

# Japan's 3,000 Spies Give U. S. A. Some Good Laughs

BY HENRY PAYNTER



A good deal of Japan's present cockiness, some federal authorities believe, is due to official Japan's fantastic conviction that she possesses every important U. S. military secret and the means of winning wars and starting revolutions in this hemisphere.

This conviction is the result of years of ingenious counter-espionage and plain downright tomfoolery by the U. S. Army and Navy. If the Army and Navy can ever stop laughing, we should be in pretty good shape.

The Japanese in the last ten years have had, at various times, more than 3000 spies in the U. S. A., more than 1000 spies and saboteurs in Latin American countries.

They have established secret landing fields in Central and South America which our people have rendered unusable. They have established secret harbors for the Japanese navy, which our people can mine on 24 hours' notice.

## Uncle Sam Knows

The identity of almost every Japanese spy or saboteur has been known to U. S. authorities. Every instruction they have received or sent has been decoded by U. S. authorities.

Practically every U. S. "traitor" the Japanese spies have dealt with here has been a U. S. counter-espionage agent.

The ones who weren't were practical jokers or quasi con men who couldn't resist picking up the handfuls of the Mikado's hot money.

A few episodes tell the story.

One of the grandest jokes, fully authenticated, is of the high ranking Colonel of the Japanese Army intelligence service who came over here as an official of the South Manchurian Railroad (controlled by the Japanese Army), which has a "tourist" office in New York City. The present Foreign Minister of Japan, Matsuoka, was formerly in charge of U. S. espionage as head of that railroad.

The Colonel had a fixed conviction (due to somebody's well-paid hoax) that the U. S. A. had built a number of secret super-highways from coast to coast, dotted by concealed arsenals and underground gasoline storage tanks. He was determined to get results.

## Japan's<sup>2</sup> Spies Secret Maps

The appropriate U. S. authorities nibbled but when they found out what he really wanted, didn't bother except to keep an eye on him. Finally, however, the Colonel, who had got his name in the papers to attract attention of U. S. nationals, was approached by an ingenious lad who said he could furnish the desired "secret maps."

He went to the Esso gasoline tourist office in Rockefeller Center, got, free, of course, a complete set of U. S. road maps, and took them back, explaining that Esso was the name of a U. S. Army secret society.

He offered the maps for \$1000. It was paid, but the Colonel said the maps didn't show the secret super-highways, arsenals and subterranean gasoline tanks. That would cost \$12,000, the American said. That was all right, said the Colonel. Another set of maps was procured, and the ingenious youth spent a good hour drawing lines and making x-marks at random, in various colored pencils.

So the Japanese Army now knows how the U. S. Army will move across the country.

But that subdued laughter you hear in every officers' club and ward room in two hemispheres is about the story of how the Japanese obtained the secret plans of Pearl Harbor fortifications.

### A Real Naval Secret

The basic theory of the U. S. west coast defense rests on a dominating, long-range navy based on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. So long as Pearl Harbor is held, a lesser navy cannot attack the U. S. A. and the U. S. Navy can attack the Orient. So the Pearl Harbor defenses are the most important military and naval secret we have.

Knowing that, and knowing the naive directness of the Japanese, unusual precautions have always been taken to guard them. Innumerable lesser Japanese spies have been circumvented. Finally, Colonel T—, head of all Japanese espionage, himself went to Honolulu to get them. (PM has been requested not to name either Colonel.)

He stayed at the Royal Hawaiian hotel, taking the best suite, and giving a number of ostentatious parties. But no U. S. "traitors" came near him for three weeks. The U. S. Army and Navy knew both his instructions and reports. They didn't want him to leave disappointed, so a top U. S. counter-espionage agent went to visit him, ostensibly a civilian clerk in a U. S. army drafting room. Col. T— came down to brass tacks. He wanted the plans of Pearl Harbor and would pay well for them.

For three more weeks, Col. T— and the U. S. agent met nightly, bargaining, while top men of the Army and Navy general staffs in Washington, using their brains and imaginations with a puckish vengeance, cre-

## 3 Japan's Spies

ated probably the most elaborate forgery in history—a complete, perfectly “authenticated” set of plans of Pearl Harbor’s military and naval defenses, seemingly accurate enough so that the forgery might not be detected except in time of war, but containing not a detail but that would bring disaster to a misguided enemy that used the plans.

