

# TAPE 14

*Recorded February 11, 1957*

55. *"During the latter part of October 1944, Hopkins heard from General Marshall the amazing story of how someone, apparently in the armed services, had imparted to Dewey the fact that the U.S. had broken the Japanese codes before Pearl Harbor." Later Hopkins told Roosevelt the action which General Marshall had taken in persuading Mr. Dewey not to make this fact public. The president was surprised at Marshall's action, but expressed no criticism of the action. Hopkins said that he never discovered who gave Governor Dewey this military information. (Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, p. 827.) Will you discuss this incident and how you handled it?*

In some way, the fact that we had this code—rather than codes—had leaked out to a few who had informed the Dewey regime, meaning Bell, I believe, whoever was his head man at that time of the management and publicity connected with the campaign. Of course, it was of tremendous importance to us to keep this code business quiet, because if we lost it, we lost the most valuable thing we could possibly have gotten regarding the Japanese operations. It was the same code that they had had at the time of Pearl Harbor. At this particular time that I am referring to, when we learned that the knowledge of the code was in the possession of somebody connected with the Dewey affair, we were chopping down the Japanese seapower, particularly their transports, cargo boats, with great rapidity in the process of rapidly bringing the China Sea into an area free of the Japanese shipping, and forcing them into a consideration of even moving their head government over across the Straits.

Just how the code business leaked out I don't know, but always somebody talks. It was very difficult to keep it absolutely quiet, because each fellow who was at all in the upper reaches felt that he had a right to know. I wouldn't have put this into your record papers, but I found in one case that Pa Watson at one time was taking the translations of the code that had been sent to the president and putting them in his waste basket. [Note by Dr. Pogue: This was revealed in the Pearl Harbor testimony.]

We were having a terrible time keeping this quiet, because various offices in the War Department—notably the secretary of war's and Assistant Secretary Jack McCloy's office—had had the advantage of reading these translations of the code, or rather particularly looking at my record book of the day's messages of every kind. When I found there was some loose

talking by some of their office force, we stopped that wide distribution, stopped particularly distribution of my operation book, and just sent up particular papers for the secretary's or McCloy's information. Incidentally, McCloy was the channel of information for the secretary of war.

Now we learnt, I have forgotten how, that Mr. Dewey not only had this information, but there was a plan to use it on his campaign. He was enroute at that time from point to point, and I think in Oklahoma at the time I picked this up. I prepared a letter, which is in the records, in which I spoke for Admiral King and myself, and asked Mr. Dewey to read the first paragraph and if he would not go along to what we were going to propose, not to read any further in the letter. He wouldn't agree to that. I sent an officer to him—I think he had just been made a brigadier general not so long ago—and the officer came back and said that Mr. Dewey didn't feel that he could make a commitment like that when he was in a campaign and a representative of the Republican party. So I modified it to the extent of agreeing to his showing it to one person—who I think was the treasurer of New York, but he was on the political staff of Mr. Dewey, but that can be checked up very quickly—the agreement being it would not be divulged to anybody else at all.

As a matter of fact, in the end this individual, whose name I don't get, talked to the *Life* magazine people after the war and disclosed the fact that we had the code and it destroyed the English code system. I know they had ten thousand people involved in one office there that had the machinery and all for rapidly deciphering these messages, and that was largely destroyed and our code business was put out of business completely by this disclosure. So it was a very serious matter.

But it was particularly serious at the time I first mention, because we were rapidly destroying—the navy was, in particular, and some of our aircraft in the army were—all of the Japanese shipping in the China Sea and further north. It was only a short time until we almost wiped it all out. Of course, that was a tremendous asset, and it was also a tremendous help to us in the guidance of our other operations, particularly the naval operations and the air operations which touched on the China Sea area.

I have explained what the agreement was with Mr. Dewey and what the denouement was, which played quite a part when they began the Pearl Harbor investigation against me after the war was over. They dragged out in the open the fact of the code because Senator Ferguson, I believe—anyway, he was from Michigan—insisted that the public must know about this. Well, of course, it just raised the devil with what we had at that time in the way of secrecy in this code business. There was so much political performance going on at that time—and particularly against Mr. Roosevelt, which dragged me in, of course, into a leading position in it—that it was highly destructive in its results.

In this business I wrote the letter to Dewey on my initiative, and I showed it to King and I said if he didn't care to be mentioned in it and included with me, I would drop that out and take the full responsibility for the letter. Well, he assented to be included in it. We were trying to stop any possibility of this code being disclosed right in the middle of this campaign by the air, the army, and the navy—and the navy itself under Admiral Halsey in the China Sea area, which led, as the records will show, to one of the most rapid destructions of the shipping of a nation that I think has ever occurred in warfare.

