Cong. Hearing on P.H. re Miles' State-ment

WDGSS-14

5 December 1945

SUBJECT: Congressional Hearing on Pearl Harbor

TO: Chief, Army Security Agency

1. According to a report appearing in the Washington Evening Star for 1 December 1945, at the Joint Congressional Hearing on Pearl Harbor Major General Miles is quoted as having made the following explanation for the failure on the part of the War Department to send to General Short a certain vital piece of information (Japanese order of 1 December 1941 to destroy codes):

> "General Miles replied that the main reason was 'the code experts said the Navy's code was much more secure than ours and so we preferred for messages to go out through the Navy.'"

2. This is the first time I, or any of my associates with whom I have consulted, have ever heard such an allegation of insecurity of the Army's principal cryptographic system in use between the War Department and the Overseas Departments. As a matter of fact,

a. the Army's cryptographic machine, Converter M-134A, was in use for these communications from 1938 to and through the date of the Pearl Harbor attack;

b. the security of that machine was at least equal to that of Converter M-134C (Sigaba) which replaced it;

c. the security of the M-134A was at the very least as great as, and probably far greater than, that of the machine the Navy was using at that time (the HCM); and finally,

d. the Navy adopted an Army cryptographic invention when it placed its original development contract with the Teletype Corporation for the construction of the machine which later became known as the FCM (Sigaba).

3. The Hawaiian, Philippine and Panama Canal Departments each had at least two Converters M-134A in everyday use in 1941, since

they were sent and placed in service in 1933; they were in continuous use between the War Department and those Departments from 1938 to the latter part of 1941, and rendered good service. They were then replaced by a more sturdy, a more rapid, a more reliable machine - but not a more secure one.

4. It is possible that what General Miles had in mind, but did not convey too clearly is that the Navy at that time allowed only commissioned officers to serve as cryptographers, and that therefore, the chances for inadvertent leakage of highly secret information were less than might, perhaps, be the case in the Army, which did not have such a restriction. If this is what he intended to convey, then in my opinion an opportunity for clarification should be made, in order that an impression so derogatory to Army cryptographic achievements, and so widely publicized, may be corrected.

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