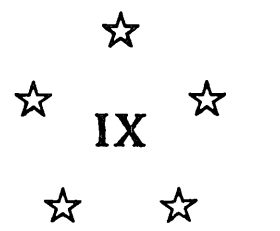

IX

So Little Time

"YESTERDAY we had time but no money and . . . today we have money but no time." Since the summer of 1940 when General Marshall made that rueful remark, he had struggled against deadlines set by approaching conflict. At the beginning of November 1941 he feared that he would be unable to complete his reinforcement of the Philippines in time. "'Until powerful United States forces have been built up in the Far East," he realized, "it would take some very clever diplomacy to save the situation." During the days of grace remaining, he and Admiral Stark spent their hours and energies encouraging diplomacy to do its best.[1]

Since late July when American attention focused on the Philippines, the Chief of Staff had worked doggedly at the seemingly impossible task of deterring attack while preparing for it. "If we could make the Philippines . . . reasonably defensible, particularly with heavy bombers in which the Air Corps at that time had great faith," Marshall testified later, "we felt that we could block the Japanese advance and block their entry into war by their fear of what would happen if they couldn't take the Philippines, and we could maintain heavy bombers on that island." [2]

Only a weakening of resolve in Tokyo or a mood of acquiescence in Washington could have gained the time he wanted at this stage of developments. He saw little prospect of concessions by Japan. General Tojo was too strongly committed to strengthening his country's control of the Far East and to gaining a speedy settlement of the China Incident to turn back. His aggressive views tensed nerves throughout the Far East.

Two weeks after the new cabinet came to power in Japan,

Chiang Kai-shek warned Washington and London of an impending attack through Yunnan province, designed to capture Kunming and cut the Burma Road. He saw no hope of meeting the threat without support from the United States and Great Britain.

The State Department, as always, was sympathetic. But Hull and his advisers had found the War and Navy Departments cool in the past to active intervention on the mainland of Asia. The Secretary of State said quite firmly on November 1 that he saw no point of sending further warnings to Japan "if we can't back them up." General Marshall and Admiral Stark immediately resisted the pressure for action. Both, said the General, were trying "to do all in our power here at home, with the State Department or otherwise, to try to delay this break to the last moment, because of our state of unpreparedness and because of our involvements in other parts of the world." [3]

The Chief of Staff knew that China would carry its pleas from the State Department to the White House. It was necessary then for the Army and Navy to make their own appeal to the President. As a beginning Marshall asked his colleagues: How far should the United States commit itself in the Far East and the Pacific? How far should the country go in trading concessions to Japan for time in the Philippines? At what point would the United States have to say "thus far and no farther" to the Japanese?

Deciding that a massive build-up in the Philippines was more important to peace in the Pacific than piecemeal aid to China or Singapore, he argued vigorously at a Joint Board meeting on November 3 in favor of sticking to the current schedule. With the Far East taut with tension, he and Stark deplored any word or action by the administration that might precipitate a crisis.[4]

On November 5 the American service chiefs took their case to Roosevelt. They began by restating basic American policy. The primary strategic objective of the United States was the defeat of Germany. "If Japan be defeated and Germany remains undefeated," they warned, "decision will still have not been reached." An unlimited Allied offensive against Japan would greatly weaken the combined effort against Germany, "the most dangerous enemy." [5]

After refocusing the President's attention on Europe, Marshall and Stark turned to the possibilities opening up in the Pacific. If

they could continue the build-up in the Philippines until mid-December they could threaten any Japanese operations south of Formosa; if they had until February or March, when the air forces reached their projected strength, the planes might well be "a deciding factor in deterring Japan in operations in the areas south and west of the Philippines." British naval and air reinforcements, now being rushed to Singapore, would reach impressive proportions by March.[6]

While the build-up was in progress, war between the United States and Japan must be avoided unless strong national interest was involved. They ruled out American entry into war to prevent a Japanese attack on Kunming, on Russia, or on those areas of Thailand that did not threaten the British position in Burma or Malaya. Although favoring more material aid for China and an accelerated development of the American Volunteer Group, they opposed sending United States armed forces to intervene in China against Japan.

If war with Japan could not be avoided, it should follow the outlines of existing war plans in that "military operations should be primarily defensive, with the object of holding territory and weakening Japan's economic position." They emphasized that America should go to war only if Japan attacked or directly threatened territories "whose security to the United States is of very great importance." These areas included the holdings of the United States, the British Commonwealth, and the Netherlands East Indies; those parts of Thailand from which a hostile force could threaten Malaya and Burma; and certain French and Portuguese islands in the South Pacific. In no case, they argued, should an ultimatum be delivered to Japan.[7]

The President heeded his service chiefs. Next day he told Secretary Stimson that he was trying to think of something that "would give us further time." He suggested a six months' truce during which there would be no movement of troops and the Chinese and Japanese would have a chance to come to terms. Stimson, as interested as Marshall in completing the Philippines build-up, threw cold water on the idea. The proposed truce would stop any reinforcements to the Far East and give the impression that the United States was deserting China. Roosevelt conceded that he would have to look for a different formula.[8]

As Marshall said, it would indeed take "clever diplomacy" to keep the peace. Even as he and Stark argued for moderation and more time, their counterparts in Tokyo, General Hajime Sugiyama and Admiral Osami Nagano, were setting rigid time limits on their Foreign Office in its search for agreement. Since the Imperial Conference of July 2 when Japan's political and military leaders had decided to settle the China Incident even at the risk of war with the United States and Great Britain, the diplomats had worked under impossible restrictions. They continued talks in Washington, knowing that the Army had ordered studies of operations against the Philippines, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies and that the Navy was practicing for an attack somewhere in the Pacific.