So we had a very hard time with this. We had a hard time in the War Department, keeping it quiet. We had a hard time because if they knew its existence, they all wanted to have it. You know that a secret only holds with two people; after that it becomes public property. It was furnished to the State Department for a long time. I don't remember how long that went on. But I know way early in the game, in the first years before we actually got into war, a new appointment of an under secretary in the State Department enthusiastically called me on the telephone to tell me what interesting reading it was. Well, I suppressed the telephone call right there and I tried to suppress the whole matter under discussion. But we were unaccustomed to such business and there was great freedom of talk, and I think it in that way, somehow or another, the whole matter leaked out and came into possession of Mr. Dewey's henchman and was going to be used as a threat against Roosevelt, I believe, to prove that he allowed the war to develop with his knowledge or with his assistance.

In regard to the question that if Arnold had been at Yalta, he would have been able to make the president listen to the Air Force intelligence which showed there was no need for the Russians' help. [No answer.]

*56. American policy in 1944 was in favor of shifting the greater part of U.S. forces from Italy to northwest Europe as soon as possible. By the time of Yalta, however, General Marshall had agreed to leave Fifth Army intact in Italy. Was this change due to a desire to satisfy the prime minister, or to permit the Canadians to take their forces out of Italy, or to some other considerations?*

It was in part due to the necessity of transferring Canadian troops north in preparation for the landing in Flanders and in part due to the needs of that army in Italy—meaning the combinations of various countries involved there—for more air during this period.

*57. Shipping shortages developed in 1944. British official historians claim this was due to the fact that control of shipping in the United States had come into the control of military authorities and that they permitted various commands to hoard ships. Many ships in the Pacific were not being used. This was shown in the latter part of 1944 when an outcry over the situation produced five million tons of shipping from the Pacific. Do you have any comment on this? Did you feel that the*

*navy tended to be wasteful about shipping? Or were the British unusually sensitive on this point?*

In regard to this, I felt that in certain places the navy procedure was wasteful of shipping, but it generally came from local reasons. I remember I sent General Arnold out to the Pacific in the early days to the headquarters of the naval commander in that area, and I forget the name of the large land space or island off Australia where the headquarters was established [New Caledonia]. And I told him in particular while he was out there looking into the air set-up and all, which was being established firmly and increased in order to assist in the defense of Guadalcanal which was under heavy attack at that time, that he would personally count the shipping in the anchorage there and, as I recall, he got eighty-two or ninety-two vessels that had accumulated there. The admiral was hesitant about sending them to Guadalcanal because they would get under bombing if they went into the tedious beach landings which were necessary, and the result was he was holding this shipping up—all cargo-laden—in the harbor there. Of course, we brought pressure to bear to have it cut down.

The wastefulness occurred, though, the difficulty of landing at Guadalcanal and the vessels going up and then coming back without discharging their load, and then being held for another attempt at the same place, which is quite different from just the plain charge of being wasteful of shipping. Everybody had to be watched on this count because the tendency was, if you had a ship to hold onto it.

What we were after was a general distribution that could be let out as the necessity demanded. There was always this shortage clear almost to the end of the war. And it was always very difficult to handle, particularly as the navy, the local commander, would naturally resent army inspections going into this place and checking up on them and the accusation being made that they were wasteful of shipping. So it was a two-sided affair and very, very difficult to handle. But on the back of that, of course, was the British pressure, which was very real pressure and a justified pressure, but not always particularly tactful.

*58. Field Marshal Wilson was appointed head of the British Joint Staff Mission to the United States in the spring of 1945 after the death of Field Marshal Dill. Did you ever have anything like the same close relations with Wilson that you did with Dill? Please contrast the qualities of the two men.*

Wilson came over here very fully informed as the relationship between Field Marshal Sir John Dill and myself, and I think he tried his best to develop the same relationship with me. I didn't help him too much, and for the reason that the relationship between Dill and myself covered a long period of time and a very intimate understanding of each other. And it took me time to feel out the real Wilson. And I was also a little sensitive

about it, because I thought that Wilson had possibly not held to his command situation in the Mediterranean in quite the way that Dill would have done it. In other words, he yielded to pressures coming largely from the prime minister, which was also natural but to be guarded against.

Incidentally, they were quite two different characters. Dill was a most unusual man. He not only had a very remarkable character, but he had even more remarkable courage in carrying out his duties. He had been chief of staff of the British Army and had after that come to this country. His opinions of affairs for quite awhile didn't jibe with those of Mr. Churchill and some of the others, and that made it a rather delicate business, but he talked with extreme frankness.

