

## The Primary Purpose of National Estimating

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*The following contains excerpts from Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) 10-41 of 4 December 1941. It was entitled "The Likelihood of Japanese Military Attack."*<sup>1</sup>

### Key Judgments

Available evidence is sufficient to warrant considerable confidence in our judgment that Japanese military forces will attack British Commonwealth and Dutch targets in Southeast Asia in the very near future.

Evidence concerning Japanese military intentions with respect to US targets in the Pacific is more scattered and ambiguous. With the exception of two sub-units of the Interagency Intelligence Committee (see below), the entities preparing this SNIE believe a near-term attack on US targets is unlikely, in view of the following evidence and inferences . . .

The minority view holds that there is at least an even chance that Japanese military forces will attack the Philippines and Hawaii in the immediate future. Admittedly based on fragmentary sourcing, this judgment is based on the following evidence:

- We know from intercepted Japanese communications traffic (MAGIC) that two weeks ago, on 19 November, Japan's Foreign Ministry sent out

a preparatory message, "East wind rain," which various knowledgeable US intelligence officers have interpreted-correctly, in our view-as indicating a basic Japanese decision for war in the very near future.

- We know from MAGIC that three days later, 22 November, Foreign Minister Togo informed Ambassador Nomura, here in Washington, that US-Japanese negotiations had to be settled by 29 November, because "after that things are going automatically to happen."
- We know from MAGIC that in the past two weeks the Japanese have been padding the volume of their radio traffic with previously issued or deliberately garbled messages, presumably to foil US decoding operations.
- We know from intercepts of Japanese traffic that just three days ago the Imperial Navy changed its ship call signs-an unprecedented change that has come only one month after the previous change, rather than the normal Japanese practice of changing such call signs every six months.
- We know from other intercepted Japanese signal traffic that two days ago (2 December) the Japanese Foreign Ministry ordered its embassies and consulates in Washington, London, Manila, Batavia (Djakarta), Singapore, and Hong Kong to destroy all but the most important codes, ciphers, and classified documents.
- Our analysis of the known (MAGIC) messages between Tokyo and its special envoys in Washington reveals a definite pessimism regarding the possibility of a negotiated settlement of its differences with the United States.

- We know that Japan's aircraft carriers are out of port and their location unknown to us, in circumstances which in certain respects differ from previous practice.
- As of three days ago the location of Japan's submarines has also become "lost" to us.
- We know that the Japanese have paid particular attention to last year's successful British aerial torpedo attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto.
- There have been scattered, unconfirmed reports that naval air units in southern Japan have been practicing simulated torpedo attacks against ships in harbor there.
- We recall that Ambassador Grew reported from Tokyo, in January of this year, that the Peruvian minister had learned "from many sources" that in the event of trouble breaking out between Japan and the US, the Japanese "intended to make a surprise attack against Pearl Harbor with all their strength and emphasizing all their equipment."
- Japanese agents are known to have been reporting in detail on local US military situations at Pearl Harbor, Clark Field, and elsewhere, including what these agents believe to be a serious lack of effective coordination between US Army and Naval commands there.

While the following considerations cannot be classed as "evidence," the holders of the minority view see them as inferences justifying a very concerned view:

- As previous US naval exercises and war games have indicated, US forces in Hawaii would be vulnerable to sudden Japanese aerial attack-particularly, as an earlier war game at the Navy's Postgraduate School revealed, if conducted at dawn on a Sunday morning.
- We know that Japanese observers are aware of the unfortunate outcome of certain previous USN exercises, and at least in one case have openly published on those results.<sup>2</sup>