The details of Japan's military preparations were not known in Washington, but reports from Tokyo by Ambassador Grew were sufficient to indicate the growing danger. When Prince Konoye's government fell in mid-October, Grew described the situation as extremely delicate. He warned the State Department against "any possible misunderstanding of the ability or readiness of [Japan] to plunge into a suicidal war with the United States." The time had come when neither "clever" nor "tough" diplomacy would suffice. Only if the United States yielded on several debated points could peace be saved. General Marshall was prepared to make such a gesture to Tokyo. "It appeared that the basis of United States policy should be to make certain minor concessions which the Japanese could use in saving face," he said in early November. "These concessions might be a relaxation on oil restrictions or on similar trade restrictions." [9]

He was seriously mistaken about the Japanese. Having embarked on a campaign to win their place in the sun, the military masters of Japan were unwilling to settle for a simple gesture. On November 5 the members of the Imperial Conference in Tokyo approved two proposals to be presented to the United States. These were less plans for negotiation than terms of surrender of the basic United States position. Plan A, providing for a settlement of the chief issues between the two countries, was so one-sided that Foreign Minister Togo recognized that it was unacceptable. Plan B, to be presented if the first was rejected, provided for a short-term truce. The Japanese would agree to stop their expansion in

the Pacific if the United States would lessen its economic pressure in the Far East.

The diplomats were given little chance to negotiate. Not only would the plans create additional friction; the time limit virtually decreed failure. The three weeks allotted the Foreign Office on November 5 for closing a deal gave neither room nor time for diplomatic maneuver.

Troubling the Japanese Ambassador in Washington, Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura, was the knowledge that his nation's military leaders did not expect a peaceable solution to the crisis. He probably did not know that as early as November 3, the Japanese Chief of the Naval General Staff had approved the plan for attacking Pearl Harbor. He was almost certainly aware that on November 5, the same day Marshall and Stark asked the President not to issue an ultimatum to Japan, the Japanese Army and Navy commanders had alerted their subordinates to the likelihood of conflict with the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands East Indies. Two days later they tentatively set the date of December 8, Tokyo time, for the outbreak of war.[9]

At this point the Foreign Office dispatched Saburo Kurusu to Washington to help the ambassador in the final discussions with Secretary Hull. The Japanese representative could not have been too hopeful about his mission; unless the United States was prepared to make concessions, there would be a violent explosion by early December.

In this ominous period numerous problems beset General Marshall and Admiral Stark. The three most persistent were: how to gain time, how to continue the build-up, and how to make certain their commanders overseas were not taken by surprise. The Chief of Staff was comforted by the secret knowledge Washington had of Japanese diplomatic activities. He had said confidently to his staff in late November, "We know a great deal that the Japanese are not aware we know and we are familiar with their plans to a certain extent." [10]

The General was speaking of a secret asset possessed by the United States. Over a period of years military monitoring stations throughout the country had been plucking from the airwaves wireless messages sent by Japan's Foreign Office to its representatives in the United States and abroad. Many of them were sent in cipher

or code which could not be read and the result was a collection of gibberish. In other cases cryptographic experts were able to solve the secret and produce decrypted diplomatic messages which were known to the initiated as MAGIC.[10]

The most valuable single source of information in the collection consisted of messages sent from Tokyo's Foreign Office in the diplomatic cipher known as PURPLE. Sixteen months before Pearl Harbor, Lieutenant Colonel William F. Friedman, Chief Cryptanalyst of the War Department, in a brilliant piece of work had uncovered this tremendous secret. Complicated machines were built to pick up the messages and turn them back into the language in which they had been originally written. Installed in Washington, London, and Corregidor, they poured forth a mass of data on those Axis designs known to Japanese diplomats and such details of Japan's military plans as its Army and Navy commanders were willing to disclose to the Foreign Office.

This was the source on which Washington depended for the final warnings of an attack. Yet the last crowded weeks before Pearl Harbor tell the story of a magic that somehow failed. The PURPLE machines produced marvels but did not reveal all the American Army and Navy needed to know to put their houses in order before the storm. The whereabouts of the Japanese fleet, the target for the attack, the hour of bombing, were never sent in diplomatic cipher. Read later in the light of the burning ships and the blazing barracks of Oahu, there were warnings that pointed toward Pearl Harbor. Some of these were either never disseminated or sent so guardedly that the recipients misread their meaning; or, when received, either because of complacency or confusion, they were not properly acted upon.

The cracking of the PURPLE secret generated its own complexities. The volume of traffic in intercepts, the preponderance of chaff in the mass of messages, and the limited number of translators combined to build backlogs of material. Some items remained untranslated for more than a week after they were received. A more serious weakness was that recipients were not permitted to keep a file of the copies for comparison and careful study. The intercepts had to be returned to the central file as soon as they were read and all but a master copy destroyed. As a result the cumulative evidence of Japanese intent was never spread out for examination at one time.

The elaborate secrecy surrounding the use of the material also limited its usefulness. Considering American ability to read Japan's secret diplomatic messages one of the most potent weapons the United States could have in case of war, intelligence officials demanded the most rigid safeguards to prevent the Japanese from knowing that the cipher had been broken. The intercepts were decoded and translated on alternate days by the Army and Navy and the messages delivered to the small list of authorized officials by carefully selected officers of the two services. Distribution was limited to the President, the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, the Chief of Staff, the Chief of Naval Operations, Chiefs of the Army and Navy War Plans Divisions, Chiefs of Army and Navy Intelligence, and a few other experts in the two departments. Not even General Arnold, Marshall's chief airman, was on the list.

