(Reading time: 17 minutes 5 seconds.)

In 1917 I created the American Black Chamber, the official cipher bureau of the United States Government, which solved the secret code and cipher telegrams of foreign governments. I directed its secret activities until 1929, when a new Secretary of State, being informed of our skill, disapproved of our practices. This decision closed the doors of my secret bureau.

During this period, from 1917 to 1929, the Black Chamber deciphered over 45,000 diplomatic code and cipher telegrams of foreign governments, and solved the code books of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, England, France, Germany, Japan, Liberia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Russia, San Salvador, Santo Domingo, Soviet Union, and Spain.

And now that the United States is no longer engaged in this sort of espionage, I am often asked whether such countries as England continued after the war to supervise the diplomatic messages of friendly nations. We are all familiar with the fame of the British naval cipher bureau, obtained during the war under the direction of Admiral Hall. But did this bureau continue its secret activities after the war?

On December 16, 1920, this question was asked indirectly of Newcomb Carlton, president of the Western Union Telegraph Company, who was testifying before the Senate committee on cable landing licenses.

"As I recall it," Mr. Carlton said, "after a message has been in our office in London for, I think, ten days, to give it a good start so there cannot be any question about it, that message in its original form—ninety per cent of them are in code—is taken to, I think, the British Naval Intelligence Bureau. They hold them not more than a few hours, three or four or five, and then return them. They do not hold them long enough for anything like deciphering."

The chairman might have pointed out to Mr. Carlton that, though it may take several hours or perhaps weeks or months to decipher a document, only a few seconds are required to make a photostatic copy. Once the telegrams are photostated, the cryptographers can take their time solving them.

Mr. Carlton went on to say that he had instructed his vice president in London not to deliver the messages, but was assured by the British Government that the messages would not be deciphered but that they wanted to know who was cabling.

On January 10, 1921, Mr. Carlton was again questioned by the Senate committee.

The Chairman: "Mr. Carlton, as I recall it, when you were on the stand here a couple of weeks ago or so, you made the statement that all commercial messages were turned over to the Navy Department of Great Britain, but you did not know whether that included government messages or not. I would like to know whether that does include government messages or not."

Mr. Carlton asked to be excused from answering. The chairman did not insist, but after taking other testimony he requested an answer.

Mr. Carlton: "I must first describe what takes place. It appears that the British Government was desirous of supervising in and out cable messages to certain European countries in the interest of British peace and quiet. In order to avoid an appearance of discriminating against other European countries, they decided to take charge, physical charge, of all in and out cable messages from every country, and they therefore adopted the plan of waiting ten days, that is, to give ten days between the handling of messages and the time that the government called at the cable offices for the messages. The messages were then placed in large bags, sealed, I believe, and put in wagons. Those wagons were drawn away under custody of the Admiralty, and lodged overnight in a storehouse and returned to the cable office next morning."

"We have further investigated and are satisfied that during that period not a single message, commercial, diplomatic, or otherwise, has been actually handled by the Naval Intelligence Bureau, and the contents are unknown to the British Government because of that fact."

The chairman would go about investigating what happened to the telegrams during the night. Mr. Carlton does not say. Having directed the secret activities of the American Black Chamber over a period of twelve years. I ask to be pardoned if I am skeptical. During the war I was in London several weeks, studying cryptography under the British and was in a good position to know..."
something of the espionage methods of the Admiralty cipher bureau.

Clarence H. Mackay, president of the Postal Telegraph-Cable Company, testifying before the same committee, said:

"Since censorship ceased the British Government have required us to turn over all messages ten days after they have been sent or received. This is a right which they claim under the landing licenses they issue to all cable companies.

Mr. Mackay did not say that the British made no attempt to decipher the messages.

In any case, members of our diplomatic corps tell a story that hardly fits into Mr. Carlton's picture. They take it as an accepted fact that Great Britain attempts to decipher our messages—take it good-naturedly, as most diplomats do. Not long ago a former secretary to the American Embassy in London thought he had a huge joke on the British Admiralty cipher bureau when he told me the following tale.

"A S you know," he said, "code words are often garbled in transmission and cannot be deciphered. One day Washington cabled us in London, asking that we confirm and repeat several code words in a message that had been dispatched a few hours earlier. The original code message had been sent to the British authorities for transmission, and through an inadvertence we had not retained a copy. So we telephoned them to return the original at once. Evidently a new clerk answered the telephone, for he replied, 'That message isn't here. It's over at the Admiralty.'"

The secretary leaned back in his chair and laughed long and loud at this. I thought it amusing myself. However, someone must have overheard the new clerk, for shortly thereafter he telephoned the embassy to say that he was mistaken about the message being at the Admiralty. They had found the message and were returning it to the embassy. "Of course," concluded the secretary, "what actually happened is that they realized the clerk had tipped their hands, and sent an urgent call to the Admiralty to rush the telegram back to us."