- We note that Maj. Gen. F. L. Martin (head of the Army's Hawaiian Air Corps) and R. Adm. Patrick L. N. Bellinger (head of the Navy's Hawaiian Naval Air Patrol) estimated some months ago that the most likely and dangerous form of Japanese attack on Oahu would be an air attack conducted at sunrise, and that there would be "a high probability that it could be delivered as a complete surprise."
- It should be emphasized that-as the Cabinet explicitly discussed in Washington just nine days ago-Japanese military practice has emphasized surprise attack with no prior declaration of war. This was demonstrated with especially lethal effectiveness in 1904, when, without warning, the Japanese suddenly attacked the Tsarist fleet at Port Arthur. Similarly, in 1894 Japanese Army forces attacked Chinese troops in Korea prior to a declaration of war; and it will be recalled that, more recently (July 1937), the Japanese suddenly and without warning attacked Chinese forces in the Shanghai area.
- Initial seriously crippling attacks on US forces in the Philippines and Hawaii would be the only chance the Japanese military would have for eventual victory, or for hoping to gain its aims through a negotiated settlement of some kind in the Pacific area.
- The greatly superior potential of US military and industrial strength, relative to that of Japan, will not necessarily deter the Imperial forces from attacking US targets. The Japanese military has its own thought and reasoning processes, which may or may not accord with what we Americans think would "make sense" to Tokyo.
- We note that British Admiral Mountbatten recently pointed out what he considered to be serious deficiencies in American defenses and alertness at Pearl Harbor.

In sum, numerous considerations-some evidential, some inferential-can support the (minority) view that the Philippines and Hawaii must be tempting targets for sudden attack, at least in the view of those officers within the Japanese military

hierarchy who champion a course of radical advance in Asia and the Pacific, and whose influence within Japanese political life has been in the ascendancy since 1931.

Hence, it is our agreed view that the contingency of sudden Japanese attack in the very near future is sufficiently great to justify certain extraordinary, immediate steps. [Separate action, not part of this SNIE but agreed upon by the entities preparing this Estimate: that we recommend to the senior operational officers of our respective services and agencies (1) that they concert in immediately sending out an Executive Summary of this SNIE-by FLASH precedence, via secure US military channels-to the commands in the Philippines and the Hawaii; (2) that they include in that cable a strongly worded, unambiguous statement that makes it clear to its recipients that this is not just another Washington alert, but one substantially more pronounced and urgent; (3) that they unite in directing our Pacific commands to report back by immediate cable what specific, coordinated alert steps they have taken in response to these newest directives; and (4) that a suitably sanitized version of this SNIE's degree of alarm be immediately cabled to appropriate allied liaison in Europe and the Pacific.]

### **The December 1941 "SNIE" in Retrospect**

The first consideration is of course that no such Estimate was in fact ever produced. Our "SNIE" is a wholly theoretical example of what might have been, and what might have changed history, had two mandatory prerequisites obtained at the time:

- That the institution and the processes of the National Intelligence Estimate system had been in operation in 1941.
- And, candidly speaking, that such processes in 1941 had been better-in terms of message, presentation, and impact-than many NIEs produced in the recent past and now, a half century later: that is, a World War, a Korean War, a Vietnam War, many small wars and a Cold War later. That

recent and present Estimates sometimes are not doing worlds better in affecting the decisions of top policymakers, five decades after Pearl Harbor, is testimony to the fact that strengthening the effective production of Estimates-and of policymakers' effective consumption of Estimates-remains a central, constant, ongoing necessity for all officers involved in these endeavors.

Whatever the case, the above 1941 "SNIE" is not an idealized "what could have been written" document, but one that realistically reflects the context and knowledge at hand as of late 1941.

- Our SNIE purposely does not clearly predict or "call" the attack on Pearl Harbor. A full version of the Key Judgments' majority view would have spelled out the many pieces of evidence and inference which had led most of the supposed entities preparing the SNIE to judge that an imminent Japanese attack on US targets in Hawaii and the Philippines was unlikely.
- Furthermore, the full Key Judgments and the full text of the SNIE would have given its readers a fairly good sense of the "noise" and "chaff present: i.e., the existence of a fairly large body of reporting information, but with the nuggets of intelligence indistinct amid the mass of somewhat ambiguous indicators.
- Nonetheless, the alarming items portrayed in the SNIE's "minority view" are not idealized or fictitious: to the contrary, every one of the items so listed was actually known at the time by various US officers. The problem was, simply, that no mechanism existed whereby these many bits of off-chance information could be shared, put together, analyzed, and quickly brought to the attention of top policymakers.

