
Extract from the "Forrestal Diaries," Chapter III, "Foretaste of the Cold War," pp. 86 and 87.

The formal surrender took place on the deck of the U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay on September 2. The mood of sudden relief from long and breaking tension is exemplified by an amusing exchange a few days later of "Urgent: Top Secret" telegrams which Forrestal put into his diary. In the enthusiasm of victory someone let out the story of how, in 1943, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the Japanese naval commander-in-chief and architect of the Pearl Harbor attack, had been intercepted and shot down in flames as a result of the American ability to read the Japanese codes. It was the first public revelation of the work of the cryptanalytic divisions, and it brought an anguished cable from the intelligence unit already engaged at Yokohama in the interrogation of Japanese naval officers: "Yamamoto story in this morning's paper has placed our activities in very difficult position. Having meticulously concealed our special knowledge we now become ridiculous." They were even then questioning the Japanese officer who had been responsible for these codes, and he was hinting that in face of this disclosure he would have to commit suicide. The cable continued: "This officer is giving us valuable information on Japanese crypto systems and channels and we do not want him or any of our other promising prospects to commit suicide until after next week when we expect to have milked them dry"

Washington answered with an "Operational Priority: Top Secret" dispatch: "Your lineal position on the list of those who are embarrassed by the Yamamoto story is five thousand six hundred ninety two. All of the people over whose dead bodies the story was going to be published have been buried. All possible schemes to localize the damage have been considered but none appears workable. Suggest that only course for you is to deny knowledge of the story and say you do not understand how such a fantastic tale could have been invented. This might keep your friend happy until suicide time next week, which is about all that can be expected. . . ."