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BOOKS

THE INTELLIGENCE JUNGLE — WORLD WAR II AND TODAY

"And I Was There": Pearl Harbor and Midway — *Breaking the Secrets.* Rear Adm. Edwin T. Layton, USN (Ret.), with Capt. Roger Pineau, USNR (Ret.) and John Costello. Morrow. 596 pages. \$19.95.
 "A World of Secrets: The Uses and Limits of Intelligence." Walter Laqueur. Twentieth Century Fund. 404 pages. \$21.95.

Adm. Husband W. Kimmel and Gen. Walter C. Short, Layton argues convincingly that they — Admiral Kimmel in particular — were made the scapegoats for errors of commission and omission by political and military leaders in Washington.

Rarely has a book righted an old wrong even before it is published, but the memoirs of Adm. Edwin T. Layton, who died in 1984, have accomplished this remarkable feat. Undoubtedly influenced by the stir likely to be created by this fascinating and significant book, the Navy Department announced a few weeks ago that one of the great injustices of World War II was to be corrected.

Layton, who was Kimmel's intelligence officer, indicts Washington for failing to provide the commanders on the scene with the information gleaned from intercept of Japanese diplomatic traffic and other communications that were of vital concern to their commands. For example, Kimmel was never told that the Japanese consulate in Honolulu had been ordered to keep close tabs on ship movements at Pearl Harbor and to divide the anchorage into zones that would make it easier to locate targets.

The case involved Capt. Joseph J. Rochefort, the man most responsible for the victory at the Battle of Midway, the turning point of the war in the Pacific. Outgunned, outnumbered but not outfought, the U.S. Navy won an incredible victory, primarily because of the work of the radio intelligence operation — Station Hypo — headed by then Commander Rochefort.

Further afield, Layton and his collaborators assert that Roosevelt entered a secret agreement at the time of the "Four Freedoms" meeting with Winston Churchill in which he agreed that the U.S. would enter the war if the Japanese attacked British territory in the Far East. And they contend the Russians may have had advance warning of the impending surprise attack on Hawaii.

Hidden away behind locked doors in the windowless basement of an office building at Pearl Harbor, the Hypo codebreakers broke the supposedly impregnable Japanese JN 25 code and not only predicted that the Japanese would strike Midway, but also the exact date on which the attack would occur. In contrast, Hypo's opposite number in Washington forecast an attack on Johnston Island or on the West Coast of the United States to take place a week later.

Much of this remains controversial, but one need not subscribe to all the intriguing hypotheses presented here to recognize the overall importance of the book. It contains much that is fresh, fascinating and vital to the study of World War II.

The Navy's treatment of Rochefort was shabby in the extreme, however. Adm. Chester W. Nimitz recommended him for the Distinguished Service Medal, one of the nation's highest awards for noncombat service, but it was turned down by the Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Ernest J. King. And Rochefort spent most of the rest of the war in command of a floating drydock in San Francisco Bay.

In the 40 years since the war, intelligence gathering has undergone a revolution, of which Rochefort and Station Hypo were forerunners. Rather than depending on trench-coated secret agents armed with miniature cameras, as Walter Laqueur points out in "A World of Secrets," modern intelligence agencies now gain most of their data through careful analysis of open sources, such as newspapers, trade journals, government documents and radio broadcasts as well as such technical means as codebreaking and electronic snooping by satellites.

Admiral Layton, Rochefort's close friend and colleague as the Pacific fleet's intelligence officer, reveals that Rochefort was the unwitting victim of an interne-cine struggle within the Navy for control of radio intelligence. The victors in this battle for bureaucratic turf were the very same men who had misjudged Japanese intentions before Midway, but had convinced Adm. King that they rather than Rochefort deserved credit for the victory.

Intelligence has become a vital part of the foreign policy-making process and Mr. Laqueur, a professor at Georgetown University, asks important questions about it in this study of how well the various U.S. intelligence agencies are doing their jobs. How good is our intelligence? And how well has it been evaluated?

Several postwar attempts to award the DSM to Rochefort were thwarted, including a request by Admiral Nimitz in 1958. But the Navy Department finally relented last month, just as word of Layton's forthcoming book began to circulate. Unfortunately, Rochefort died in 1976.

American policymakers confront no shortage of intelligence. If anything, they are literally drowning in it. The problem is to find what is important, to evaluate the data properly and to make use of it. For example, Mr. Laqueur points out that in the case of Iran, U.S. intelligence had a formidable array of information, but completely misread the situation there. As late as August 1978, a CIA assessment held that "Iran is not in a revolutionary or even a pre-revolutionary situation."

Scholarly, but lucid, Mr. Laqueur's book is a far cry from the "gee whiz" school that dominates most writing about intelligence, and is highly recommended to readers with an interest in intelligence and the making for foreign policy.

Although the book gives little comfort to conspiracy theorists who claim "President Roosevelt promoted a war with Japan in order to enter the struggle against Hitler through the back door," it adds fresh fuel to the long-running controversy about who should bear the responsibility for the Pearl Harbor disaster. Unlike Gordon W. Prange, whose best-selling "At Dawn We Slept" placed the blame on military commanders in Hawaii,

—NATHAN MILLER

Mr. Miller is author of the forthcoming "The Secret Warriors: The Hidden History of American Espionage."