But whether Mr. Carlton was overoptimistic or not, the American Black Chamber was not so fortunate as to have wagonloads of code and cipher messages delivered to it under naval escort. Our cable lines are not controlled by the government, and a great many, when it was possible, to obtain copies of the telegrams of foreign governments. Often it was necessary to resort to dangerous espionage."

In 1927, however, things were running smoothly, unless suddenly my informant in Washington stopped sending me copies of Japanese code messages, except one now and then. This was during the crisis in China, when Washington was especially concerned about the intentions of Japan and England. Back in 1919 I had broken the Japanese diplomatic codes. From 1919 to 1927 we had deciphered something like 10,000 Japanese diplomatic messages and broken close to thirty different Japanese codes—this, of course, in addition to our other work. Japan was one of the few governments that Washington was interested in at all times. For this reason, aside from the Chinese crisis, I wrote my informant after a couple of weeks, asking if he was sending us only a few Japanese messages. He replied that only a few were being filed with the cable companies in Washington. I doubted this and immediately took the midnight to Washington, where I questioned him closely.

"I THINK the Japanese Embassy is sending its messages in some other manner," he told me. "But in order not to arouse suspicion they file a telegram now and then with the cable companies here."

"And what of the telegrams they receive from Tokyo?"

I asked.

"I have sent you everything, both received and sent cables," he assured me.

"But there haven't been a dozen telegrams in the last three weeks," I protested. During the crisis in China there should be a large file.

"I can't help that," he said. "They are not being filed here in the name of the Japanese Embassy."

I was bewildered at this information, but a few days later I received a communication from my government that seemed to explain the situation. Japan evidently had adopted a most amazing and illegal method of sending diplomatic dispatches to and from Tokyo and Washington. The letter contained several code telegrams and sheets of data, and stated that these had been turned over to the War Department by the coast guard which was intercepting rumrunner wireless messages on the Pacific coast.

The messages had been intercepted on a wave length of about fifty-six meters between 5 and 6 A.M. Pacific time. They were evidently transmitted on a fixed schedule, for the sending operator gave no call or signature. But suddenly, without warning, there flashed "RAK to [CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]"
RP?" Then followed replying several messages with no address or signature. At the end there was silence for a few seconds, then the other station signaled, "RP to RK3," and followed with a series of messages. The Japanese guard intercepted these messages without acknowledgment.

Investigation, so the report said, disclosed the fact that the mysterious calls, RP7 and RK3, were signals for amateur stations. Nothing else was known.

Typed at the bottom of each message were notes by the coast guard intercepting operator:

The above is certain to be correct for the signals were exceptionally loud, but the crack doesn't agree nor the numbers. Unable to hear RP7 this watch.

The above code groups were interpreted on approximately fifty meters. Signals barely readable. Station already transmitting when tuned in and did not sign call-at end of message. RK3 sent the first message and then signaled "AB," meaning "I have finished, go ahead." RP7 transmitted, but our station was unable to copy on account of static. RK3 then signaled "AHB," meaning "Another here," and transmitted Part 2 of inclusion, not signing any address or signature. He signed off with "NM," meaning "No more."

These two stations apparently work on fixed schedule every morning from 5 A.M. to 7:00 A.M. Pacific time coast.

The intercepted messages were in ten-letter code groups. The following few lines will serve as an example:

FAZBZNDY VAFETQPSU EXAPFJABIAJ AGENCY! FOLOUREAZ OJEGJEGLU-ATNIOUDI...

I had the report and the operator's comments hurriedly without paying any attention to the cipher messages. When I looked at them, my heart stood still. They were Japanese diplomatic code messages! Japan had discovered that we were reading their messages and had established communication with Tokyo through high-frequency transmission. Such a step was illegal, a grave breach of international law.

They were, without question, encoded in what we called Job code, the very eight Japanese code we had broken since my original solution. I at once took the messages into the Japanese Department of the Black Chamber, and requested my assistants to give me a translation at once.

They told me the telegrams were so badly garbled that only phrases here and there could be read, but they were sufficiently clear to show the subject matter which was the Chinese situation. This gave us no clue as to their destination, for it is the custom of Tokyo to keep all embassies informed on international questions.

The messages therefore might be from Peking to Tokyo, or from Tokyo to Washington, London, Paris, or any other post. However, one of the telegrams was not encoded in Job code, but in Jw, an English-language code which the Japanese had compiled for encoding English-language telegrams. Though badly garbled, the message was without question a memorandum from our Secretary of State to the Japanese Foreign Office. It looked like a Washington-Tokyo telegram.

All this seemed to me conclusive proof that Japan had erected a high-frequency sending and receiving set on our soil. I felt some hesitancy in sending my deductions to Washington. It might lead to serious consequences. War had been often declared for less. However, there was nothing to do but report my findings. In making my report I urged Washington to attempt to locate the station by the use of a radio goniometer, which is an instrument that shows the direction from which the wave emanates. Much to my surprise, I was informed that the War Department equipment for high-frequency interception was not sufficiently modern for this experiment.

