The length of time required to defeat Japan would be very considerable.

If we enter the war against Japan and then if Great Britain loses, we probably would in any case have to reorient towards the Atlantic. There is no dissenting view on this point.

And for the war

(C) Shall we plan for sending the strongest possible military assistance both to the British in Europe, and to the British, Dutch and Chinese in the Far East? The naval and air detachments we would send to the British Isles would possibly ensure their continued resistance, but would not increase the British offensive power. The strength we could send to the Far East might be enough to check the southward spread of Japanese rule for the duration of the war. The strength of naval forces remaining in Hawaii for the defense of the Eastern Pacific, and the strength of the forces in the Western Atlantic for the defense of that area, would be reduced to that barely sufficient for executing their tasks. Should Great Britain finally lose, or should Malaysia fall to Japan, our naval strength might then be found to have been seriously reduced, relative to that of

the Axis Powers. It should be understood that, under this plan, we would be operating under the handicap of fighting major wars on two fronts.

Should we adopt Plan (C), we must face the consequences that would ensue were we to start a war with one plan, and then, after becoming heavily engaged, be forced greatly to modify it or discard it altogether, as, for example, in case of a British fold up. On neither of these distant fronts would it be possible to execute a really major offensive. Strategically, the situation might become disastrous should our effort on either front fail.

(D) Shall we direct our efforts toward an eventual strong offensive in the Atlantic as an ally of the British, and a defensive in the Pacific? Any strength that we might send to the Far East would, by just so much, reduce the force of our blows against Germany and Italy. About the least that we would do for our ally would be to send strong naval light forces and aircraft to Great Britain and the Mediterranean. Probably we could not stop with a purely naval effort. The plan might ultimately require capture of the Portuguese and Spanish Islands and military and naval bases in Africa and Europe; and thereafter even involve undertaking a full scale land offensive. In consideration of a course that would require landing large numbers of troops abroad, account must be taken of the possible unwillingness of the people of the United States to support land operations of this character, and to incur the risk of heavy loss should Great Britain

Best plan to work on

*In combination with British
& British could contain
Jap. fleet & prevent army transfer
to South
& Africa*

collapse. Under Plan (D) we would be unable to exert strong pressure against Japan, and would necessarily gradually reorient our policy in the Far East. The full national offensive strength would be exerted in a single direction, rather than be expended in areas far distant from each other. At the conclusion of the war, even if Britain should finally collapse, we might still find ourselves possessed of bases in Africa suitable for assisting in the defense of South America.

Under any of these plans, we must recognize the possibility of the involvement of France as an ally of Germany.

Good reasoning

I believe that the continued existence of the British Empire, combined with building up a strong protection in our home areas, will do most to ensure the status quo in the Western Hemisphere, and to promote our principal national interests. As I have previously stated, I also believe that Great Britain requires from us very great help in the Atlantic, and possibly even on the continents of Europe or Africa, if she is to be enabled to survive. In my opinion Alternatives (A), (B), and (C) will most probably not provide the necessary degree of assistance, and, therefore, if we undertake war, that Alternative (D) is likely to be the most fruitful for the United States, particularly if we enter the war at an early date. Initially, the offensive measures adopted would, necessarily, be purely naval. Even should we intervene, final victory in Europe is not certain. I believe that the chances for success are in our favor, particularly if we insist upon full equality in the political and military direction of the war.

A risk that must be taken

~~SECRET~~

The odds seem against our being able under Plan (D) to check Japanese expansion unless we win the war in Europe. We might not long retain possession of the Philippines. Our political and military influence in the Far East might largely disappear, so long as we were fully engaged in the Atlantic. A preliminary to a war in this category would be a positive effort to avoid war with Japan, and to endeavor to prevent war between Japan and the British Empire and the Netherlands East Indies. The possible cost of avoiding a war with Japan has been referred to previously.

I would add that Plan (D) does not mean the immediate movement of the Fleet into the Atlantic. I would make no further moves until war should become imminent, and then I would redistribute our naval forces as the situation then demanded.

Until such time as the United States should decide to engage its full forces in war, I recommend that we pursue a course that will most rapidly increase the military strength of both the Army and the Navy, that is to say, adopt Alternative (A) without hostilities.

Under any decision that the President may tentatively make, we should at once prepare a complete Joint Plan for guiding Army and Navy activities. We should also prepare at least the skeletons of alternative plans to fit possible alternative situations which may eventuate. I make the specific recommendation that, should we be forced into a war with Japan, we should, because of the prospect of war in the Atlantic also,

~~SECRET~~

definitely plan to avoid operations in the Far East or the Mid-Pacific that will prevent the Navy from promptly moving to the Atlantic forces fully adequate to safeguard our interests and policies in the event of a British collapse. We ought not now willingly engage in any war against Japan unless we are certain of aid from Great Britain and the Netherlands East Indies.

