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The Honorable John H. Dalton
Secretary of the Navy
Department of the Navy
The Pentagon
Washington DC 20350-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In November 1987, your predecessor, Secretary James H. Webb, Jr., asked me to review the performance record of Admiral Husband E. Kimmel in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief, u.s. Pacific Fleet, with particular reference to the period immediately preceding and on 7 December 1941. The Secretary's letter was in response to a petition from Admiral Kimmel's two surviving sons that their father be restored posthumously to the rank of Admiral on the retired list.

Although the Board for Correction of Naval Records had earlier declined to review the petition, on the grounds that such action did not lie within the Board's jurisdictional authority, the Secretary reminded me that the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, does have the authority to take the action requested by Admiral Kimmel's sons.

I therefore asked the Director of Naval History to review the historical record and to submit a report to my office. This the Director did in a memorandum dated 5 January 1988. On its basis I recommended to the Secretary, on 19 January 1988, that the Navy decline to support the request of the Kimmel family. Among the reasons given in my memorandum, I cited the endorsement of Admiral Ernest J. King, made in 1944, to the Navy Court of Inquiry into the Pearl Harbor attack. That Court had exonerated Admiral Kimmel of any charges of "dereliction." Admiral King, however, reversed that finding on the grounds, as I learned recently, that Admiral Kimmel should have conducted long-range air searches at least "in the more dangerous sectors."

The Director of Naval History had written, on 5 January 1986, a review article in the New York Times in which he stated that the Martin-Bellinger estimate of March 1941 had clearly identified for Admiral Kimmel the north and northwest as the "more dangerous sectors." The Director wrote: "There is also the written evidence 'of an official report on Hawaiian air defenses, completed in March 1941, which, as the [Gordon W.] Prange book (Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History) points

out, predicted that an air attack ,was most likely to come from the north or northwest." The Director Naval History enclosed that review article with his memorandum to me and stated that, as for those observations, "I see no reason to alter them at this time."

In my memorandum to Secretary Webb I concluded: "I believe that we should not attempt to reverse the actions of our predecessors or second guess their intentions unless there is compelling evidence that there was an injustice done. In this case, there is no such compelling evidence."

I now believe, sir, that there was an injustice done to Admiral Kimmel, both by Admiral King and by the Director Naval History. Thanks to an investigation of the original records by a University of Florida professor of history, the results of which were communicated to me privately, I have only recently learned that there were no known or predicted "more dangerous sectors," as stated by Admiral King, in any of the official estimates provided to Admiral Kimmel prior to the attack. Furthermore, the Martin-Bellinger estimate of March 1941, which the Director of Naval History informed me in his report predicted that an air attack, if one came, would be launched from the north or northwest, ***nowhere states that the most dangerous sectors were the north and northwest.*** The words "north" and "northwest" do not appear *in* the text, nor do any equivalent nautical or numerical terms.

I can supply you, Mr. Secretary, with copies of all these pertinent documents.

It is my considered judgment that the memorandum to Secretary Webb in which I recommended against the Kimmel family's petition was defective in those parts where I cited Admiral King, and where I relied on the report of the Director of Naval History, who, it appears, did no original research of his own but consulted only secondary sources, one of which was gravely flawed.

I therefore ask you, sir, to withdraw the recommendation made *in* my memorandum to Secretary Webb, dated 19 January 1988, and to reopen the case of Admiral Kimmel. I believe such action is owed to the Admiral, to his sons, and to the Navy. No mistake should be allowed to stand in this sensitive matter, and I personally disavow my unwitting support of one.

Respectfully yours,

/S/ Carl Trost

Carlisle A. H. Trost