Subject: Controversy with reference to whether the President and Secretary of State kept the Commander of the Army and Navy forces at Honolulu informed adequately with regard to information they received concerning possible attack.

One of the most unpleasant and for many people disorienting and disconcerting controversies that has arisen out of the events of the last war is the one surrounding the circumstances of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. I was not in Washington at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor. I was at my post in Cuba and my wife and I were lunching with Dr. and Mrs. Theodore Johnson, very good friends of ours, Cubans, in Havana. A few days after the attack I had to fly to Washington on business. I cannot speak, therefore, out of first-hand knowledge of what was actually done by the President and the Secretary of State and by the chiefs of staff in Washington in keeping the commanders of our army and naval forces in Honolulu informed. I had, however, been making rather frequent trips to Washington and always spent a good deal of time with Mr. Hull. He kept me, during these conversations, fully informed concerning the conversations he was having with the two Japanese negotiators who had been there for weeks talking with him (insert here the names of these two Japanese negotiators). The Secretary, who was never a man of robust health, found these conversations extremely exhausting. He told me that he was carrying on all his conversations with the Japanese at his apartment in the evening. As Mr. Hull had long and hard days in the Department, he spoke frequently of how tired and worn out he was as the result of these long and drawn out and exceedingly difficult meetings with the Japanese in his home.

Mr. Hull has told, in his autobiography, the story of these conversations. There is nothing that I can add to what Mr. Hull has said except some personal observations which may be of interest in connection with the controversy which has arisen over this question as to whether the army and navy commanders at Honolulu were adequately informed...
of the information which the President and the Secretary and the chiefs of staff had. I do know, from conversations with Mr. Hull, that he specifically stated to me that the President and he were relaying, through either the President or the chiefs of staff, all the available information they had to Honolulu. The Secretary was much disturbed over the fact that the fleet was, with the exception of certain patrols, concentrating during the week-ends in Pearl Harbor. He spoke of it as a grave danger. Mr. Hull had no confidence whatever in the good faith of the two Japanese negotiators. He told me on several occasions that he had the definite impression that they were simply trying to draw out and prolong the conversations. He had in mind definitely the possibility of a surprise attack somewhere by the Japanese which would precipitate war and Pearl Harbor was one of the places which he had in mind.

The President was in close touch with this situation. He realized, perhaps better than anyone, as he really had all the information available from all sources and up to the moment, that a surprise attack somewhere would be made by the Japanese. The chiefs of staff were in constant touch with the President, as was Mr. Hull. All this I had from Mr. Hull directly at least two weeks before the attack took place.

Mr. Hull has described in his book the conversations which he had with the two Japanese negotiators in the Department the morning after the attack. His account is vivid enough but the account that he gave to me when I came up from Cuba to Washington a few days thereafter was one of the astonishing and most startling things as well as one of the most important things which ever came to me from the Secretary. Mr. Hull was capable of righteous anger. I have never seen him so angry and so vigorous in his speech as he was during the conversation in which he gave me these facts.
Anyone who really knew Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Hull realizes that they could not have had any information which was withheld from the commanders at Honolulu. While the President and Mr. Hull, as I've frequently said in these notes, were idealists, they were at the same time realists. They really abhored the idea of war but they recognized that war was an instrument of policy which certain countries would not hesitate to use, and certainly not the Germans nor the Japanese. No one ever tried harder to find a solution of our problems in the Far East than Mr. Hull did in his negotiations with the Japanese government. There were, of course, certain points from which he could not recede because had he done so it would have been a Japanese victory in control in the Far East without the Japanese ever having struck a blow. Aside, however, from the basic fundamental points on which we could make no concessions, Mr. Hull and the President were willing to negotiate and were willing to negotiate up to the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Japanese government knew for, I believe, at least a month before the actual attack on Pearl Harbor that there were certain points on which our government would not recede and it was then that they began to plan the attack which would provoke actual war. Those who are trying to disseminate, for whatever personal reasons they may have, a wrong impression as to the circumstances and events before the attack on Pearl Harbor are doing our country a great deal of harm and the more that is said and written will only prove that the Army and Navy commanders at Honolulu were adequately informed of all the information which we had. All the foregoing is preliminary to one observation which I can make. During this conversation several days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Mr. Hull told me of conversations which he had had with the President in which he informed him that he was sure that the Japanese negotiators were only stalling and that he feared anything might happen at any time. He said that the Pre-
sident was entirely in accord with his interpretation of the turn the conversations were taking. He said to me specifically that several days before the attack on Pearl Harbor the President had given instructions to the chiefs of staff that information should be sent to the commanders one of at Honolulu that an attack at any number of points might be imminent at any time and for them to be on the alert. Specifically he said that instructions had been sent that only a few vessels at any time should be in Pearl Harbor at any one time. There was to be no concentration of vessels in Pearl Harbor as this was a direct invitation to the Japanese to attack at that point. At the time that Mr. Hull had this conversation with me he had no idea, as no one else did, of the controversy which would arise with respect to the giving of information. He was merely recounting what had taken place and what had been done.

In view of the seriousness of the event it was inevitable that there should be an inquiry into what had happened. The inquiry which was carefully conducted, and to the Committee making it, was given all the information available, ended in censuring the Army commander and the Navy commander at Pearl Harbor for not taking adequate precautions to lessen the impact of an attack.

That inquiry did not settle the matter. The real controversy did not arise until after the war. It was natural that those who had been held responsible by the committee of inquiry for the tremendous destruction which took place should endeavor to clear their name. I could certainly not add anything to the great volume of comment there has been made in the last few years with regard to the responsibility for the fleet being concentrated in Pearl Harbor at the time of the attack. I have, however, wanted in these notes to make a record of what I have just said because nothing that has happened since the attack on Pearl Harbor has changed my conviction, from the knowledge that I had
at the time and before any controversy with respect to responsibility arose, as to the fundamental fact which is that the President and the Secretary did everything in their power to transmit up to the minute information and practically every hour to the commanders of our forces at Honolulu.

As I read some of the comment which has been made, it has been interesting for me to note that no one seems to have said that whether or not the commanders of our armed forces at Honolulu had up to the minute information, there was this large concentration of naval vessels in Pearl Harbor. The General in command of our armed forces in Honolulu and the Admiral in command of our fleet were capable, trained, experienced men. They must have known the seriousness of the situation which was hanging over our relations with Japan. There is ample evidence that they were aware of the, not only possibility but probability and later almost certainty, that an attack was planned by the Japanese at some point and that Honolulu would be a most likely point of attack. Ordinary prudence, therefore, would have counseled that only a few ships should ever be in Pearl Harbor at one time. Everyone knows what shore leave means to the officers and men on board ship at any time, and especially during the times of stress and vigil which preceded Pearl Harbor. That officers should wish to be with their families over the week-end and that the men should be given an opportunity for relaxation for a day or two in port is only natural, but that the whole fleet practically should have been concentrated in Pearl Harbor over a week-end at this crucial time, which could only have been done with the knowledge of the commanding officer, is something that cannot be explained away.

The Japanese government and people suffered deeply for their perfidy. We are now faced by another enemy more implacable, more broad
in its objectives for world domination, more definite in its determination for our destruction than ever were the Japanese. Whatever their sins they were not planning, and later fighting, for world domination. Why in our time, when we are faced by a far more serious situation for our security and future, this controversy over Pearl Harbor should continue is difficult to explain. To let a matter of this kind become a political football is about as serious a lack of responsibility on the part of any person occupying a responsible position in the government today as one can conceive of.