No important allied military decision should be reached without clear understanding between the nations involved as to the strength and extent of the participation which may be expected in any particular theater, and as to a proposed skeleton plan of operations.

Accordingly, I make the recommendation that, as a preliminary to possible entry of the United States into the conflict, the United States Army and Navy at once undertake secret staff talks with the British military and naval authorities in London, with Canadian military authorities in Washington, and with British and Dutch authorities in Singapore and Batavia, with a view to reaching agreements and laying down plans for promoting unity of allied effort should the United States find it necessary to enter the war under any of the alternative eventualities considered in this memorandum.

Very Important

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

PSF
Nov

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

November 4, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE PRESIDENT

*File
personal
confidential*

The attached table of comparative
naval strengths (Built), prepared by ONI,
is forwarded for the President's information.

Respectfully,

D. J. Callaghan
D. J. CALLAGHAN

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library
DECLASSIFIED
DDO BR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)

Date- 4-7-70

Signature- *DDO*

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Op-16-F-10

Office of Naval Intelligence
Oct. 31, 1940.

TABLE VI
COMPARATIVE NAVAL STRENGTHS

BUILT

	G.B.	FRANCE	JAPAN	U.S.	ITALY	GERMANY	RUSSIA	SPAIN	TURKEY	
BB	‡	ⓐ					§			BB
(35,000+)	1	—	—	—	2	2	—	—	—	
(27-35,000)	11	—	9	12	—	—	—	—	—	
(27,000-)	—	1	—	—	4	2	3	—	—	
OBB	—	—	1	3	—	—	—	—	—	OBB
CC	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	CC
OCC	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	OCC
CV	7	1	7	6	—	1	1	—	—	CV
OCV	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	OCV
CA	15	4	18	18	6	5#	5	1	—	CA
OCA	—	—	5	—	1	—	—	—	—	OCA
CL	31	10	11	17	11	4	3	5	—	CL
OCL	21	—	8##	2	2	—	2	—	2	OCL
DL †	21*	24	—	13	—	9 (est)	18	—	—	DL
DD	80**	29	77	71	88	20 (est)	27	13	4	DD
ODD	66***	1	46	75	31	—	22	6	—	ODD
SS	39	58	42	35	89	120 (est)	160	8	7	SS
OSS	12	4	27	68	7	—	11	2	—	OSS
Total	308	132	251	320	241	163	252	35	14	

Greek Navy comprises following available naval vessels: -

1 OCA; 6 DDs; 4 ODDs; 6 SS; 13 old TBs; 2 MTBs; 10 Auxiliaries.

Includes 2 pocket BB.

† DL's include all DD types of 1800 tons or over.

* Does not include 1 Polish DL.

** Does not include 1 Polish DD nor 2 Norwegian DD's now reported in England.

*** Does not include fifty ODD's being acquired by Britain from U.S. nor any of the 900-ton type escort vessels of which eleven are believed completed.

Includes YUBARI (2,890 tons).

‡ Does not include following French ships reported under British control: 3 BB; 4 Cruisers; 13 DD; 9 SS.

ⓐ The only French ships enumerated in this column are those considered as immediately effective units under control of Vichy Government. For analytical disposition French Fleet see Op-16-F-3 Table of 10/10/40.

§ Statistics on Russian Navy particularly are incomplete and consequently unreliable.

Op-16-F-10 DISTRIBUTION: Op-10 Op-22
Op-12 Gen. Board Aide to President
Op-16 BuShips Aide to SecNav.
Op-16-F M.I.D.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

DECLASSIFIED

DDO DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)

Date: 4-7-70

Signature: *[Signature]*
CONFIDENTIAL



THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON

6 November 1940

*Tell PSF
personal
mail!*

Dear Mr. President:

Congratulations. *Grant*

Personally, as I told "Pa" Watson last week, I had no doubts and when I was asked yesterday if I were going to sit up for the returns, I answered that I thought the signals would be fairly clear early in the evening. At 2230 I felt so sure of the verdict that an "All's Well" could be sounded.

This morning it is perfectly beautiful in Washington, hardly a cloud in the sky. It hope it is a good omen, but you and I know there are lots of rocks and shoals ahead. I only hope that I may be of real help to you in my end of the piloting. You know I will give you all I have.

Every sympathy, every good wish, and all the good luck in the wide world in the tasks ahead.

Sincerely,

Betty.

The President,
The White House.