### **Negative Factors Present in 1941**

Why was much better national estimating not done in 1941? Many significant negative factors at hand prevented this. Our purpose in examining them now is not only to understand more clearly

why the Pearl Harbor disaster did happen, but, more important, to see in that experience those factors in different, newer guises that have since reoccurred and that can still harm effective US national estimating. In the case of late 1941, the principal hazards present were these:

1. First and foremost, ingrained considerations of bureaucratic turf prevailed among the US Government's various entities, and had long done so. The many significant off-chance bits of the puzzle (the items enumerated above in the SNIE's minority views) were scattered around and among these many entities and were never shared, brought together, and assessed. Tragedy ensued because there was no mechanism to collect and cooperatively examine every scrap of pertinent all-source intelligence. Worse still, there was little will to do so.

- Earlier efforts to create the rudiments of a collective assessment system had met sharp resistance on many sides. One example of this attitude was the view expressed by the Army's G-2, Brig. Gen. Sherman Miles, who on April 1941 had written his Chief of Staff, Gen. George C. Marshall, that William Donovan's recommendation that President Roosevelt create a new central intelligence authority would, "from the point of view of the War Department-appear to be very disadvantageous, if not calamitous."<sup>3</sup>
- During 1941, there had been many bitter splits within the top reaches of the Navy. The Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) and the Office of Navy Communications were often at loggerheads. Later in 1941, new and even more serious splits developed between ONI and Navy Plans-the latter insisting on monopolizing the making of such Estimates as were produced in the Navy at the time, even though more expert capabilities to do so resided in ONI.
- Responsibilities for intelligence were divided at the time. No one looked at the total situation: the Army watched the Imperial Japanese Army; the Navy watched the Imperial Navy.
- There was a marked lack of coordination between Washington and the military commanders

at Pearl Harbor. For example, for four months in 1941 (up until late November), Washington shared no Purple MAGIC intercepts with Pearl Harbor's Navy Commander, Adm. Husband E. Kimmel. Also, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) mistakenly thought that Kimmel had the capability to process and break such traffic in Hawaii.

- The Army's commander in Hawaii, Gen. Walter C. Short, was not cleared for MAGIC, even though there was a MAGIC-related monitoring station at Fort Shafter under his command. Furthermore, his relatively new G-2 had no previous intelligence experience.
  - There was poor coordination between the commands of Kimmel and Short. For example, neither knew just what degree of alert the other's forces were on.
  - At the very last moment, Sunday morning (Washington time), 7 December, top Washington policymakers decided to send an explicit, extraordinary warning to Hawaii. But the Army officer given the task of sending out that alert, upon learning that the Army's own circuits were down, chose to send the cable via Western Union, rather than through Navy circuits-which were up at the time and could have effected immediate and secure delivery.
  - The examples of turf battles mentioned above reflected pullings and haulings which existed more broadly throughout the armed services at the time. Such practice continued to impede effective cooperation in many cases after Pearl Harbor and at times throughout World War II.
2. Operations officers and intelligence officers tended to live in two separate worlds-as they have sometimes continued to do since that time. Examples prior to Pearl Harbor:
- Washington did not clue Kimmel and Short that in late 1941 it was basing much of its Pacific area strategy on confidence in deterrence: that is, the US was planning to build up a massive B-17 strength in the Philippines, in the belief that this

would deter the Japanese from going to war with the US. Unknown to Washington, unfortunately, the Japanese tended to discount the capabilities of the B-17 at the time, because of reports the Germans had given Tokyo of the rather limited performance the early models of that aircraft had displayed in certain RAF bombing raids over Europe. Hence, the mistaken confidence in deterrence that existed among US war planners would have doubtless dulled their receptivity to the degree of alarm expressed in our 4 December 1941 "SNIE." In any event, initial Japanese air attacks on the Philippines destroyed much of our B-17 strength there, even though those attacks occurred hours after Gen. MacArthur had been informed of the surprise disaster at Pearl Harbor.

- Beginning in 1930, the office of the CNO did not pass on to ONI the information it gained from Japanese naval exercises. And in one instance, the CNO (Adm. Charles F. Hughes) instructed the Director of Naval Communications to show the intercepted Japanese exercise messages only to him (the CNO), because he "thought he could not trust his director of naval intelligence."<sup>4</sup>
- A draft report prepared by ONI on 1 December 1941-which pointed out the possibility of Japanese attacks in Southeast Asia, Guam, the Philippines, Wake Island, and Hawaii was never published because the Navy's War Plans Division demanded changes in that document that were unacceptable to its ONI authors.
- On the morning of 7 December 1941, the chief of ONI's Far East Section (CDR Arthur H. McCollum) thought that the US Pacific Fleet was at sea, rather than at anchor in Pearl Harbor.<sup>5</sup>
- Nor, contrary to our "SNIE," was there any precedent for intelligence officers to include in their reports or Estimates any candid items (concerning US capabilities or alertness) which, however accurate and perceptive, might be uncongenial to policymakers' sensibilities.

