

PROFESSIONAL READING: Books Briefly Noted

Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision, by Roberta Wohlstetter, Stanford, 1962.

This is one of the most thorough analytical studies of the events leading up to any war and will probably become *the* book on the controversial question of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. The author, with commendable objectivity, carefully documents from open source material an incredibly complicated story and enables even a casual reader to understand the workings and difficulties of pre-war intelligence operations. Nearly sixty pages of the book are devoted to MAGIC, the name applied to the process by which United States experts decoded Japanese secret diplomatic messages. In the clearest exposition of the subject which has yet been published, Mrs. Wohlstetter develops the thesis that the necessity for extreme secrecy in the use of MAGIC often made it impossible for proper evaluations to be made of the material. By getting at the publicly available facts, piece by piece, and by analyzing them and arriving at logical conclusions, the author has become the leading authority on Pearl Harbor. *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* is without doubt the best published treatment of this highly controversial incident in American History.

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But Not in Shame, by John Toland, Random House, New York, 1961.

The title of this book is taken from General Wainwright's last message to President Roosevelt, the first paragraph of which reads:

With broken heart and head bowed in sadness *but not in shame*, I report to your excellency that today I must arrange terms for the surrender of the fortified islands of Manila Bay.

It is the extraordinary story of the first six months of the war with Japan and is based primarily on interviews by the author with hundreds of surviving participants in those stirring events. Of particular interest to Agency personnel is the vital role played by cryptanalysis in containing and hurling back the Japanese advance. Japanese leaders, prior to the Coral Sea operation in May 1942, still did not have the slightest suspicion that the "Purple" code had been broken months before by a team of U.S. cryptanalysts and that, in consequence, Admiral Nimitz was aware of the impending attack on Port Moresby. Later in that month, decoded Japanese messages warned of the

impending Midway operation, referring, however, to the point of attack merely as "AF." Washington believed that "AF" referred to Oahu while Admiral Nimitz was convinced that "AF" meant Midway. Eventually, Midway was ordered to send a fake, uncoded message reporting the breakdown of the distillation plant there. Two days later, cryptanalysts in Pearl Harbor's "Black Chamber" decoded an intercepted Japanese dispatch which revealed that "AF" was low on fresh water. With the certain knowledge that Midway was Yamamoto's target, the United States was able to inflict a crushing defeat on the Japanese Navy and to conclude with a decisive victory the first six months of the Pacific War.

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The Secret War, by Sanche de Gramont, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1962.

The author's credentials, at least, are impressive: winner of a Pulitzer Prize in 1961; student at Yale, Columbia and the Sorbonne; service with the French Army in Algeria; reporter for the Worcester *Telegram* and later for Agence France Presse as well as the Associated Press; and now a foreign correspondent, based in Paris, for the New York *Herald Tribune*. The story he tells is, essentially, a story of the spy trade and is told with candor, perspicacity and reasonable precision. Nearly half the book is devoted to individuals—Judy Copland, Harry Gold, Klaus Fuchs, Rudolf Abel, Martin and Mitchell and Burgess and Maclean, George Blake, the Krogers along with many others—but he has not neglected the organizations for which they work. The book reveals, theoretically, some of the inner working of CIA, the KGB (Committee for State Security in the USSR), NSA, and the GRU (Overseas Intelligence Branch of the Red Army). The author discusses, with equal objectivity, the faults and merits of these organizations, their successes and failures, their philosophies and operations. One might be surprised to learn that the NSA building ("a monument to planned intelligence") possesses the longest unobstructed corridor in the world—980 feet long and 560 feet wide, that it is protected by four gatehouses manned by guards armed with machine guns, that its battery of computers includes the new Whirlwind which is said to be able to break any code, and that wastebaskets are provided with paper linings, specially marked for each office, which are stapled at the end of the day and stored for a specific period to ensure that nothing has been discarded by mistake. One may smile, but, even allowing for certain lapses, the book is interesting and informative, whatever doubts one may entertain about the author's reliability after reading his account of NSA.

CIA—The Inside Story, by Andrew Tully, William Harrow and Company, New York, 1962.