### He Was Decorated

Col. T— was delighted. He sucked in his breath and paid over \$15,000 without a murmur, and went home to be decorated by the Mikado.

The \$15,000 is burning a hole at U. S. Army-Navy offices at Washington.

Japanese Army and Navy offices believe they have the most “unbreakable” codes in the world. (They paid Americans for the systems they use.)

Japanese spies were constantly running into difficulties in this country, always being arrested photographing strategic spots.

Capt. Fritz Wiedemann, Hitler’s close friend, and consul-general at San Francisco, as well as supervisor of German espionage on the west coast of the hemisphere, made a brilliant suggestion to Toshito Sato, Japanese consul at San Francisco, and his subordinate, Qwan Yoshida, Japanese consul at Los Angeles.

Because of their conspicuous “size, race and color,” said the tactful Nazi, the Japanese spies were having a lot of troubles, so they could combine with the Germans; they would ask the Germans to do actual spy-work here, and, in turn, the Japanese would act as courier service, by way of Siberia—for German economics and espionage in the U. S. A. It was a bargain—a very happy bargain for our authorities, since, for the first time, through intercepted messages, they got a full picture of Hitler’s plot against the U. S. A.

### Terrific Plot

Another amusing result was that Nazis had cooked up a fantastic plot for “insurance” in the southwest, a Mexican border “incident,” a Mexican revolution, and a bombardment of the Panama Canal from secret Central and South American airdromes. (These PM has previously mentioned.)

The happy Japanese couldn’t resist telling each other and the home folks about it. Consequently every Nazi spy and saboteur in the Panama Canal region has been arrested or extradited; every secret airdrome has been ploughed up and filled with pits and obstacles; and every secret harbor on the west coast of Mexico and Central America is under constant surveillance.

The Japanese navy’s “fishing” vessels on the west coast of the U. S. A., Mexico, and the Panama Canal region, caused one of the greatest laughs. The crews consisted of commissioned and non-commissioned offi-

## Japan's<sup>4</sup> Spies

cers of the Japanese navy. The boats painstakingly charted the coast and water depths at a cost of millions, although more accurate maps than they had facilities to make can be purchased through the mail from the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey at about 50 cents a map.

These "fishing" vessels also did a good deal of fishing around the U. S. Battle Fleet during maneuvers. The Navy is still chuckling over an incident that occurred last season when the battleship *Pennsylvania* nearly lost its gunnery cup by sending a sixteen-inch shell about 10-feet above the deck of a Japanese "fishing" craft. Minus hats, hair and sails, the crew set off for home as rapidly as possible. The official report was that the fishing boat was so near the target it was indistinguishable from it.

### In New York

In New York alone are about 1400 male Japanese, a majority of them acting in full or part-time as spies, in either the Army or Navy Intelligence Service. Centers of espionage here are: the Japanese consulate general, which maintains a full time spy service; the Nippon Club, which has about 400 well-to-do, well-educated members, and serves as a center of anti-American activities; the South Manchurian Railway office; the Army and Navy purchasing offices; and the Mitsui organization, which collects vital strategic information for transmission to Japan. The Domei, official Japanese news agency, also engages in espionage activities here.

But there is only one Japanese in the U. S. A. whose activities have given federal authorities any real concern. He is Kenzo Ito, Japanese consul at New Orleans, who, working in conjunction with J. H. Lang-Ben, Japanese consul at Galveston, Texas, was up to something (we aren't permitted to tell you what) that might have given the U. S. A. great concern.

Ironically enough, they found out about it through Baron Edgar Freiherr Spiegel van und zu Peckelsheim, German consul at New Orleans, whose rattle-brained activities have already brought upon him an official rebuke and warning from Secretary Hull. The Baron, fortunately for the U. S. A. spilled the only unspilled Japanese beans here.



SEPTEMBER 30, 1940

OldMagazineArticles.com