• In Washington, duty in intelligence had not been held in high regard. Representative comments:

- Laurence F. Safford (Cdr., USN, who in December 1941 had been chief of the security section of Naval Communications): "At the time, Naval Intelligence was the dumping ground of the Navy, and assignment to intelligence duties was generally considered the kiss of death."<sup>6</sup>
- John M. Thomason (Col. USMC, who at the time of Pearl Harbor headed ONI's Latin American desk): "[ONI was] a haven for the ignorant and well connected."<sup>7</sup>
- President Roosevelt spoke of Army attaches as "doughheads . . . estimable socially acceptable gentlemen" who did not know "the essentials of intelligence work."<sup>8</sup>

3. In Japan, our extremely able ambassador, Joseph C. Grew, was not cleared for MAGIC traffic. His naval attache was a mere lieutenant commander. All foreigners there, moreover, official and private, were severely limited in their access to Japanese life; and the foreign press corps there was fairly inexperienced-at least as contrasted with the extraordinarily capable press corps at the time in Europe.

4. Prior warnings Washington had sent to commanders in the Pacific had a debilitating "cry wolf" effect.

- Washington had sent out a series of alerts during 1941, all rather vaguely worded. On 27 November Washington cabled another warning, the intent of which was to express more concern than previously, but this alert apparently did not ring serious alarm bells in the consciousness of the commands of Kimmel and Short.
- Testifying in 1944 to a Congressional investigating body, General Short stated that the effect of the multiple alerts received in 1941 had been to "weaken the probability of an immediate war between the United States and Japan."<sup>9</sup>

- Just a week before our "SNIE" of 4 December, a prescient intelligence officer, Col. Rufus S. Bratton, Chief of the Far East Section of Army Intelligence, had prepared an Estimate based on MAGIC materials that predicted that Japanese-US hostilities would break out on 30 November. When war did not occur on the 30th, he was discredited. This failure of hostilities to break out as he had predicted would have diminished Washington policymakers' receptivity to sharp new alarms, such as those sounded in our "SNIE" of 4 December.
5. Before 7 December, there was a predisposition in the Army command at Pearl Harbor to view the Japanese threat there as one that would probably arise primarily from sabotage, not air attack. Such alerts as Washington gave Hawaii during 1941 had to pass through that psychological filter, as our 4 December "SNIE" would have had to. It was fear of sabotage that led General Short to order that Army Air Corps aircraft be lined up, in a row, on Hawaii's airfields—a move that assisted a Japanese attack that came from other quarters.
6. The prevailing judgment before 7 December in top US military circles in Hawaii (with the exception of the views of Maj. Gen. Martin and Rear Adm. Bellinger, cited above in our "SNIE,") was that the chances of a Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbor were "negligible" and "very remote."
- The Navy's War Plans Officer at Pearl Harbor (Captain Charles H. McMorris) had categorically assured Admiral Kimmel that there would "never" be an air attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>10</sup>
  - Such judgments rested heavily, in turn, on a fairly widely held view at the time that Pearl Harbor's waters were too shallow to permit the Japanese to launch successful aerial torpedo attacks. The US did not have such a capability; therefore, the Japanese did not. It is noteworthy (1) that Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox had been so impressed with Britain's successful air attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto (1940) that he alerted Secretary of War Henry Stimson to the lessons this might have for American defenses; and (2) that Admiral Kimmel had requested anti-torpedo nets for Pearl Harbor, but had been turned down by CNO Harold Stark, who informed him (15 February 1941) that such nets were not necessary because Pearl Harbor's waters, unlike those at Taranto, were too shallow.<sup>11</sup>
7. In Washington, there was little tradition for assessing foreign powers' intentions. The accepted business of intelligence was only to rack up foreign powers' capabilities. Such emphases still obtained in some significant quarters nine years after Pearl Harbor, five years that is, after the end of World War II, when in 1950 the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), General Walter Bedell Smith, had to bring his considerable clout to bear to get all the participants in the just-formed National Intelligence Estimates system to begin preparing Estimates that examined foreign powers' intentions as well as capabilities.<sup>12</sup>
8. Another hazard that the new and untested estimative art form, the SNIE or the NIE, would have faced in 1941 would have been its lack of status, the absence of an established track record of fairly accurate estimating, one that would have gained that product the respect of and hence acceptance by senior US policymakers.
9. Ironically, the existence of MAGIC reporting created certain hazards among its readers in 1941.
- Because certain privileged senior policymakers in Washington had seen this greatest-of-all intelligence, there was a natural tendency among them to feel that they could now confidently make their own SNIEs. In fact, these busy and harassed senior officers had seen only a portion of the total take from intercepted Japanese traffic, and little of such other relevant collateral intelligence as existed at the time.
  - Concentration on what appeared to be the highest Japanese code and cipher systems led Army and Navy cryptographers to give low priority to the processing of traffic to and from Tokyo and its consulate in Honolulu, the substance of which traffic—had more of it been seen—would definitely have raised the degree of awareness that Oahu was a possible target for air attack.