Now we have to be very careful about this, and I don't know whether this should be anyway referred to outright in your record, but it finally reached the point where Mr. Roosevelt was always very sensitive about the reports on his own conduct of affairs. He didn't want a record of cabinet meetings. He didn't give us the messages he was sending half the time. He would communicate with Churchill, he would receive a message for Churchill, and I would be wholly unaware of it, though it directly affected the affairs of the army and the air and maybe the navy.

In this peculiar way I kept track of this matter. When a message would go from the president to Churchill addressed to My Naval Friend, who was Churchill, that would immediately go in the special distribution that was regulated by the affairs of the British officialdom so that everybody that should know that immediately got a copy of it and, of course, that would right away go to the [British] chiefs of staff and the senior of them. Then Dill should know it in Washington, so Dill would get a copy of it. Then Dill would come over to my office, and I would get Mr. Roosevelt's message through Field Marshall Sir John Dill. Otherwise, I wouldn't know what it was. I had to be very careful that nobody knew this—no one in the War Department—and certainly not the [British] chiefs of staff, because Dill would be destroyed in a minute if this was discovered. But he knew I had to have it or should have it, and he just brought it to me and read it to me. He sat opposite me at my desk and went over this.

Of course, Wilson did not have the benefit of all these exchanges that we had. This was quite a risky thing for Dill, but he realized that we just had to have the information. Why should the British chiefs of staff have it—it was from our president—and the American chiefs of staff not have it? But it was just Mr. Roosevelt's desire for secrecy. But it went to everybody else, so I would get it through Dill, which is a rather unusual circumstance.

I got the other the same way. When the prime minister sent a message to Mr. Roosevelt, Dill would bring me a copy, and I never disclosed that fact to any of the chiefs of staff, and certainly not to the president. But it kept me *au courant* with what was going on, and I couldn't have got it any

other way. I could understand exactly why they were doing as they did, but I didn't think they quite understood the absolute necessity of the information on my side of the operations. Dill was thoroughly familiar with this. He had been chief of staff of the British army. He was the representative of the British chiefs of staff in Washington, and he was interested solely in the most advantageous conduct of the war. But neither one of us could discuss it with anybody.

I will go even further to say—you will have to guard this pretty carefully—that Dill would frequently get messages from Mr. Churchill and ask him to ascertain General Marshall's possible view of this. Dill would come over and read me Mr. Churchill's communication. Then he and I would make up the reply. And very often, when I wouldn't agree with it at all, very decidedly wouldn't agree to it, I would comment very forcibly and very freely to Dill in a way I couldn't possibly comment to the prime minister. Then Dill would report that to Mr. Churchill. That's what I said to Dill, and that way my own feeling got across to Mr. Churchill.

It was a rather curious set up, but a very effectual one in this business, because these were all strong men—Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill—and the coordination of these matters was of vital importance. I was in a position, so far as it affected military affairs and things of that sort, to know better almost than any of them how important it was that we should have certain information, and I got it in that way. But I have never disclosed it until this minute.

*59. Early in 1945 a controversy arose between the British and American authorities over Eisenhower's direct approach to Stalin and over Eisenhower's decision to make his main drive from the Ruhr to Leipzig instead of in the north. The U.S. chiefs of staff insisted at this point that they must back Eisenhower's judgment. Do you have any comments on developments in this phase of the war?*

I have no particular comment on this. I still agree with the decision of the American chiefs of staff on the matter. It was something for General Eisenhower as commander.

*60. On April 28, 1945, General Marshall said to Eisenhower: "Personally, I should be loathe to hazard American lives for purely political purposes." This and similar views by Generals Eisenhower and Bradley have been attacked by American and British writers as a failure of the military to take proper account of political factors in their decisions. Such views raise the question as to what extent the military should undertake to introduce political considerations into their decisions. What is your view in retrospect of this argument?*

In regard to the political aspects which some British historians and some British officials feel that I was not sufficiently mindful of—and General Eisenhower and General Bradley—I have this to say: we probably devoted more time in our discussions, our intimate discussions of the American chiefs of staff, to such matters as any other one subject, because

we were very fearful that we might find our whole campaign upset by some political gesture. I frankly was fearful of Mr. Roosevelt introducing political methods, of which he was a genius, into a military thing which had to be on a fixed basis. This was particularly so in regard to the Baltic [*Balkan*] states and the now-termed satellite states and certain Mediterranean things. You can't treat military factors in the way you do political factors. It's quite a different affair. You have to be very exact, very clearly informed, and very precise in what you say in regard to military things.