Possibly the Army and Navy came to depend too heavily on the intercepts. In their warnings of July and October 1941, neither Marshall nor Stark had to go beyond the information available through normal sources of intelligence. Japan's aggressive intentions were evident in the national press and in reports sent by American diplomats from Tokyo. An intelligence officer reading *The New York Times* could be almost as well informed on Japan's future policy as another officer scanning a number of random diplomatic messages coming off the decoding machines.

Few students of the Far East doubted that Japan intended to use the opportunity offered by the plight of Russia, Britain, France, and the Netherlands to grab the oil and other critical resources she desperately needed. The question was where and when a frustrated and fanatic military clique would choose to strike.

There were some tough questions to answer. Would Japan dare drive southward for raw materials as long as a powerful United States fleet was at Pearl Harbor and an Army garrison in the Philippines? Would the pressure of economic sanctions and a ban on oil exports force even the moderates among Japanese leaders to approve attacks on the oil fields of the Netherlands East Indies before economic strangulation set in? Or would they choose the moment of Soviet Russia's greatest weakness to settle old accounts with Japan's most feared neighbor and seize points in eastern Siberia that would both remove Russian pressure and give Japan a point from which to threaten Alaska? Intelligence officers in the War Department read intercepts of continuing troop and ship

movements southward but kept Siberia high on the list of Japanese goals.

Throughout the summer of 1941 danger signals kept going up. Despite soft words from Premier Konoye, the intercepts between Tokyo and Berlin indicated that Japan would risk war in order to profit from Germany's European conquests. There was no specific indication in any of the messages that Pearl Harbor would be a target. In the summer and early fall, perhaps only an intelligence officer forced to rely on intuition, a clever assessment of Japanese psychology, and American reports from Tokyo would have reached that conclusion. With the MAGIC intercepts at hand, the tendency was to rely on them for the positive statement of Japanese movements. Inasmuch as the Foreign Office was kept ignorant of details of military plans, no orders were picked up showing Pearl Harbor high on the list of targets.

For years writers in Sunday supplements had alternated articles on invasions from Mars with warnings of the "yellow peril." The two favorite journalistic targets for the Japanese were Pearl Harbor and the Panama Canal. Characterizing the Japanese as a "sneaky" people because of their earlier surprise attacks on the Chinese and the Russians, the prognosticators assumed that Japanese planes and ships would come out of the mists just at dawn on a Sunday morning when defending crews and troops were asleep. Intelligence officers regularly included such attacks in their lists of possible enemy actions. They just as regularly ruled them out because some other alternative seemed more the type of attack they would make if they were running the Japanese armed services.

General Marshall always felt that his Intelligence Division, for all its expert knowledge, let him down in 1941. He was aware of Stimson's strong dissatisfaction with many of the intelligence reports. Several times he had intervened on his experts' behalf, although he later admitted that the organization of the division was bad and that it was short of people. He said in 1956 that he should have made necessary changes but "I didn't know enough about where they were wrong to relieve them." [11] Despite his confidence in some of the officers in the organization, he shared the field officer's unfavorable view of G-2. Beset by demands for officers for training and command assignment, he neglected to strengthen adequately the division on which he had to depend for accurate enemy information.

Critics of the War Department G-2 Division aimed their shafts at its chief, Brigadier General Sherman Miles, son of a former commanding general of the Army, Nelson Miles, and nephew of General William Tecumseh Sherman. Although Miles' post-World War I service had included three years as chief of the Plans and Projects section of the War Plans Division, his critics remembered that he had been five times a military attaché. This association with the "pink tea" set was almost fatal to the ambitions of an officer in the old Army. Too many attachés had been selected for their social graces and their personal incomes and had spent too much of their lives as social aides to ambassadors to impress their colleagues. General Marshall knew better than to make any such generalizations. His own knowledge of Germany and Central Europe had come from extremely well-informed attachés such as Colonel Truman Smith in Germany and Colonel John Winslow in Poland. Nevertheless he was dissatisfied with the functioning of G-2 and he had considered bringing in a new Chief of Intelligence several months before Pearl Harbor.[12]

Despite shortcomings of the organization and mistaken estimates, the Intelligence Divisions of the Navy and War Departments in Washington and in Hawaii collected an impressive amount of accurate information. There could be no question in the minds of General Marshall or General Short or General MacArthur that the Japanese were daily growing more restless or that war might come suddenly. The trouble lay in the fact that all signs pointed to pressure points in the Far East rather than to Pearl Harbor.

Assuming that the Japanese would continue to push southward until they were stopped by the British or the Americans, General Marshall believed as late as mid-November that the Army still had a chance to influence the decision in the Far East. Knowing that Kurusu was on the way from Tokyo, he hoped that the talks could be spun out for at least a few more weeks. His main concern on November 15, as he prepared to leave for several days to see the Carolina maneuvers, was that nothing be leaked to the Japanese of his plans for the Philippines. With planes being shifted from various parts of the country to west coast ports, it was only a matter of time until an enterprising reporter would break the story. A premature announcement might either destroy the shock value of the build-up or trigger Japanese action.

The Chief of Staff had learned that the best way to keep a secret

out of the newspapers was to reveal it to responsible newsmen and then explain why it could not be printed. Growing uneasy about how much rumor might reveal of his plans, he called an extraordinary Saturday morning briefing on the 15th. Seven newsmen, representatives of the chief wire services and the *New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, Time,* and *Newsweek,* received early-morning invitations to meet General Marshall at the Munitions Building.

On their arrival the puzzled newsmen were shown to the Chief of Staff's office. Looking about for a clue as to the nature of the meeting, they saw a huge map of the Pacific with large circles marked on it representing the range of aircraft from various fields and bases. When they were seated General Marshall explained that what he had to tell them would have to remain secret. If they did not wish to remain under the circumstances, they were free to go. No one moved, and he started his briefing.