10. Another significant hazard was the fact that some experts already enjoying high reputations among senior US policymakers were making certain judgments at this same time (late 1941) notably different in tone from those of our "SNIE." One key example was this special assessment prepared on 27 November 1941 by Stanley Hornbeck, one of the State Department's chief East Asia experts:

In the opinion of the undersigned, the Japanese Government does not desire or expect to have forthwith armed conflict with the United States... So far as relations directly between the United States and Japan are concerned there is less reason today than there was a week ago for the United States to be apprehensive lest Japan make "war" on this country.

Were it a matter of placing bets, the undersigned would give odds of five to one that the United States and Japan will not be at "war" on or before 15 December; would wager three to one that the United States and Japan will not be at "war" on or before the 15 January (i.e., seven weeks from now); would wager even money that the United States and Japan will not be at "war" on or before 1 March (a date more than 90 days from now) . . . Stated briefly, the undersigned does not believe that this country is now on the immediate verge of "war" in the Pacific."<sup>13</sup>

11. Japan's skillful diplomatic deception at the time would have also dulled receptivity to our "SNIE's" somewhat alarmist tone. Certain of the "SNIE's" principal customers in Washington would almost certainly have pointed to the presence in Washington at the time of the two special Japanese peace emissaries, Ambassador (formerly Admiral) Kichisaburo Nomura and Saburu Kurusu, both senior officials of excellent reputation; and they would doubtless have emphasized that (the unwitting) Admiral Nomura had long been an outspoken pro-US advocate within Japanese leadership debates.

12. Most such indicators of possible Japanese attack as existed at the time pointed toward

Southeast Asia. The idea of Hawaii as a Japanese target would have been especially difficult to sell.

13. There also was the hazard of mirror-imaging. Many US officials at the time were guilty of an ever-present myopia among intelligence estimators: the assumption that the Japanese would be guided by what we consider to be rational behavior. As expressed by Brinkley and Hull:

US personnel reasoned that the United States had far greater military, economic and industrial strength than Japan; thus the Japanese would recognize that they could not win a war against this country. In a sense, US analysts perceived a Japanese attack as irrational."<sup>14</sup>

14. But the greatest hazard by far to a concerned SNIE of early December 1941 would have been the profound, widely held indifference or disdain with which many American experts viewed the Japanese and their capabilities. Examples:

- As of 1931, the year in which Japan began its sudden takeover of Manchuria, the Far East section of ONI consisted of one officer and one secretary.<sup>15</sup>
- Before late 1941, certain accurate warnings had been sent to Washington, D.C., from officers in East Asia concerning unique technical advances by the Japanese. These related to their Zero fighting plane, their 24-inch oxygen-propelled torpedoes, and their rearming of Mogami-class cruisers with 8-inch guns. These reports were deep-sixed at Navy Headquarters as being beyond Japanese capabilities. Furthermore, ONI regularly published and distributed information throughout the fleet on the strength and location of German naval units-but not on those of the Japanese.<sup>16</sup>
- Admiral Kimmel, 1946: I never thought those little yellow sons of bitches could pull off such an attack, so far from home.<sup>17</sup>
- US Naval Institute Proceedings, March/June 1941: The Japanese are, by nature, imitators and

lack originality. This blend of characteristics makes them conscious of their failings, and they seek to hide them from the world by every means in their power, meanwhile dressing their windows with extravagant and unsubstantial claims . . . They copy foreign aircraft but there is no doubt Japan stands lowest in air power on the list of great powers (even behind the Italians!).<sup>18</sup>

