

Ms. Meg Greenfield, editorial page editor
Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20071

8/12/91

Dear Ms. Greenfield,

This is not intended for publication but for the information and perhaps understanding of those of you younger than I who did not live through what I did.

Today's letters captioned "Who Planned Pearl Harbor" address only military thinking. What the Japanese did there and elsewhere at that time not only could have been anticipated on the basis of political thinking - reverse Clausewitz, war as an extension of politics by other means - I did predict it, three times.

The last of these three times was when I was Washington correspondent for what then was the third-largest picture magazine, Click. The article, illuminated by a map of the area, appeared less than three months before Pearl Harbor.

My first prediction was when I was rather young, a reporter for the Wilmington (Del) Morning News, and I wrote it for the Wilmington Sunday Star.

I then was also a contributor to the syndicated weekly of the old Philadelphia Ledger. It distributed my greatly condensed article based on what I wrote for the Star.

The morning after Pearl Harbor I gave my months of research to a dear friend, Kathryn C. (Casey) Blackburn, the ^Nsecond to Lowell Mellett (also a friend) in what I think then was known as the Office of Government Reports. Having nothing else, they made use of it.

My interest in what the Japanese were up to was generated by an older friend, Artemy A. Horvath, a refugee from the Russian revolution. He was a chemist who fled east and before coming here was, as a renowned expert on soy beans, the equivalent of an undersecretary of agriculture in the Chinese government.

His brother, a mathematician, fled westward. In Berlin he was a friend of Albert Einstein.

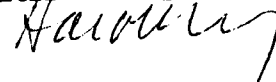
I recall only one error in that Click article. I predicted a Japanese attack along the Amur River border between Manchuria and Siberia.

By accident I learned about the attack on Pearl Harbor early that afternoon, Washington time. I drove a visiting sister-in-law out to National Airport, where she had a friend who was a meteorologist. He came out to my car ashen and shocked. The government had not yet announced that attack but word had passed from one airport tower to another rather rapidly.

On the official level, there was advance knowledge and warning that J. Edgar Hoover got and ignored. He was informed by British intelligence and by a U.D. double-agent, Dushko Popov. I believe Popov may still be alive.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg



Part 8/2/91 'Who Planned Pearl Harbor?'

William H. Honan's "Who Planned Pearl Harbor?" [Outlook Aug. 4] was an interesting article—as far as it went. Not to take anything away from the article's subject, Hector C. Bywater, but Mr. Honan is slighting others in crediting Bywater with envisioning in detail the coming conflict between Japan and the United States more than 15 years before World War II.

In fact, one might question where Bywater got some of his ideas, since Marine Lt. Col. Earl Hancock Ellis published the prophetic "Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia" in 1921, a full four years before Bywater's book was released. In his treatise, Ellis correctly understood the strategic implications of Japan gaining control of the former German colonies in the South Pacific at the end of World War I, and his prescience in seeing the necessity of an island-hopping campaign to defeat Japan's naval power gave the Marine Corps a two-decade head start in developing and perfecting the tactics and equipment of amphibious warfare that resulted in ultimate victory. He followed up his 1921 paper with a personal reconnaissance of many of the islands Marines were to fight over nearly 20 years later. He died on the island of Koror in the Palau Islands on May 12, 1923, while conducting this mission.

Perhaps Ellis is overlooked because as a person he was, shall we say, less-than-desirable company, what with his chronic drinking, depressive moods and bizarre behavior. Indeed, although no one is sure, the best

guess is that he drank himself to death. Nevertheless, history has validated Ellis's reputation as a brilliant military theorist and strategist, and a good deal of the credit for the United States' success against the Japanese in World War II belongs to him.

TOM NEVEN
Associate Editor
Marine Corps Gazette
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One factor overlooked or off-handedly omitted from the Pearl Harbor article by W. H. Honan was the precipitous action of the United States in July 1941 that terminated oil shipments to Japan, causing it to alter its scheduled attack on its Pacific targets.

Thus a few questions come to mind: Did Hector Bywater write that the United States would cause Japan to initiate the war? Was Japan's overall plan to gain access to Indonesian oil supplies prior to its sneak attack on Pearl Harbor? What were Bywater's lists of reasons for Japan's needs to dominate the Pacific—e.g., economics only?

We need to know Japan's justifications for Pearl Harbor other than revenge for U.S. oil cutbacks.

DAN McELWAIN
Fairfax

The article "Who Planned Pearl Harbor?" gives great credit to Hector Bywater's contribution but strangely makes no mention of the true genius behind Japan's World War II planning, Homer Lea. In his 1909 book "The

Valor of Ignorance," Lea predicted the war, the attack on Hawaii and included a map showing the Japanese attacks in the Philippines at Lingayen Gulf and Lamon Bay and their subsequent march on to Manila.

In his article Mr. Honan notes the similarity of the plans of Japanese Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto and Bywater, stating, with respect to these landings: "Given the innumerable possible landing sites in the Philippines, the odds against any such accidental similarities are very great." Agreed, but the true author should be given credit. The odds that all three would pick the same two sites are indeed small. The originator was Homer Lea writing decades before the other two.

Homer Lea had a wide following among military leaders of the world. As the guest of the governments of Germany and France Lea reviewed their armies before World War I and provided military advice. Former U.S. Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Adna Chaffee wrote the laudatory introduction to "The Valor of Ignorance." The renowned Georgetown University political geographer Edmund A. Walsh described Homer Lea as "that amazing adventurer from California who became American military adviser to the Chinese government and who, as early as 1909, prophesied in minute detail the strategic stages in the Japanese attack on the Philippines in 1941..."

GEORGE DAOUST
Great Falls