FROM: Phyllis Schlafly

68 FAIRMOUNT, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002 / (618) 462-5415

RELEASE: DECEMBER 7, 1982

CONTINUING LESSONS OF PEARL HARBOR

"Enjoy your dream of peace just one more day. ... Hawaii, you will be caught like a rat in a trap." Those were the words of Japanese Admiral Matome Ugaki, Yamamoto's Chief of Staff, on December 6, 1941. They capsule what the cocksure Japanese military leaders were thinking in the final hours before their vicious attack on Pearl Harbor, the greatest single military disaster we ever suffered.

As we look back on that fateful day 41 years ago, one wonders how the Japanese could have ever thought they could defeat the great United States of America. Japan was only a small fraction of the industrial power it is today, and the only way an armed force could reach U.S. territory from Japan was primarily by means of ships.

How could rational military strategists have imagined a scenario that could have anticipated victory over America? The Japanese warlords simply concluded that the United States lacked the will and the weapons to fight.

Another question is, why was the United States caught by surprise? Our government had received many warnings that an attack was imminent, especially from the breaking of the Japanese codes. Looking back, it seems impossible that the Roosevelt Administration failed to recognize the evidence of an impending attack in general, and of an attack on Pearl Harbor in particular.

In the weeks before Pearl Harbor, U.S. experts and amateurs relaxed in the twin defense myths of late 1941: that Pearl Harbor was impregnable (supposedly the Gibraltar of the Pacific), and that Japan would be deterred from launching a surprise attack because of fear of devastating U.S. retaliation.

The dictionary defines "deterrent" as the ability to retaliate sufficiently to frighten an enemy from attacking. An effective U.S. deterrent must combine our military strength, plus the perception of that strength by a potential attacker, plus the attacker's judgment as to whether we could and would hit back with devastating U.S. retaliation.

Do we have a deterrent today against a potential aggressor? The nuclear freezeniks are constantly arguing that we have "enough bombs," or "sufficient warheads," or "overkill." But the question isn't "how many bombs do we have?" but "do we have enough weapons to frighten the enemy out of attacking because of his fear of devastating U.S. retaliation?"

The crux of the matter, therefore, is not an absolute judgment of what is U.S. strength, or even an absolute judgment of what is U.S. military strength in relation to Soviet strength. The most important factor is the Soviets' estimate of U.S. strength, plus their estimate of whether or not we will use it, plus their estimate of whether the retaliatory strike they suffer would be so "devastating" that they don't dare risk it.

If you were Yuri Andropov contemplating the United States today, would you think the United States has the weapons which can inflict devastating retaliation? If so, would you think the United States has the will to use them?

What would you think when you review the passage of the nuclear freeze referenda by about a fourth of the nation's voters? What would you think when you contemplate the activity of high-ranking clergy in trying to invoke their religious authority against the use or even the possession of retaliatory weapons?

What would you think when you observe the difficulty President Reagan has had in getting his defense program through Congress? What would you think when you hear that one federal judge has hamstrung and paralyzed the draft registration program?

What would you think when you recall that, from 1966 to 1981, the United States did not build a single new ballistic submarine, but in the same timeframe the Soviets built 60 such submarines? What would you think when you recall that the Soviets have already deployed a Backfire bomber force twice as large as the projected U.S. B-1 bomber force which is still on the drawing board? What would you think when you recall that 3/4ths of U.S. warheads are carried on launchers that are 15 years old or older, while 3/4ths of Soviet warheads are on launchers five years old or less?

The first thing Yuri Andropov said after he took command of the U.S.S.R. was that peace "can be upheld only resting upon the invincible might of the Soviet armed forces." It doesn't sound like he's very much in awe of our power, does it?