- William D. Puleston (Captain, USN; a former director of ONI), May, 1941: The greatest danger from Japan, a surprise attack on the unguarded Pacific Fleet, lying at anchor in San Pedro Harbor, under peacetime conditions, has been averted. The Pacific Fleet is one of the strongest bases in the world. Pearl Harbor was practically on a war footing and was under a war regime. There will be no American Port Arthur.<sup>19</sup>
- Fletcher Pratt (one of the most distinguished experts at the time on naval warfare), 1939: Every observer concurs in the opinion that the Japanese are daring but incompetent aviators; hardly any two agree on the reason. Four main theories have been advanced, explaining it on medical, religious, psychological, and educational grounds.

According to the first postulate, the Japanese as a race have defects of the tube of the inner ear, just as they are generally myopic. This gives them a defective sense of balance, the one physical sense in which an aviator is not permitted to be deficient.

The second explanation places the blame on Bushido and the Japanese code that the individual life is valueless. Therefore, when the plane gets into a spin or some other trouble, they are apt to fold their hands across their stomachs and die cheerfully for the glory of the empire, where Westerners, with a keener sense of personal existence, make every effort to get the plane out of trouble, or bail out at the last minute. This explanation has been advanced by several aviation instructors who have been in Japan.

The psychological theory points out that the Japanese, even more than the Germans, are a people of combination. "Nothing is much stupider than one Japanese, and nothing much brighter than two." But the aviator is peculiarly alone, and the Japanese, poor individualists, are thus poor aviators.

Finally, the educational explanation points out that Japanese children receive fewer mechanical toys and less mechanical training than those of any other race.<sup>20</sup>

15. The most important lesson for us concerning these hazards of 1941 is the fact that such dangers are by no means unique to the Pearl Harbor setting, but have been present in varying form in virtually every subsequent estimative situation, and will continue to be so. Intelligence evidence is almost always incomplete, ambiguous, and beset by hazards. Hence, the business of analysis and estimating is more an art than a science-and the skills required of the estimators are in large part a matter of experience and "feel," as well as of preparing, crafting, and marketing their Estimates to policymaking consumers in the most professionally effective way as possible.

### Current Relevance of the 1941 SNIE

Despite the many severe hazards discussed above that prevented effective national estimating in the case of Pearl Harbor, such an estimate would have embodied numerous positive attributes, whatever the consequent actions-or inaction-of its senior policymaking consumers. Such positive attributes are worth careful notice, not so much for their relevance to 1941, as for their instructive guidance for national estimating today. The principal positive attributes of our theoretical SNIE, the principal lessons for us as estimators a half-century later, are briefly stated below.

*All-source intelligence should be fully shared, overriding the innate bureaucratic proclivity to accord turf protection the highest priority. As we have seen, the failure of competing US elements to cooperate in*

1941 played a central role in helping produce tragedy. Our theoretical SNIE, by contrast, reflected the benefits of sharing all available evidence. Thereafter, as we have also seen, cooperativeness in sharing and analyzing available all-source intelligence did not begin to occur in a major way at the national level until 1950, almost a decade after the terrible lesson of Pearl Harbor. Even worse, there have been occasions since 1950 where a thorough examination of the national intelligence question at hand has been damaged by this or that office/officer having held out on key information. These miscreants can be have been, and still remain-intelligence collectors, intelligence analysts, intelligence managers, or policymakers at various levels of rank and responsibility, up to and including senior White House figures.

*Clarity is a virtue.* Our "SNIE" tried to express its messages fairly clearly. There have since been many unfortunate occasions where the facts and judgments encased in National Estimates passed up the line have indeed been cloudy. Such texts must heed the traditional guidance of US Navy communications: keep it clear, brief, and unequivocal.

