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30 June 1944

THE "WINDS MESSAGE"

Mr. G. E. Sterling, Chief of National Defense Operations Section of the Federal Communications Commission, furnishes the following account of the "Winds Message":

1. Throughout the latter part of 1941, the F.C.C. Monitor Station at Portland, Oregon, was monitoring the Japanese Short-wave Broadcasting Stations and analyzing Japanese propaganda directed to North and South America. The broadcasts were recorded on the disks of a Magnavox (?) =*Memovox* *wt* recorder and then played back for translation. A small staff of Japanese translators and "Propaganda Analysts" were attached to the Portland Monitor Station. They translated each broadcast, as it occurred, analyzed and screened it, and forwarded a digest (in English) by teletype to F.C.C. Headquarters in Washington. Here it was combined with Axis broadcasts from European stations and disseminated to various Departments and Offices of the U.S. Government.

2. About a week before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Col. Guest of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer (War Department) called on Mr. Sterling and requested the F.C.C.'s assistance in listening for a special message they were expecting. It would be given in the middle of a Japanese-language news broadcast from Tokyo and would contain the Japanese words meaning "North Wind," "East Wind," and "West Wind." Mr. Sterling was given a list of telephone numbers to call in case this "Winds Message" was heard. The Portland Monitor Station was "alerted" for this message.

3. The "Winds Message" was heard at Portland — interrupting a news broadcast — and was recorded there. It was in Japanese language — Voice. It was immediately transliterated into the European form of written Japanese and forwarded to Washington by teletype. The F.C.C. Watch Officer called the various numbers, including the Navy number, and delivered his message. (It was received in the Navy Department by Lt. Brotherhood, the GY Watch Officer.)

4. Mr. Sterling stated that he had often wondered if the message had proved to be of importance!