Now as to whether we did not regard diplomatic factors sufficiently, I repeat again that we discussed these more than anything else. But that was Mr. Roosevelt's [problem] and our problem was to be on guard that the military picture—meaning air, navy, and army—was not completely disjointed by some I will call irrelevant political gestures which were made without due thought to what was going on at the time. Of course, Mr. Churchill and the president were the dominant factors in all arrangements and all guidance. And they were the great political leaders of their countries, but they were also the military leaders and it was quite a delicate issue back and forth, particularly in matters like the Mediterranean, the soft belly of Europe, the Balkan states, the marches on Berlin, and things of that sort. Well, there were a great many factors connected with all these things, but we had to give special regard to the particular military factors and make certain there were no misunderstandings or failure in this respect.

I repeat again that I doubt if there was any one thing, except the shortage in LSTs, that came to our minds more frequently than the political factors. But we were very careful, exceedingly careful, never to discuss them with the British, and from that they took the count that we didn't observe those things at all. But we observed them constantly, with great frequency and particular solicitude, so that there is no foundation in that. We didn't discuss it with them because we were not in any way putting our neck out as to political factors, which were the business of the head of the state—the president—who happened also to be the commander in chief.

I have just discussed this pretty plainly and I think to the full. When the final considerations came, the president sat in—well, more than sat in, he called the meeting—and we discussed the thing. You take, for example, the subdivisions of Western Europe when we were trying to settle the apportionments for control as the peace was developed. I think we discussed halfway across the South Atlantic the various factors, you might say, of a political nature, which were the president's deep concern in these matters and which affected vitally the decisions which were made—which now may seem military decisions, but they were very decidedly political decisions.

61. *Do you feel that the military authorities should undertake to make political decisions?*

I do not think the military authorities should make any political decisions unless they are instructed accordingly, because the effects are too wide-reaching. There are too many influences involved, and it is quite a question of how much of this would be familiar to the military participants. And also it must be remembered the military responsibility in operations is very, very large, and it has with it a terrible measure of casualties. I know I was very careful to send Mr. Roosevelt every few days a statement of our casualties, and it was done in a very effective way, graphically and rather in colors, so it would be quite clear to him when he had only a moment or two to consider; because I tried to keep before him all the time the casualty results, because you get hardened to these things and you have to be very careful to keep them always in the forefront of your mind.

62. *In retrospect, do you feel that we should have tried to take Berlin and Prague as Churchill wanted us to do?*

No, I do not think we should have gone into Berlin at that time. I am not so certain about Prague. I think it would have been better to have probably done this. It must be remembered that all this time we were trying to do business with Russia. We had been fighting with them. They were part of the armed forces, a very decided part. They had played a great part in the fighting and the wearing down of the German strength, and we had to take that all into careful regard. At that time, toward the close of the struggle, they were exceedingly sensitive, looking all the time for something that would indicate that the British and Americans were preparing to go off alone and to settle the thing in a way to their—British and American—satisfaction and to the disadvantage of the Russians. So we were very careful about this—the Americans more so than the British—because Mr. Churchill was quite positive in the matter, and events and time have rather proved that he was possibly more nearly right than the American position. But we were trying very hard to find a basis of negotiation to go along with the Russian government. Eisenhower was in a particularly trying position, because in command of the troops he was brought into constant situations that had to be handled with great delicacy, and almost invariably he had to handle them in a way that displeased one party or the other, and I thought he did extraordinarily well in this matter.

Now just what the effect would have been of the question of Prague is open to discussion. I might say in all this, it is very much a Monday quarterback business, because all sorts of things have happened since those days and our relations with Russia at that time were quite different.

They were always delicate. They were always jealous and it was very, very hard to preserve a coordinated association with them. But we did it to a very large extent at that time, which is unthinkable today in the knowledge of later events. Nobody but the Lord could foresee all that that has happened since.

63. *In December 1951, in a speech in New York, I said that Eisenhower based his decision to stop at the Elbe on purely military basis, and that if he had not he would have been criticized by the same people who now say that political and military factors should be combined. Any comments?*

I think your answer to that question in New York was correct—in the abstract. In things like this, very often, the people who are criticizing the decision now would have been the most violent attackers of it at the time if it had been carried out the way they advocated.