By all means, *do not water down the message.* Whether or not the consumers of the theoretical SNIE had agreed with its various judgments, they would have had little difficulty in discerning the purport of-and the differences between-the majority and minority views expressed in that Estimate. By contrast, two of the primary criticisms of National Estimates over the years, 1950 to today, have been that, like Charlie Brown, they are sometimes wishy-washy, and that they betray too many wounds inflicted by the coordination process. It is incumbent on an Estimate's producers, and especially upon that project's chairperson, to ensure that dissenting or differing judgments are presented sharply and unambiguously. Split decisions, clearly stated, are worth far more to policymaking consumers than is coordinated mush.

*Distinguish between what is fact and what is judgment.* Our "SNIE" tries to distinguish between that which is evidence and that which is inference. This is a requirement often sinned against in estimative

practice. Consumers must be told clearly which is which-and just what evidence lies behind the judgments made.

*Venture out courageously beyond evidence.* The theoretical SNIE of December 1941 did bravely offer certain estimative, future-tense judgments. There is always a marked hesitance among analysts to go beyond empirical evidence. Such caution is admirable, but what estimators are paid for is to discern probable trends and contingent outcomes. This both distinguishes Estimates from analysis, and provides the policymakers added wisdom.

*A good Estimate must reflect knowledge of the operational world.* Our theoretical SNIE did so, indicating for example certain lessons that could be drawn from earlier US and Japanese naval exercises (though in fact US operational offices at the time did not share much of such information with the US Government's intelligence officers). To this day, policymaking officers have withheld relevant data from their intelligence colleagues-justifying a lament frequently heard from the latter than it is sometimes easier to find out what is going on in the Red world than it is in the Blue.

*A good estimate must be candid.* The 1941 "SNIE" did not pussyfoot in pointing out that certain third parties at the time, Japanese and British, believed that US alertness and effectiveness were deficient. It is not the business of National Estimates to pass judgment on US policy. But it is the responsibility of an Estimate to state candidly how US capabilities and conduct are viewed by the primary actors in a given dynamic situation, whether or not such candor on the part of the estimators necessarily flatters existing US policies, commitments, and progress.

*Good estimators do not merely "estimate," but they offer operational officers suggestions relevant to the carrying out of policy.* Note that the entities preparing our "SNIE" offered some specific follow-through recommendations to their operational superiors. These recommendations did not treat the substance of policy, but they did represent certain extraordinary procedural steps which the producers of the

estimate felt the crisis situation called for. Again, without in any way "making policy," today's officers constructing an estimate must not settle for a text that merely wrings its hands about this or that possible threat. A good estimate also provides the decisionmakers certain "handles" to assist them in their conduct of policy—a contribution that senior officers in administration after administration have asked of estimators over the years.

In situations of considerable estimative uncertainty, *the off-chance possibilities must be clearly flagged* for the policymakers in situations where an actual such future would have momentous consequences for US security interests. In our theoretical SNIE its producers took pains to recommend certain immediate follow-up steps, even though the majority estimative view expressed in the Estimate (its paragraph 2) would not in itself have justified such a degree of alarm. The overriding need now, as then, is that policymakers must make contingency plans for a range of possible developments, not just for what their estimators—or they themselves—believe is the most probable future. Here National Estimates can make one of their most valuable contributions to the decisionmakers: painting in—and reducing—the most likely range of possible future developments for which a policymaker must be prepared.

*Avoid mirror-imaging.* What makes sense to you and *me* is not the determining factor of what *they* will do. Our theoretical SNIE told its consumers explicitly that the Japanese had their own thought processes—which were not necessarily the same as ours. Over the years, the sin of mirror-imaging has been one of the most common errors perpetrated by estimators: the assumption that "it would not make sense" for actor X to do Y, oblivious to the fact that the actor's heritage, values, and thinking may be far different from ours.

Finally, *policymaking consumers with a legitimate need to know must get the Estimate, and they must get it in time to act on whatever contribution it contains.* Note that in our theoretical 4 December, the authors of the "SNIE" appreciated that time was of the essence. Note also that those estimators

realized that our allies should know our degree of alarm. There have been occasions since that time where error, oversight, or bureaucratic secrecy have denied a legitimate policymaker badly needed intelligence, or have given that officer the word too late to be ground into decisionmaking.