To the uninitiated—and their number is legion—the inner workings of CIA are confused, impenetrable and baffling. Even to those who have at least some knowledge of the operations of other government agencies, CIA and its doings remain enigmatic—and appropriately so, for the collection, analysis and distribution of intelligence must, by its very nature, be cloaked in secrecy and mystery. *CIA—The Inside Story* pulls aside the cloak a trifle, revealing its history, its methods, its trials and tribulations, and the problems which it encounters both at home and abroad. It reveals the role of the agency in such activities as ousting Arbenz from Guatemala, in engineering the coup against Mossadegh in Iran, in assisting in the capture of Abel, and, as a climax, in the debacle of the Cuban invasion of 1961. Well written and generally objective, this book is informative and well worth the time of anyone who is interested in the more devious aspects of present day political activities. It indicates, too, how far the U.S. has come in the business of espionage from the days when Mr. Stimson dissolved the State Department's code breakers' office because "gentlemen don't read other people's mail."

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Now It Can Be Told, by Leslie R. Groves, Harper and Row, New York, 1962.

"Never in history has anyone embarking on an important undertaking had so little certainty about how to proceed as we had then." Thus does General Groves describe the situation in the early days of the Manhattan Project. In this book he reveals the story—based on documents, most of which have hitherto been available only to him—of Oak Ridge, the intelligence search for atomic information in Europe, the negotiations with the British and the Belgians for the exchange of information and raw material, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and eventually the transition to peacetime management. In answer to the question whether it is worthwhile, after nearly twenty years, to study the Manhattan Project in detail, General Groves explains his reasons for this account: to fill in the gaps still existing in the public understanding of the project; to emphasize the cohesive entity that was the project—a major factor in its success; and, finally, to record the lessons learned. This was the first of the "Special Projects," and as he himself states: "While ours was the first large organization of its kind, it surely will not be the last. For this reason alone, the story of the Manhattan Project is worth telling." In the current development of

our complex weapon systems, of course, the vertical organization approach is standard; Polaris, for example, has its Special Projects Office of the Bureau of Naval Weapons. Those now concerned with the management of such programs will recognize themselves and their problems in this book and will find the reading of it a rewarding experience.

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Thinking About the Unthinkable, by Herman Kahn, Horizon Press, New York, 1962.

The *Unthinkable* of the title is, of course, thermonuclear war which was the title of another book by the same author in 1960. Mr. Kahn's earlier book elicited extravagant and contradictory comments. Thomas C. Schelling, Professor of Economics at Harvard, called the author "the most exciting military strategist in the country," while James R. Newman, editor of *World of Mathematics*, said: ". . . no one could write like this; no one could think like this . . ." and he called *On Thermonuclear War* an "evil and tenebrous book, with its loose-lipped pieties and its hayfoot-strawfoot logic . . . its bloodthirsty irrationality." Mr. Kahn's current book re-presents much of the same sort of thing that was presented in *On Thermonuclear War*, and it is doubtful that his new defenses of his concepts or the methods of analysis will convince the doubters—or disappoint his supporters. His thesis is that the possibility of thermonuclear war must be faced boldly and that such a war must be studied intensely—how to prevent it, what to do if it occurs. He tends, however, to ignore political factors, and, quite obviously, the use of what he calls "doomsday machines" could invalidate most of his theories. Because of the unknowns and the intangibles, war is an art, not a science, and perhaps one of the major weaknesses of this book is the tendency of the author to deal with war as with a mathematical equation. He has, however, focused attention upon the problems of thermonuclear war, and his conclusions are provocative and interesting even if they must be balanced by a consideration of political factors, the intangibles of human nature and the lessons of experience.

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Strike in the West, by James Daniel and John G. Hubbell, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1963.

The title of this timely book on the actions of the United States in regard to Cuba is derived from the Soviet policy of fixing the attention of the world on affairs in the East, i.e., Berlin, while at the same time

preparing to strike in the West. The authors present for the first time a detailed account of the recent missile crisis that brought the world to the brink of war. The facts which are marshalled here may not be new to the reader, but the arrangement constitutes a chilling pattern that may cause wonder and alarm at the inability of the government, served by a world-wide intelligence-gathering system, to interpret correctly the growing mass of evidence of Soviet activities. Attention is given to the confusing lack of agreement on what constitutes offensive as opposed to defensive weapons. There is also an interesting reconstruction of White House meetings on how to meet the threat—by an invasion which, it was estimated, might cost 5000 lives; by a surprise air attack to eliminate the missile bases; or by a blockade which might be followed, if necessary, by more drastic action. For some of us here, obviously, this book will have a heightened interest.