63a. *Several British writers, including the official historians, have declared that as Roosevelt declined in health, General Marshall took over the making of U.S. strategy. One writer, saying that General Marshall wrote the message of April 5, 1945, in which Roosevelt took Stalin sharply to task for impugning American motives in negotiating with the Germans in Italy, concludes that "unknown to the British, General Marshall has been largely responsible for the strategic decisions bearing Roosevelt's name." Any comment on this?*

In regard to the message mentioned of April 5, 1945, although I don't have the records here, I think I know which one was mentioned. I believe it is the one Mr. Churchill makes quite a point of in his book. I wrote the message and repeated it to Mr. Roosevelt at Warm Springs. It is a fact that more and more Mr. Roosevelt utilized my services in connection with matters of this sort. But I wouldn't say that they were unknown to the British other than to say that we were not required to repeat every conversation that Mr. Roosevelt and I had to the British government. That was a matter to be decided between Mr. Roosevelt and myself as he dictated.

He had grown seemingly a little more dependent on me as the years went on. I don't think it was entirely a matter of ill health. At first he didn't accept my views on such matters very easily. He was accustomed to dealing with so many political factors, where you have to be so careful and have to possess such a wide background of knowledge of the people involved, that it was quite understandable for a long time he rather hesitated about taking me into his confidence. Also I had to be proven. He had appointed me without any large war experience, except being with General Pershing in the First World War and for a time chief of Operations of an army of almost a million men, and I was pretty young. But it was quite a long time before he built up confidence in me to anything like the extent that he apparently had in the last year of the war.

I was very careful not to force the issue on any of these things. Harry Hopkins, I think, rendered me a great service, because he was inclined to accept my views right along and would try to have Mr. Roosevelt well aware of them. But I might cite the fact that from the start, from the day I first met Hopkins, he insisted that I should go to Warm Springs with Mr. Roosevelt a day later and explain to him the situation of the army and its needs. This was about Christmas time, 1939, I think. He was very firm in the necessity for me to go to Warm Springs. I might say that he never got me there. I was never invited to Warm Springs during the entire time, though Hopkins several times wanted to get me there.

He did the same thing in regard to Hyde Park. Two or three times he thought that it was very important that I should go to Hyde Park and talk these matters over with Mr. Roosevelt, rather than have him do it. Again he was unable to do it. So I never went to Hyde Park and I never went to Warm Springs. I was not on that basis of intimate relationship with the president that a number of others were.

In thinking of this question I have just been answering, there comes to my mind a message from Stalin in 1942, I think about April, when I was having lunch alone with Mr. Churchill in that basement dining room of his at 10 Downing Street. A message came from Stalin which was very rude, very rough. And it had come that morning or within the hour of the time we had sat down, I think, and Mr. Churchill showed it to me, quite furious. And he said he didn't see how he, as the political head of his country, could accept such a thing—the political head of the British Empire—such a message as that from Stalin.

I was very new at the business then, but it seemed to me quite clear that Stalin was in a desperate situation—we all knew that. He was in desperate need of these things which we couldn't furnish him. He saw only his side of it, which is not unnatural—we have that all the time—and he was a rough character. (Anyone reading his early career would certainly agree to that statement.) And this was a message, written by the head of a country, who was a dictatorial head, who had had a very rough time rising to that position, who was now in a desperate situation, facing possible defeat or destruction, and in tremendous need of these things he wanted. And he was to be forgiven if he wrote very much in character, and I thought the prime minister had to consider that. If that came from some other man in some other position, it would be quite a different matter. But I think it was Stalin *au naturel*.

I remember that conversation took place at lunch down at Downing Street, and afterwards we sat out in his garden, as I recall, and he was telling me of some of the historic things which occurred right there.

As a matter of fact, in speaking of my relationships with Mr. Roosevelt, where they had political significance, I was always involved in the problem

of finding an opportunity to state my case. It was frequently said in those days by politicians who had seen Mr. Roosevelt, that they never got a chance to state their case. He was quite charming, and quite voluble, and the interview was over before they had a chance to say anything. Well, I was aware of that, and it was undoubtedly Mr. Roosevelt's system in one way. When I would have something particularly disagreeable—something that was very difficult for him to do at that time—and he didn't want such a matter to be brought up, he would be very communicative and would talk continually, and I would never get a look-in until the time had expired. So I was very careful not to prolong such a discussion—to ask any questions about it—but I just stuck to the thing I was after and whenever there was a pause, I started on with that.

So one day he entertained me with what proved to be a very vital discussion or statement. He went on to explain to me just how he expected to handle the question of the Baltic [*Balkan*] states with the Russians. And that was a great problem at that time, just how he would handle the issue of the Baltic states. Afterwards I was quite provoked with myself because I was so intent on getting my point across, which was the reason for my call, and to avoid this discursive procedure of Mr. Roosevelt's to keep me from doing it, that I practically paid no attention at all to his discussion of this very vital political question. I always condemned myself in this respect, although the reason for it was very plain.