## NOTES

1. This SNIE, the most recent of several, is being immediately hand carried (in its present, rough form) directly to the President; the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy; the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and the Navy; and the Military Adviser to the President. This Estimate has been coordinated by the intelligence units of State, War, Navy, the FBI, and Colonel Donovan's newly formed office of the Coordinator of Information. The all-source evidence, methodology, reasoning, and degree of confidence behind these Key Judgments are spelled out in more detail in the body of this SNIE, below, and in its technical annexes.
2. (For readers some decades after Pearl Harbor). Edwin T. Layton (Rear Admiral, USN, Ret.), with Roger Pineau and John Costello, *And I Was There: Pearl Harbor and Midway—Breaking the Secrets* (New York: William Morrow, 1985), pp. 18, 70-71, citing *Warera Moshi Tatakawba (When We Fight)*, by Shinsaku Hirata (1933): "During an American fleet problem off Hawaii some years ago, a carrier force sent flights of planes to attack after they had penetrated to seventy or eighty miles off Hawaii. Aided by rain squalls, these planes were able to surprise the defenders and carry out an effective bombardment of Pearl Harbor, theoretically destroying that major naval base."
3. Thomas F. Troy, *Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency* (Washington, DC., Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1981), pp. 42 and 486, citing Memorandum, Miles to Marshall, "Coordination for the Intelligence Agencies of the Government," Records of the Army Staff, Army Intelligence Decimal File, Record Group 319

- (Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD.), file 310.11. A government-wide Joint Intelligence Committee had been approved in September-October 1941 and had met once-amid considerable rancor-before 7 December, but it did not begin actually to function until two days after Pearl Harbor. Col. Donovan's budget request for that Committee's 1942 research and analysis, incidentally, was \$800,000.
4. Layton, pp. 36 and 530, citing National Archives of the US (Record Group 457, Modern Military Branch, Military Archives Division) SRH histories. SRH 305: Laurence F. Safford, "History of Radio Intelligence: The Undeclared War," 15 November 1943, 6. Layton (as a Lieutenant Commander and Commander) was fleet intelligence officer at Pearl Harbor for Admirals Kimmel and Nimitz (including the Battle of Midway), and at Nimitz' invitation was present as an honored guest at the signing of the Japanese surrender, 3 September 1945, aboard the USS Missouri.
  5. Ladislas Farago, *The Broken Seal: The Story of "Operation Magic" and the Pearl Harbor Disaster* (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 339. Farago had been a senior ONI officer.
  6. Gordon W. Prange, Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), p. 288, citing statement to historian Harry Elmer Barnes, 7 November 1967. Prange was for many years a member of General MacArthur's intelligence staff.
  7. Farago, p. 102.
  8. Farago, p. 204.
  9. Layton, p. 159.
  10. Farago, pp. 360-361.
  11. Layton, p. 74.
  12. General Smith had been General Eisenhower's wartime Chief of Staff. Named DCI by President Truman in 1950 to invigorate US intelligence following its failure to call the North Korean attack on the South Korea, "Beedle" Smith is credited by many observers as having been the most effective Director of Central Intelligence to date.
  13. David A. Brinkley and Andrew W. Hull, *Estimative Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Defense Intelligence School, August 1979), p. 35, citing Farago, pp. 284-285.
  14. Brinkley, p. 42.
  15. Captain Ellis M. Zacharias (USN, expert on Japan and at one time Deputy Director of ONI), *Secret Missions: The Story of an Intelligence Officer* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), p. 120.
  16. Howard V. Young, Jr., "Racial Attitudes and the US Navy's Unpreparedness for War with Japan," in *New Aspects of Naval History: Selected Papers from the 5th Naval History Symposium*, ed. Department of History, US Naval Academy. (Annapolis, Md: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1985), pp. 178-179.
  17. Prange, *Pearl Harbor*, p. 460, citing statement made to Pearl Harbor inquiry counsel, Edward P. Morgan.
  18. Young, p. 180, citing "Japan's Air Strength," *Proceedings* (June 1941), p. 880.
  19. Young, p. 180, citing *Armed Forces of the Pacific* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1941), pp. 116-118.
  20. Ernest R. May, ed. *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before Two World Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 477, citing David Kahn, "The United States Views Germany and Japan in 1941." Pratt's last point would be news to Sony and Toyota.