When he had their attention Marshall announced calmly that the United States and Japan were on the brink of war. He then listed the reinforcements that had been sent and were waiting to go to the Philippines. If the United States was allowed time to complete the build-up, he said, the President would then suddenly reveal to the moderate leaders of Japan the extent of the vast air force that menaced them. Perhaps, if they were allowed to save face, they would desist from their aggression.

The General stressed the defense potential of the Philippines set forth by his War Plans Division in late October. It was an ambitious program, requiring luck and time, but within the realm of possibility.

As reported by one of the newsmen, Robert Sherrod of the *Time-Life* Bureau, who kept notes on the briefing, the remainder of Marshall's talk was somewhat fanciful. He seemed to believe that heavy bombers would greatly reduce the role of the Navy in the Far East and to suggest that the outbreak of war would be followed almost at once by bombing attacks from the Philippines on the cities of Japan. Perhaps in his efforts to emphasize the importance of secrecy about the air build-up, he exaggerated what he expected of the B-17s. Only ten days earlier he had stated that "the main involvement in the Far East would be naval," and his current directives for air action envisaged no strikes against the civilian population of Japan.[18]

His briefing was successful in gaining secrecy if not in reporting accurately all of his plans. In his main point—the need for time—he was merely stating a somewhat exaggerated version of what he was attempting to do in the Philippines. Not by threatening to burn Japan's cities but through menacing Japanese expeditions that must pass near the Philippines on their way south did he expect to exert pressure on Japan. He was no Billy Mitchell proclaiming the end of naval power and hailing the triumph of air. In whatever hopes he held for the Far East Air Forces in November 1941, he was deceived. The new B-17, much improved as it was, still could not perform the major miracles that he expected of it.

On the day after his press conference General Marshall left for a short trip to Florida and to North Carolina, just as the newly arrived envoy, Kurusu, was preparing to open talks with Secretary Hull. Marshall returned to his office on the 18th to clear away papers that had accumulated over the weekend and left again the following afternoon. He was bound for the Stettinius cottage at Pompano Beach to spend a long Thanksgiving weekend with Mrs. Marshall. He was thus away from Washington during the preliminary skirmishes between the Japanese envoy and the Secretary of State.

On the 24th the Chief of Staff returned from the warmth of Florida to the chill of Washington, where signs of winter were beginning to appear. The contrast was even greater between the lazy calm of the Florida resort and a city on edge with apprehension. The negotiations had not gone well.

Even before Kurusu's arrival Secretary Hull had ruled out Plan A. Having read the terms of Plan B through MAGIC intercepts before he met the new envoy, he was inclined to distrust both the plan and the emissary. In both he sniffed the odor of deceit. In Plan B, Tokyo talked of halting its advances into southeastern Indochina. But the price was outrageously high. It required America's virtual abandonment of China and the relaxation of economic pressures being exerted on Japan by the West.[13]

Old, ailing, worn out by his exertions to reach a settlement with the Japanese, Hull was sickened by the proposed negation of a policy that he had tried for months to establish. His patience at an end, he might have dropped the conversations altogether but for the pleas of Marshall and Stark for a little time. Piecing together various suggestions that had been considered in the State Department

and making use of a draft developed in the Treasury Department, he considered briefly the possibility of presenting two counterproposals to the Japanese.

As the State Department sketched these offers Nomura and Kurusu watched anxiously the approach of the fatal deadline. For more than two weeks Tokyo's instructions to Nomura had stressed the need for haste and the dangerous passage of time. The Foreign Office's response of November 22 to the ambassador's request for an extension of the period for further negotiations produced a chill that matched the season. Negotiations were almost at an end.

The Foreign Office was explicit in its warning: "There are reasons beyond your ability to guess why we wanted to settle Japanese-American relations by the 25th, but if within the next three or four days you can finish your conversations with the Americans; if the signing can be completed by the 29th (let me write it out for you—twenty-ninth); if the pertinent notes can be exchanged; if we can get an understanding with Great Britain and the Netherlands; and in short if everything can be finished, we have decided to wait until that date. This time we mean it, that the deadline absolutely cannot be changed. After that things are automatically going to happen." [14] There were two other highly important messages from Tokyo the same day. MAGIC missed Japanese Navy announcements that the task force bound for Pearl Harbor would depart November 26 and that X Day would be December 8, Tokyo time, but it did flash a clear signal of danger.

The deadline rang a warning bell in the Navy Department. Always conscious of keeping the fleet on the alert, Admiral Stark over a period of months had peppered Kimmel with wires concerning the course of negotiations and chatty personal letters revealing his private reactions to Japanese intentions. In accordance with this practice he had a proposed message prepared to show the Chief of Staff when the latter returned to his office on the 24th. With General Marshall's approval, Stark that afternoon warned Navy commanders in the Pacific (with instructions to show the message to their Army colleagues) that:

> There are very doubtful chances of a favorable outcome of negotiations with Japan. This situation coupled with statements of [Japanese] Government and movements of their naval and military forces indicate in our opinion that a surprise aggressive movement in

any direction, including an attack on the Philippines or Guam is a possibility. . . . Utmost secrecy is necessary in order not to complicate an already tense situation or precipitate Japanese action.[15]

The Chief of Naval Operations later argued that the message should have alerted Pearl Harbor to a possible attack, but his specific listing of Far Eastern targets lessened its impact on Admiral Kimmel. It had even less effect on General Short. He testified later that he never saw it. Contradictory evidence was presented as to whether or not it was forwarded by the Navy. The salient point that impressed the probers was that information sent to the Navy did not flow automatically to Army headquarters at Fort Shafter.