64. *Isn't it a fact that you had drafted many messages for the president dealing with these matters?*

I did help draft a good many messages—many more towards the last years of the war—but there I wouldn't know whether it was a question of failing health, he was saddling me with more responsibility, or he was giving me the compliment of having a greater trust in my judgment, in my ability to handle these matters.

65. *Did you write the April 12th message which Mr. Roosevelt sent to Mr. Churchill saying, "I would minimize the general Soviet problem as much as possible?"*

I don't recall this.

66. *Did you make any effort in the last year of the war to get the president to define his unconditional surrender formula more clearly?*

I don't recall that I did. There were some discussions with all the chiefs of staff, I think—I mean the American chiefs of staff—with Mr. Roosevelt where this question came up. But I don't recall anything significant that came out of the discussions.

67. *Did you try to get the unconditional surrender formula dropped?*

I don't recall that I did.

68. *Do you feel that the Germans and Japanese fought longer than they would have done if the unconditional surrender formula had been dropped?*

I think there was quite a possibility that the Germans and Japanese might have conceded the war a little earlier if it had not been for the unconditional surrender formula. However, I think it had a great psychological effect on our people, on the British people, and on the Allied people generally, as well as on the Germans when it was made at Yalta [*Casablanca*], because we had been going through a period of defeats and now this came out as a declaration to the world that we were going in this thing to the finish.

I recall my satisfaction in reading the decoded cablegrams, or radio-grams, from the Japanese embassies in Europe before the people concerned became involved in the war with us—that would be the ambassadors from some of the Scandinavian countries, the ambassador in Moscow, the ambassadors in Spain and Portugal, the ambassador in Switzerland and others like that. In these decipherings came out the story of the pressures that they were exerting on the Japanese prime minister to bring the war to an end. This was cited by some of these ambassadors. All this is in the records, of course, and you can get it straight from there.

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They wanted a quick conclusion of the war with us and the British because they had nothing to gain and everything to lose by it, and it would virtually destroy Germany, which it virtually did destroy. And I remember they used this expression once—they said it is very important to get this—you are going to find the Americans the most difficult of all to deal with.

Well, I took some satisfaction from that for the reason that a democracy has a very hard time in a war, particularly at the start of a war. They can never get ready in advance. The conditions are such that they are very susceptible to surprise action, and the arbitrary government, like the Hitler government, has every advantage in those respects. They are just bound to win at the start unless they are very, very stupid. Of course, in the end, if the democracy is a firm democracy, it builds up a power which outlasts the other and the dictatorship bogs down. But it hadn't bogged down yet. And its firmness of control was illustrated by the results of the effort to assassinate Hitler. And this reference to the American democracy was standing firm—was going to defeat these people—was impressed on all these Japanese ambassadors.

*There has been much dispute over the need of dropping the A-bomb to hasten the end of the war. Admiral Leahy and others say they felt it was not needed. Indeed*

*Admiral Leahy said a few days before it was dropped that he thought it was just something the longhairs had dreamed up. He felt that they believed it had to be dropped because so much money had been spent on it.*

69. How closely had you been associated with the development of the bomb?

In the development of the bomb, Mr. Stimson was one of the group, which was headed by the vice-president that Mr. Roosevelt, in effect, put in charge of the general development. I was—I don't remember what my status was then, except it fell to me to make the preparations and still do it with secrecy. So we had to construct these huge plants down in the South and out on the Pacific Coast, which were going to be required, and still try to do it in secrecy. Well, that was my job. I picked out the general that I put in charge of it, and I even tried to do it without the knowledge of General Summerall [*Somervell*]<sup>1</sup>—which I couldn't quite make—but he kept quiet about it. I never did know how much General [Groves] told him.

But anyway, I had to get the money, and I directed all these preliminary operations and the construction of the affair—not that I knew anything about the technique at all—but to get the thing done; to amass the money and the men and everything else of that sort. I was rather amused at myself because as time wore on, these long statements that would come, that were filled with complicated procedures necessary in this matter and the technical terms involved—I spent so much time with the *Encyclopedia Britannica* or the dictionary, trying to interpret what they said, that I finally just gave it up, deciding that I never would quite understand it all. What I must understand was all the procedure concerned with getting this thing done. I obtained the first money by taking 20 percent of the appropriations concerning such matters in the development of bombs, artillery, and kindred matters, which was legal. You could divert 20 percent away from an appropriation to a somewhat similar matter, one connected with defense, for example, and this bomb was certainly connected with defense.

