

JUNE 7, 1942

## NAVY HAD WORD OF JAP PLAN TO STRIKE AT SEA

### Knew Dutch Harbor Was a Feint.

Washington, D. C., June 7.—The strength of the Japanese forces with which the American navy is battling somewhere west of Midway Island in what is believed to be the greatest naval battle of the war, was well known in American naval circles several days before the battle began, reliable sources in the naval intelligence disclosed here tonight.

The navy learned of the gathering of the powerful Japanese units soon after they put forth from their bases, it was said. Altho their purpose was not specifically known, the information in the hands of the navy department was so definite that a feint at some American base, to be accompanied by a serious effort to invade and occupy another base, was predicted. Guesses were even made that Dutch Harbor and Midway Island might be targets.

The advance information enabled the American navy to make full use of air attacks on the approaching Japanese ships, turning the struggle into an air battle along the modern lines of naval warfare so often predicted in Tribune editorials.

It was known that the Japanese fleet—the most powerful yet used in this war—was broken into three sections: First, a striking force; next a support force, and finally an occupation fleet.

#### Pearl Harbor Was to Be Next.

It was apparent to Adm. Chester Nimitz strategists in Hawaii that the feint would probably be

made by the supporting force, the real blow struck by the striking fleet, with the occupation force standing by, ready to land troops as soon as defenses were broken down.

Had the attack on Midway been successful, Pearl Harbor and the Hawaiian Islands would have been the next point of attack, naval authorities feel sure.

The various forces were made up approximately as follows, according to navy information here:

**THE STRIKING FORCE:** Four aircraft carriers, the Akaga and Kaga of 25,500 tons each, and the Hiryu and Soryu of 10,000 tons each; 2 battleships of the Kirishima class—29,300 tons with 14 inch guns; 2 cruisers of the Tone class—new 8,500 ton 6.1 inch gun ships; 12 destroyers.

#### Support Force Listed.

**THE SUPPORT FORCE:** One aircraft carrier of the Ryuzo class, 7,100 tons; 2 Kirishima class battleships; 4 new 8,500 ton cruisers of the Mogami class, including the Mogami, Mikuma, Suzuya, and Kumano—will have guns of 6.1 inch caliber; 1 light cruiser; 10 destroyers.

**THE UPATTON FORCE:** Four cruisers—the Chokai, Myoko, Chitose, and Choda, all believed of 8,500 tons with main batteries of 6.1 inch guns; 2 armored transports of the Kurekuma Maru class—converted liners; 4 to 6 troopships; 8 to 12 supply vessels; 12 destroyers; 10 submarines.

Well informed as it was, the navy was on the alert for the first movements of this force. When it moved all American outposts were warned.

#### Dutch Harbor a Feint.

American naval dispositions were made in preparation for the various possible attacks the Japs were believed to be planning.

Up to this time the Japanese had not committed themselves to any action. They were still in position to turn their real threat against either Dutch Harbor or Midway. By last Tuesday the Americans were able to conclude that a feint was to be made at Dutch Harbor.

Meanwhile preparations among all available American forces in the vicinity of Midway were being rushed in the hope of striking a telling blow against the Japs. The wisdom of this course became apparent on Wednesday when the feint was made in the form of air raids on Dutch Harbor. The same day the fleets in the Midway area commenced their now historic battle.