The calm of Hawaii did not prevail in Washington. The knowledge of a deadline and the continued movement of Japanese forces weighed heavily on the minds of the President and his advisers. At the White House meeting on November 25 General Marshall heard Roosevelt announce that "we were likely to be attacked perhaps next Monday for the Japanese are notorious for making an attack without warning." In a much publicized description of the discussion that followed Secretary Stimson recorded: "The question is how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves." [16] There was nothing sinister in this traditional American formula for keeping the record straight—it was written into the next day's warning as "permit the Japanese to commit the first overt act"—but it would serve one day as a basis for the charge that Roosevelt and his advisers were conspiring to get the United States into war.

His patience wearing as thin as Hull's, Secretary Stimson thought that another warning to the Japanese was now in order. He recalled that after the Atlantic Conference the President had taken the first step toward reminding the Japanese that if they crossed the border from Indochina into Thailand they violated "our safety." Stimson suggested that the President need only point out that their current movements were in violation of that warning. At the end of the meeting he and Hull went to work to prepare such a statement.[17]

General Marshall was of two minds about the proposal. He had recognized for some time that if the Japanese appeared in the Gulf of Siam "war was inevitable and [that] we would be in a very crit-

ical situation if we didn't immediately take some action to try to control it." But he shied away from a final break. On the 25th or the morning of the 26th, he apparently discussed the situation with Admiral Stark, and they decided to rush to the President a second appeal that their staffs were already writing. As the Philippines seemed to be the American possession in the Pacific most threatened by current developments, he also directed his Chief of War Plans Division to draft a warning to MacArthur.[18]

The situation grew still worse on November 26. For several days Hull had been considering the possibility of presenting the Japanese with a proposal for a three months' truce, a *modus vivendi,* at the same time that he delivered his Ten Point Program for a permanent settlement. Disturbed at criticisms of the truce by the Chinese and their strongest backers, he decided to drop the *modus vivendi* and present the Ten Point Program as his final offer. He handed his reply to the Japanese representatives on the afternoon of the 26th.

General Marshall and Secretary Stimson had already agreed that the terms of the *modus vivendi* were too stiff. Even Secretary Hull conceded that there was only one chance in three that the Japanese would accept them. There was still less reason to believe that Tokyo could or would agree to the Ten Point Program. This demanded withdrawal from Indochina, which the Japanese might have considered, and withdrawal from China and the recognition of Chiang Kai-shek's government, which would nullify their gains of the past four years. In exchange for these concessions the United States offered to unfreeze Japanese assets and enter into a liberal trade agreement with Japan. Hull saw nothing in the memorandum "that any peaceful nation pursuing a peaceful course" would not be delighted to accept. It is possible that his analysis was correct. But the existing Tokyo government could not have approved the program and survived. It confirmed the view of the military party that the United States had no wish to reach an understanding.[19]

In submitting the stronger proposal Secretary Hull did not consult the Army and Navy leaders, who so recently had asked for minor concessions to Japan and the avoidance of an ultimatum at this critical point in their preparations. Some of Hull's friends saw the righteous indignation of a man who had lost all hope of reaching an agreement and was merely restating for the record the basic

American position on issues in the Far East. Others, including his biographer, Professor Julius W. Pratt, concluded that his action "was a petulant one by a tired and angry old man." [20]

Before learning of Hull's intentions General Marshall held a morning conference with his advisers, Arnold, Bundy, Gerow, and Handy, to determine what action they should take in view of the fact that the President and Secretary Hull expected an attack on the Philippines. Marshall said that he did not see it as a probability. The oversanguine estimates of General MacArthur and his own overoptimistic predictions of the rate of airplane build-up in the Islands had done their work. The hazards of such an assault, he held, "would be too great for the Japanese." [21]

As a prudent man, however, he took no chances. He proposed to send instructions to MacArthur "in spite of the fact that a break will not necessarily mean a declaration of war." The United States could not justify ignoring any Japanese convoy that might be a threat to American interests. "Thus far we have talked in terms of the defense of the Philippines," he added, "but now the question is what do we do beyond that." As a means of furnishing a guideline for MacArthur, he devoted much of the conference to revising draft instructions that Gerow had hurriedly sketched before the meeting. They were the basis for the wire sent the next day while Marshall was out of Washington.

In his later discussion of the November 27 message General Marshall indicated that it was probably he who had passed on to General Gerow the President's demand that the United States must not commit the first overt act of war. Marshall was equally responsible for removing inhibitions on MacArthur's freedom of action. At his morning conference he asked specifically about the nature of the Far Eastern commander's mission under current directives. When reminded that MacArthur was to defend the Philippine Archipelago, support the Navy, and attack threatening convoys, the Chief of Staff instructed Gerow to make clear that the Far East commander was "authorized to take such action as might be necessary to carry out that part of his mission which pertains to the defense of the Philippine Archipelago."

General Marshall went still further in authorizing action that conceivably could lead to war. Determined to allow General MacArthur complete freedom, the Chief of Staff ruled that the Far East commander was free to fly reconnaissance missions over the Japa-

nese mandated islands. To remove any doubts as to the decisive moment for MacArthur to begin operations, Marshall declared that MacArthur should start with "actual hostilities" rather than "a state of war." War, he told his subordinates, existed in China and in the Atlantic, although no one had bothered to declare it.

Significantly, no one throughout the morning conference raised the question of General Short's mission in Hawaii. On the contrary, General Arnold spoke of transferring pursuit planes from that command to strengthen the garrisons at Midway and Wake and the possibility of sending two Army battalions from Hawaii to relieve Marines in the two islands was discussed. Marshall stipulated that the Navy would have to agree to the transfers. Otherwise there would be no air strength in the Hawaiian Islands until replacements could arrive. In the end Marine Corps planes were substituted for those offered by the Army, but the action confirmed the point that neither the Army nor the Navy considered Pearl Harbor in danger of attack.