We finally got to the point that I felt that we must get some authority from Congress. Of course, that was a very difficult, delicate thing. I don't know how much Mr. Stimson tells about in his book, but what actually happened was, he and I had a meeting with the principal leaders on the Hill—the speakers and the chairmen of the committees—a very select group of men. And what we wanted from them was the assurance that if we put in for, I think it was \$600 million on what was then called the Manhattan Project, which was the name least liable to arouse some feeling of a mystery (we might have called it Hoboken, but we called it Manhattan). We went up on the Hill to see these various people and Mr. Stimson made the talk. And it was very difficult to do because he couldn't explain just what it was, except that it was a great secret and he could not explain that secret. But they would have to take his word for it and my word for it that it

was of vital importance that we get this additional money, and that it was of equally vital importance that not a word be breathed of what the thing really was. Well, they agreed that they would do all they could to avoid any debate or any discussion of this in committee.

Well, when the time came, I was told that one member of the Military Appropriations Committee of the House—a fellow from down in Alabama, I think, who was very busy with all these things and had been unable to get into these plants—at Timber [*Oak*] Ridge, or whatever the name, and the plant on the Columbia River—had brought up in the committee this matter of the Manhattan Project and the \$600 million, and stated that it had to be explained and he was going to insist upon it, and they were in quite a dilemma as to how to handle this because, in a sense, he had a right to demand that and he was always out after this sort of a matter. He was the real busy bee in all this business and particularly resentful of the fact that he had driven out in his car and hadn't been allowed to go through the plants.

Well, the chairman called me up and told me they couldn't do anything with him. I believe I was out of town at the time. Anyway, I got back and they had gone into their final mark-up session, which was the closing out of the whole affair, and they still hadn't handled this man. So as nearly as I can remember the wording used, I went up to this meeting, at which I had no right to be present. I didn't consult them, I just opened the door and walked in and sat down. Well, they were all very polite to me. They were all my friends. I sat down and then I addressed myself to this man, and as nearly as I can recall, I told him that I had just learnt this. I just wanted to say to him that if he forced this thing in the open—if he forced a discussion, which would be a public discussion of something that Mr. Stimson, the honorable secretary of war, and myself had assured these people mustn't be discussed; they must trust us on this as they did the hundreds of thousands of lives of our soldiers—that if he did that, I was going to take the broadcasting radio over and make him ashamed of himself for the rest of his life. Then I got up and left the room, and he shut up and didn't make any more demands.

I don't recall exactly the English I used, but that was the sense of it. And the rest of them accepted my apology for barging in on them, and we got by that last stumbling block in the effort to get the \$600 million to add to what was over a billion and a half, I think, at that time. Of course, in all these things it was exceedingly difficult to keep them secret, where you had to get at big money, just tremendous amounts of this, and build these great plants without explanation. I think only the fact that we were building so many of them diverted the public attention from these particular ones.

As to Admiral Leahy, he was not told what this was because there was no necessity for telling him until the very last moment. We only told those

that there was a necessity for telling. We didn't tell Arnold until it was time for him to train his particular pilots for launching the bomb in the Far East; and we didn't tell Spaatz—"Tooey" Spaatz—until he was ready to sail for the Far East; and I don't recall when we told General MacArthur, but it was the very last minute when we brought this matter out into the open. But there were long discussions by Mr. Stimson and myself, and later with the special committee, on this thing of which Mr. Harrison acted as chairman in Mr. Stimson's absence from time to time. Senator Byrnes was on this committee and he would come to Washington in connection with the meetings, and was being accused of all sorts of political maneuvers which were actually the meetings in connection with this atomic bomb affair.

70 . *How seriously did you take its importance prior to the dropping?*

We regarded the matter of the dropping of the bomb as exceedingly important. We had just gone through a bitter experience at Okinawa. This had been preceded by a number of similar experiences in other Pacific islands down north of Australia. The Japanese had demonstrated in each case they would not surrender and they would fight to the death. And even their civilians would commit suicide rather than to be taken under the control of the American forces. With this knowledge, particularly of Okinawa, where I think we killed 120,000 Japanese without a surrender—I think there were several badly wounded that we picked up, but literally not a surrender—it was to be expected that the resistance in Japan, with their home ties, would be even more severe.

We had had the terrific bombing. We had had the hundred thousand people killed in Tokyo in one night bombs and it had had seemingly no effect whatsoever. It destroyed the Japanese cities, yes, but their morale was not affected as far as we could tell at all. So it seemed quite necessary, if we could, to shock them into action.

What we did not take into account, as nearly as I can recall, and I think my recollection is fairly plain on this, was the destruction would be so complete that it would be quite an appreciable time before the actual facts of the case would get to Tokyo. So the destruction at Hiroshima was so complete that there was no communications, at least for a day, I think, maybe longer, and it was not until the second destruction took place at Nagasaki that the Japanese were really aware of what had happened in the earlier bomb explosion.

