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## Listening to the Enemy: Key Documents on the Role of Communications Intelligence in the War with Japan

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flavor. On 19 May 1940, as German armies raced through France, Fuchs wrote his bride that Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa had arisen. "And this Friedrich Barbarossa is none other than our Führer Adolf Hitler." Just over a year later, Fuchs informed Mädi "that Russia is nothing but misery, poverty and depravity." He had fully endorsed Hitler's views that Russians, Bolsheviks, and Jews were "criminals," "scoundrels," "sub-human beings," "the mere scum of the earth," "murderers of all culture." Adolf Hitler was the keeper of the gate, about to save Europe from this scourge. "One day, many years hence, the world will thank the Germans and our beloved Führer for our victories here in Russia." Ironically, Karl Fuchs' last letter, sent to his mother on 12 November 1941, finally reflects growth: "My plight today is similar to Father's in the Great War. . . . All of us have become serious and mature in this struggle for the future of our people." He died nine days later.

The value of the letters does not lie in their detailed account of the war in the Soviet Union—in fact, there is only one, dated 1 November 1941, that details a battle at Vyazma—but rather in the fact that they show what one might term an average Nazi soldier locked in combat with the perceived mortal, biological-racial enemy in the East. The letters are chilling in their simple, obedient acceptance of the Nazi regime's murderous philosophy.

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Spector, Ronald H., ed. *Listening to the Enemy: Key Documents on the Role of Communications Intelligence in the War with Japan*. Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1987. 368pp. \$50

Interest in the intelligence aspect of our Pacific conflict with Japan continues to grow as more documents are declassified by the government. Near the end of 1985, the National Archives received several thousand such documents. Ronald H. Spector, author of the praised *Eagle Against the Sun* and currently Director of Naval History at the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C., examined a small portion of that material known as "the histories," a collection of almost 360 monographs which together present a panorama of intelligence activities from its early days after World War I until 1945.

In this book Spector has compiled those which he labels "the most significant and interesting of these monographs." His aim, which is to give readers who are interested in World War II "a useful source" for exploring the intelligence field, has succeeded. He provides a fascinating, often eye-opening view of both the significant contributions made by intelligence as well as some of its problems.

Spector divides the book into five sections: "Prewar Communications Intelligence," "ULTRA in Action,"

“Keeping the Secret,” “Japanese Intelligence,” and “The Surrender of Japan.” Although each chapter possesses strengths of its own, the most informative is ULTRA in Action, which offers an illuminating glimpse at two major areas of American intelligence, the Radio Intelligence Units (RIU) on board many ships and the assistance given to Pacific submarines by intelligence.

Among other accomplishments, by listening to Japanese air and ground communications, RI units could often inform a commander when his task force had been spotted by the enemy and sometimes estimate the arrival time of the anticipated Japanese air attacks. Intelligence was so effective in directing submarines to Japanese convoys in the immense Pacific Ocean that frustrated Japanese officials in Singapore claimed a person could walk from that port to Japan on American periscopes. Submarine commanders at times complained if an enemy convoy was twenty minutes behind the schedule provided by intelligence, and there were occasions when every available submarine in the Pacific was stalking an enemy target, using information provided by intelligence.

The remainder of the book delves into such matters as Army-Navy friction over proper use and dissemination of intelligence (a dispute which began in 1922 and continued throughout the war), the difficulty of sorting out important material from the thousands of intercepts (one report compared intelligence to

“Fishing with a dragnet, anything and everything comes in with the haul.”), the problem of dealing with a free press while involved in secret activities, the danger of overusing intelligence (shooting down Yamamoto’s plane is given as an example), and the question of whether American political and military leaders could have determined from intelligence that Japan was prepared to surrender, thereby voiding the need for the atom bomb.

The book has few weak points. Spector assembled the volume for “the researcher and general reader interested in the war with Japan,” and he assists the researcher by listing related archival documents for each entry. However, the general reader could have benefited from lengthier explanatory notes at the start of each section. A few sections become bogged down by routine lists of daily activities or by technical detail, but that is the fault of the men who wrote the reports, not Spector’s.

Spector gives us much that is valuable. In fact, he actually leaves the reader wanting more. Frequent appearances of “Text Withheld” in many documents makes the reader eager to discover what has been censored. If such fascinating material can be gleaned from this relatively small collection of government reports, one also wonders what mysteries remain to be unfurled as additional documents become available.

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