The news from the Far East, while threatening, was not considered dangerous enough by the Chief of Staff to prevent him and several members of his staff from flying down to North Carolina on the 27th to observe the final phases of the maneuvers. Later, Senator Homer Ferguson questioned Marshall's judgment on leaving the city at the height of the crisis. Forgoing the obvious rejoinder that the President and other top government officials were still in the city, the Chief of Staff rested his defense on one episode of the trip. He recalled with relish the splendid performance of one of the armored force commanders, a certain George S. Patton. As a result he had set that fiery soldier on the road to high command. So far as the warning message was concerned, Marshall's absence was not crucial. He had expressed his views on the 26th and they were included in the message sent out the following day.

The imminence of war hung over deliberations in the State Department and the War Department on the 27th. During the long, trying day Secretary Stimson became perturbed as reports reached Washington that the large Japanese expeditionary force was continuing to move south. With Marshall away, he called the President and got his approval to send a final warning to General MacArthur "that he should be on the *qui vive* for any attack and telling him how the situation was." [22]

Stimson felt Marshall's absence "very much." The Secretary

found Stark, "as usual, a little bit timid and cautious when it comes to a real crisis, and there was a tendency, not unnatural on his part and Gerow's to seek for more time." Nevertheless Stimson called on Stark, whose staff was already preparing a message to commanders in the Pacific, and Gerow, who brought the draft that Marshall had discussed on the previous day, to help with the drafting of the wire. Intended primarily for MacArthur, it was to go, with a significant amendment, to Hawaii, the Canal Zone, and San Francisco.[23]

In a long session, marked by many interruptions, they spelled out the warning. Stimson made a final check with Hull as to the state of negotiations. Although pessimistic in general, the Secretary of State held out a faint hope that talks might continue. That slight glimmer of optimism caused Stimson to modify his warning, making it weaker than Marshall had intended and much milder than the message Stark was to send.

During the afternoon of November 27 the War Department informed commanders in the Pacific:

> Negotiations with Japan appear to be terminated to all practical purposes, with only the barest possibilities that the Japanese Government might come back and offer to continue. Japanese future action unpredictable, but hostile action possible at any moment. If hostilities cannot, repeat cannot, be avoided, the United States desires that Japan commit the first overt act. This policy should not, repeat not, be construed as restricting you to a course of action that might jeopardize your defense.[24]

This part of the message was straightforward and left no chance for confusion. The chance for trouble lay in the next sentence, which was changed in three of the four wires. All of them contained the statement General Marshall had stressed the previous day: "Prior to hostile Japanese action you are directed to take such reconnaissance and other measures as you deem necessary." This was left in its original form in the wire to MacArthur. In the directives to Hawaii, the Canal Zone, and San Francisco, someone added, "but these measures should be carried out so as not (repeat not) to alarm civil population or disclose intent." General Short was later to call it a "do-don't" message and claim that it prevented him from taking more positive action in Hawaii.[25]

Before many hours passed, Short saw a stronger warning. On the

heels of the Army message Admiral Stark sent an additional alert, which he instructed Kimmel to show his Army colleague. Opening with the explicit admonition, "This dispatch is to be considered a war warning," it could scarcely have been more pointed. But Stark weakened his alert by adding too much. Unaware that Japanese carriers were on their way to Hawaiian waters and with no hint that Pearl Harbor rather than Thailand was the prime target, he listed as likely "an amphibious expedition against either the Philippines, Thai or Kra Peninsula or possibly Borneo." He then confused matters by writing Admiral Kimmel that he did not expect an attack against the Philippines but had thrown that in. His danger flare fizzled out without alarming Kimmel or Short.[26]

General Short reacted to the Army message with amazing speed. Foreseeing no threat to Pearl Harbor and believing that subversive activities by Japanese inhabitants of Oahu constituted his major problem in case of war, he ordered Number One Alert, the defense against sabotage. Within minutes after receiving his warning he confidently notified Washington, "Report Department alerted to prevent sabotage. Liaison with Navy reurad [reference your radio] 472 27th." He had not interpreted his warning properly and he was in line for a reprimand in case of trouble. But he had made his report, referring specifically to the War Department directive by number.[27]

No one in Washington noticed that fate, persistently against the United States in this period, had thrown dust in the eyes of the officials in Washington. Shortly after the message signed in General Marshall's name had gone out, General Miles, the Army Chief of Intelligence, sent another message to Short, directing him to take proper precautions against sabotage. When the War Department received the Hawaiian Department commander's assurance that he had taken proper action, apparently everyone who saw the message —Marshall, Gerow, Stimson—assumed that it was an answer to Miles' warning and not to the important earlier message. Washington felt assured that Short was on guard, and Short assumed that the War Department was satisfied with his alert.[28]

The confusion between headquarters in Hawaii and Washington was matched by that between Army and Navy headquarters in Pearl Harbor. In the curious lack of coordination that existed in Hawaii, the Navy commander did not know that Short's Number

One Alert, meaning that he was on guard against sabotage, now was totally different from the Navy's, calling for a full alarm. When the naval officers heard that Short had proclaimed a Number One Alert and saw his trucks and troops moving to stations, they concluded that Short was in a full state of readiness.

General Marshall was impressed by the fact that three of the four recipients of the November 27 warning responded by taking positive action. In the Canal Zone, at San Francisco, and in the Philippines, the commanders reported that they had gone on full alert, specifying the steps they had taken to meet an enemy attack. General Short's failure to react in the same fashion weakened his later defense that if he had been shown additional intercepts, available in Washington, he would have been fully prepared for attack.