Quite evidently they were shocked into action, because as nearly as they could guess, they didn't know how many bombs we had. They didn't know the full details, but they knew the destruction had been terrific from a single bomb. And they had been told something like that from Potsdam, but they didn't take it seriously. Now it had happened. They got the full word of what had happened at Hiroshima. And now very shortly thereafter

it had occurred again at Nagasaki. The fact that we had no more bombs completed at the time was unknown to the Japanese and they could see Tokyo, probably, being wiped out next. And they were, as I think, shocked into immediate action which otherwise we would not have gotten out of them. And we would have had a terribly bitter and frightfully expensive in lives, treasure, etc, if we had to proceed with a landing in Japan.

There were supposed to be nine more bombs completed in a certain time, and they would be largely in time for the first landing in the southern tip of Japan. There were three corps to come in there, as I recall. They didn't know about it at the time, but I had gone very carefully into the examinations out in New Mexico as to the after-effects of the bomb, because we were having in mind exploding one or two bombs before these landings and then having the landing take place, and reserving the other bomb or bombs for the later movements of any Japanese reinforcements that might try to come up. And it was decided then that the casualties from the actual fighting would be very much greater than might occur from the after-effects of the bomb action. So there were to be three bombs for each corps that was landing. One or two, but probably one, as a preliminary, then this landing, then another one further inland against the immediate supports, and then the third against any troops that might try to come through the mountains from up on the Inland Sea. That was the rough idea in our minds.

Now Admiral Leahy was not told until the meeting of the chiefs of staff, very late in the game, just before the completion of the bomb. I believe it had even been tested then, maybe it hadn't. Anyway, it was the very end, and he was told of this, and he had been in the ordnance business in the navy, quite familiar with explosives and things of that sort, and he utterly scouted the proposition of this and regarded it largely as a waste of money. And Admiral King and I were much shocked because of the money . . .

[Begin reel side 2]

71. *Do you feel it was necessary to drop the bomb to shorten the war?*

I regarded the dropping of the bomb as of great importance and felt that it would end the war possibly better than anything else—which it did—and I think that all the claims about the bombings and all afterwards were rather silly, because we had had these terrific destructions and it hadn't had these effects. I think it was quite necessary to drop the bombs in order to shorten the war.

72. *Do you feel, in retrospect, that it would have been better to refrain from using it?*

In retrospect, I feel the same way about it. There were hundreds and hundreds of thousands of American lives involved in this thing, as well as

hundreds of billions of money. They had been perfectly ruthless. We had notified them of the bomb. They didn't choose to believe that. And what they needed was shock action, and they got it. I think it was very wise to use it.

73. *Do you feel that Mr. Stimson was chiefly responsible for dropping the bomb?*

I do not think Mr. Stimson was chiefly responsible for dropping the bomb. We talked to a great many on the committees that were involved in it—the engineers and others—and this particular committee that Mr. Roosevelt had set up, of which Mr. Stimson, Mr. Harrison, and Secretary Byrnes were members. And I think in the situation it was demanded, and was very important to use it. But Mr. Stimson was not alone responsible. I was just as much responsible as he was, because my arguments were very much for using the bomb.

74. *Were you aware of peace offers Japan was making through the Russians in the summer of 1945?*

I was aware of the peace offerings Japan was making to the Russians in the summer of 1945. I was reading the messages from all the ambassadors of Japan that were still in Europe. I was reading the replies of the prime minister to the situation. I was familiar with the Japanese psychology to quite an extent. I had been in Japan a little bit, much more than the ordinary person, and I knew what they were doing on each one of these operations. We had to end the war. We had to save American lives. We had to halt this terrific expenditure of money which was reaching a stupendous total. And there was no way to economize on it until we stopped the war. The bomb stopped the war. Therefore, it was justifiable.

The Japanese peace offers to the Russians—I don't know the details about that. But I had been reading all the prime minister said to the various ambassadors of Japan, and he was unable at that time to direct the army. The army was dominant in these matters and they could only apparently be slugged into submission. And we slugged them.

I'm going to stop dictating now and take this up later, but I'd like to say this: in the later paper that you sent me you give long lists of names of officers and others to have me analyze them and comment on their efficiency. I am not going to do this. I think if anything like this got into the book in any way, the books rather, all the attention would go to that and all the acrimonious debate would go to that, and nothing to the really important part of the text. I don't think it would be quite fair because the officer has no chance to answer it at all.