Washington was horrified at the thought that Japan had secretly erected a wireless station in the United States, was ordered to bring the evidence to light. I showed the English-text telegram and my interpretation to my assistant, and we both agreed with my judgment. We looked serious indeed.

On my way back to New York, I started means of getting positive evidence. For over a year I had prefaced their code telegrams with the term "AGENCY!

From the text of the telegrams we had nothing to do with the Japanese. For this reason no one could attempt to find out what they meant.

The first few letters, FAZ, were in the group of messages, and now it suddenly occurred to me that deciphering these groups, not the telegrams, I could trace the station back to Tokyo. If the Tokyo-Tokyo telegram numbers represented this mysterious intercept, it would tie Tokyo-Washington, 0. No. 100 reference code and deciphered translation has a number a great deal of written work, any 10 or more—then again, not a message passing between us.

On the other hand, if the series, 510, 107, 840, led to anything, any good proof of the use on our soil.

The Congressional Limitation Committee's report, which was submitted to Congress, led to the intercepted messages. What had those responsible telegrams looked like? I had not a clue. Could I decipher them? I had not anticipated their arrival in New York, and the intercepting signal station had unlocked my safe and destroyed all the intercepting records.

I had no idea who had deciphered them. I had not anticipated their arrival in New York, and the intercepting station had destroyed all the intercepting records.

I had a hunch that the intercepting station had destroyed all the intercepting records.

Having constructed the theory of the intercepted messages, I turned my thoughts to the intercepting station. What was its purpose? Did it give aid and comfort to the enemy? Did it give aid and comfort to the enemy?

But this did not end the matter. I felt that the Japanese Embassy in the United States was the last place they would turn to in any case. I had been told that the Japanese Embassy in the United States was the last place they would turn to in any case.

"Now," I asked, "how do you think the Japanese Embassy will react if we find that the Japanese Embassy has been intercepted?"

My informant was puzzled, "You mean the Daiichi?" he said with a smile.

"Yes," I replied, "you know more about it than I do."

[CONCLUDED]
had secretly erected a wireless station in the United States. Washington and Tokyo were exchanging messages to obtain proof of the location of the Japanese Embassy. I went to Washington and obtained proof by means of the English-text telegram and personally explained that my informant had told me that the Japanese Embassy no longer filed their messages with the cable companies, they routinely agreed with my memorandum. The situation looked serious indeed.

On my way back to New York I thought of ways and means of getting positive proof of the location of the stations. For over a year the Tokyo Government had prefaced their code telegrams with a series of letters. From the text of the telegrams it was clear that the letters had nothing to do with the messages themselves. For this reason no one considered it worthwhile to attempt to find out what they meant.

The first few letters, FAPEOZIDNY VAPEITQPU, of the message already quoted are the indecipherable groups. Now it suddenly occurred to me that if I could decipher these groups, and if they gave the number of the telegrams, then I could determine whether they were passing between Washington and Tokyo. The Washington-Tokyo telegram number for February, the date of this mysterious intercept, is approximately 40; the Tokyo-Washington, 50. Now if I can break the Telegram Reference Code and discover that the telegram in question has a number a great deal larger or smaller than 40 or 50—a large or small—then I am certain that it is not a message passing between Washington and Tokyo.

On the other hand, if the series number is approximately 40 or 50, it is possible to decipher a message that Japan has erected a station on our soil.

The Congressional Limited was pulling out of Philadelphiathen it suddenly flashed through my mind. What had those first few letters of each telegram looked like? I had paid little attention to them. Could I decipher them? For two hours I impatiently awaited my arrival in New York, and was not happy until I had unlocked my safe and scattered before me on my flat-topped desk a sheet of Japanese diplomatic code telegrams.

The process of deciphering was intricate, and as its success proved barren of direct results, I omit the technical details.

Having constructed the table to my satisfaction, I turned to the intercepted messages between RPK and RKS with misgivings. Would my table confirm my deduction that Japan had erected a wireless station in the United States? I began to decipher these groups of letters. One was enough.

FA PE OZ ID NY VA FE PE
0 1 93 15th my 1 91

I now had the answer to my problem. The mysterious telegrams were not Washington-Tokyo messages. They were transmitted between Japanese posts. Although the intercepted messages that quoted was sent February 13, the serial number is 198. Now the Washington-to-Tokyo number for approximately the same date is 40, and the Tokyo-Washington to the number is 50. This proves that the RRS and RKS wireless intercepts are not between Washington and Tokyo.

Apart from the conclusion that the Japanese Embassy was not using a private wireless, why were they not filing their messages with the established cable companies? I went to Washington the next day, determined to find out. When I arrived I was a man on whom I had depended for information and told him the details.

"Now," I asked, "how do you account for the fact that the Japanese Embassy is filing no telegrams?"

"My Hopkins is putting something over on you," he said with a smile.

"Well, you know more about him than I do. He's your man."

REF ID: A44769

Double-Crossing America—By Herbert O. Yardley

October 10, 1931

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How 9 out of 10 stars guard complexion beauty

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