After all the facts were known, General Marshall had no doubt that General Short had failed to carry out his instructions. "I feel that General Short was given a command instruction to put his command on the alert against a possible hostile attack by the Japanese. The command was not so alerted." [29]

Later he spelled out some of the steps the Hawaiian commander should have taken. "His planes should have been—he should have been in full contact with the Navy; the arrangements should have been so far as he could manage them through the Navy for the conduct of overwater reconnaissance, of which the Navy would have the direction; his own planes, his fighter and interceptor planes in particular, should have been ready for action. They were flying anyway. They should have been armed. Pilots sufficient for the first flight should have been ready; planes, presumably, might have been in the air in the early morning; the radar [which was used only three hours a day] should have run 24 hours a day as they did in Panama." [30]

Marshall recognized that the warning not to alarm the civilian population might have prevented the full alert of ground troops. But he saw no "particular reason why there was any difficulty in relation to the restrictions . . . in the message toward the water reconnaissance, overwater reconnaissance, toward radar activity, toward the handling of the fighter planes, toward the manning with ammunition ready of the anti-aircraft guns."

Up to a point his arguments were sound. General Short had misunderstood the directive and had not carried out instructions. But

the War Department could not escape its share of responsibility. Short had reported as ordered and the War Department had nodded momentarily, overlooking his failure to go on full alert against attack. Four years later the Army Board investigating the causes of Pearl Harbor blamed the Hawaiian Department commander for command failure. It also censured General Marshall and General Gerow for failing to see that he had not responded properly to their instructions. General Gerow assumed the blame for not recognizing the import of the reply from Fort Shafter.

General Marshall declined to allow Gerow to take the rap for the War Department. As Chief of Staff, he had to answer for the faults of his commanders in the field and "for the actions of the General Staff throughout on large matters and on the small matters." Although he did not initial Short's wire he assumed that he had seen it. It had been his opportunity to intervene and he had not taken it. Therefore, he thought "General Gerow had overstated it when he said he had full responsibility. . . . He had a direct . . . but . . . I had a full responsibility." [31]

Having assumed the responsibility in this phase of the Pearl Harbor affair, he claimed some indulgence from history. "I am not a bookkeeping machine and it is extremely difficult . . . for me to take each thing in its turn and give it exactly the attention that it had merited." It was a reasonable defense from an overworked Chief of Staff, but it did not exonerate him.[32]

General Marshall's direct responsibility in November 1941 for the failure to follow up on his orders stemmed from his neglect to reorganize the War Department staff in 1940-41. He had attempted to hold too many threads of operations in his hands and had spread himself so thin between administering the War Department staff, overseeing training, appearing before Congress, selecting officers, dealing with soldier morale, and puzzling over the demands of Lend-Lease operations, that he could not closely follow the day-by-day reports of his intelligence officers or check adequately on the response of his various commanders to orders. It was not that he was unwilling to delegate authority. Over a period of years his habit had been to give his subordinates full powers and allow them to find their way. But as the War Department was then organized he had found it difficult to divest himself of authority. The reform of the staff system was to be one of his first major projects after the initial shock of Pearl Harbor.

Beyond the question of poor organization there was the simple fact, indicated repeatedly in October and November, that both Pearl Harbor and Washington had been blinded by the glare of Japan's fireworks in the Far East. For months American political and military leaders had watched anxiously as the Japanese extended their control over Indochina. They speculated that Thailand, Burma, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, or even the Russian Maritime Provinces might be attacked. Since General Marshall's alert of 1940 Washington had never again included Pearl Harbor in the list of probable targets.

In a memorandum to the President on November 27 Marshall and Stark emphasized the degree to which the Far East now dominated their thinking. In their second appeal within a month, again reminding President Roosevelt that "the most essential thing now from the United States viewpoint is to gain time," they enumerated the problems in the Far East that caused them concern:

> Considerable Navy and Army reinforcements have been rushed to the Philippines but the desirable strength has not yet been reached. The process of reinforcement is being continued. Of great and immediate concern is the safety of the Army convoy now near Guam, and the Marine Corps' convoy just leaving Shanghai. Ground forces to a total of 21,000 are due to sail from the United States by December 8, 1941, and it is important that this troop reinforcement reach the Philippines before hostilities commence. Precipitance of military action on our part should be avoided so long as consistent with national policy. The longer the delay, the more positive becomes the assurance of retention of these Islands as a naval and air base. Japanese action to the south of Formosa will be hindered and perhaps seriously blocked as long as we hold the Philippine Islands. War with Japan certainly will interrupt our transport of supplies to Siberia, and probably will interrupt the process of aiding China.[33]

Their pleas for moderation were made against a background of increasing Japanese boldness. Alarmed by November 28 intelligence reports of continued movements southward, Secretary Stimson rushed to the White House, breaking in on a conference between Roosevelt and William Donovan, to announce a new crisis. Already under pressure from the British for a statement of the American position in case of continued trouble, the President summoned his advisers to a noon meeting to consider what should be done.

Deeply concerned over a possible Japanese attack on the Isthmus of Kra, the narrowest part of the long finger of Thailand that thrusts southward to separate Malaya from Burma, the British commander-in-chief at Singapore (Brooke-Popham) had drawn up plans to land troops to forestall a Japanese threat to that area. Told of these plans, Roosevelt's advisers agreed that circumstances had completely changed since their meeting two days before.

In speaking of Thailand on November 26 General Marshall had thought it possible to wait until the Japanese actually invaded the country before issuing an ultimatum. Now with a force of 25,000 Japanese on the high seas, headed southward, he recognized that the situation had changed. As Stimson recalled the discussion, "It further became a consensus of views that rather than strike at the Force as it went by without any warning on the one hand, which we didn't think we could do; or sitting still and allowing it to go on, on the other, which we didn't think we could do—that the only thing for us to do was to address it a warning that if it reached a certain place, or a certain line, or a certain point, we should have to fight." [34]

Hoping that diplomacy might still yield some small delays, the President suggested that the Japanese be asked for an explanation of their troop movements and their reasons for continuing the build-up in Indochina. If the answer was not satisfactory he proposed as a last resort to appeal to Hirohito. Stimson demurred. One did not send warnings to an Emperor. A better course was to advise Congress of the perils facing the American people and of measures that might have to be taken to meet those dangers. As for Hirohito, it was better to send a separate and secret plea. The President agreed. On the assumption that there would be no attack until after the Japanese returned an answer to the Ten Point Program, Roosevelt directed his advisers to work on a message to Congress while he slipped away to Warm Springs, Georgia, to share a belated Thanksgiving dinner with the patients at the Infantile Paralysis Center.

Meanwhile the commanders in Hawaii seemed blandly unperturbed by the danger facing them from Japan. Stimson and Marshall later charged them with forgetting the main duty of a sentinel guarding an outpost. In the absence of specific directives, the general orders of a sentry required that he be constantly on the alert. Time and perspective have mellowed these stern judgments

of the past. It is easy now to feel sympathy for the two commanders in Hawaii who were to be relieved of their posts for sharing Washington's mistaken notion that trouble was coming in the Far East rather than the Central Pacific.

General Marshall and Admiral Stark were to have their uncomfortable innings before the Congressional Inquiry of 1945 because certain messages, indicating undue Japanese interest in ship traffic at Pearl Harbor, were not forwarded. Kimmel and Short listed as critical a Tokyo directive to agents in Hawaii in September 1941, dividing the harbor into five areas and requesting weekly reports on arrivals and departures of ships in each area. General Marshall replied that the Japanese showed similar interest in ship movements throughout the world and that no specific danger to Pearl Harbor was indicated by the request.

In later years the Hawaiian commanders cited the list of intercepts that had not been passed on from Washington: the deadline messages indicating that Tokyo's patience was wearing thin and that only a few days were left for decision; messages in late November and December ordering the evacuation of Japanese nationals from the United States and Great Britain; precise instructions about the burning of codes; and finally orders to destroy code machines.

All the faults of omission were not in Washington. The Navy headquarters at Pearl Harbor did not always make certain that all warnings from Washington were passed on to all of their key officers and to General Short. A properly coordinated Army-Navy organization would have made the Army commander aware that the Navy was not conducting long-range reconnaissance on December 7. Someone at Navy headquarters should have known that General Short's Number One Alert was not a state of full readiness against attack.

There were also telltale messages intercepted in Hawaii that were misread. Analyzed more carefully, they could have pointed toward undue curiosity in Tokyo about ship traffic and the anchorage of ships at Pearl Harbor. There might have been more concern about the fact that Kimmel's chief of fleet intelligence did not know the location of the Japanese carrier fleet or that little importance was attached to reports (later proved false) of the arrival of two Japanese carriers in the Marshall Islands.

Through all the debate over what information was given and

what withheld, one point stands out. If the attack had come just after the "war warning" of November 27, as Roosevelt had predicted it might, the commanders in Hawaii could never have justified their position. They were to base their most effective defense on the failure of the War and Navy Departments to pass on numerous intercepts that flowed into Washington during the last week before the attack. It was easy enough for Kimmel and Short to say afterward: if we had received this message or that we would have been adequately prepared. The hard fact is that more imaginative commanders might have done more with what they had.

Believing that the commanders in Hawaii were on the alert, General Marshall ceased to worry about Pearl Harbor. Over the last weekend in November he thought mainly about problems in the Philippines.

He also had personal concerns. Mrs. Marshall's ribs still gave her trouble. Earlier in the month, after her side was healing nicely, she had made a sudden misstep that had pulled loose some of the incompletely knitted cartilage. The General had taken her to Florida over Thanksgiving so that she could get some rest. He gave her physical state and "critical matters" pending at that time as reasons for canceling his plans to attend the Army-Navy game on November 29. His tickets were not wasted. Allen and Madge Brown enjoyed sharing Marshall's box with General Arnold during a closely fought contest which the Navy won 14-6. Washington newspapers dutifully recorded that General Marshall had been kept at home by the international situation.[85]

The short vacation in Florida had made General Marshall aware that he was nearly exhausted. On December 1 he wrote the head of the Army Hospital at Hot Springs, Arkansas, that he was thinking of coming out—a day or two before Christmas—"to stay there ten days or two weeks and give myself an opportunity to rest up" and give Mrs. Marshall a chance to recuperate completely. Realizing that he was indulging in wishful thinking, he added: "Of course, all my plans are dependent on the international situation and the President's desires at the time." But it was good to think about two unhurried and unharried weeks.[86]

He realized that there was a direct correlation between his own state of health and Mrs. Marshall's. On the day before Pearl Harbor he wrote Mrs. Winn that he feared her mother was "going too

strong" and might collapse. He was not certain he could bear that added burden. "I have just about enough steam to do this job," he declared, "and if I am involved in her being down with an illness in addition to the job, it quickly goes beyond my strength." [37]

His anxieties were soon to be submerged in a sea of international woes. This weekend of the Army-Navy game marked the watershed between peace and war. Many who celebrated Navy's victory on November 30 mourned its losses ten days later. But with disaster little more than a week away, Washington and Pearl Harbor still showed no immediate alarm about America's danger.