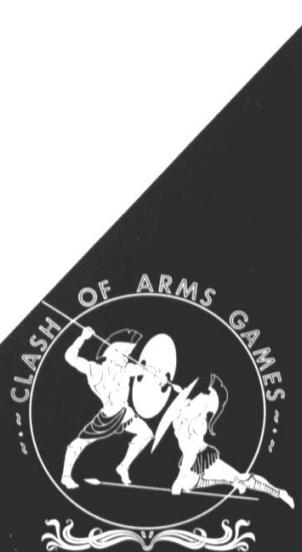




Bywater's War: **Pacific Navies Between 1922 - 1939**

*Robert Eldridge
Historicon 2012*

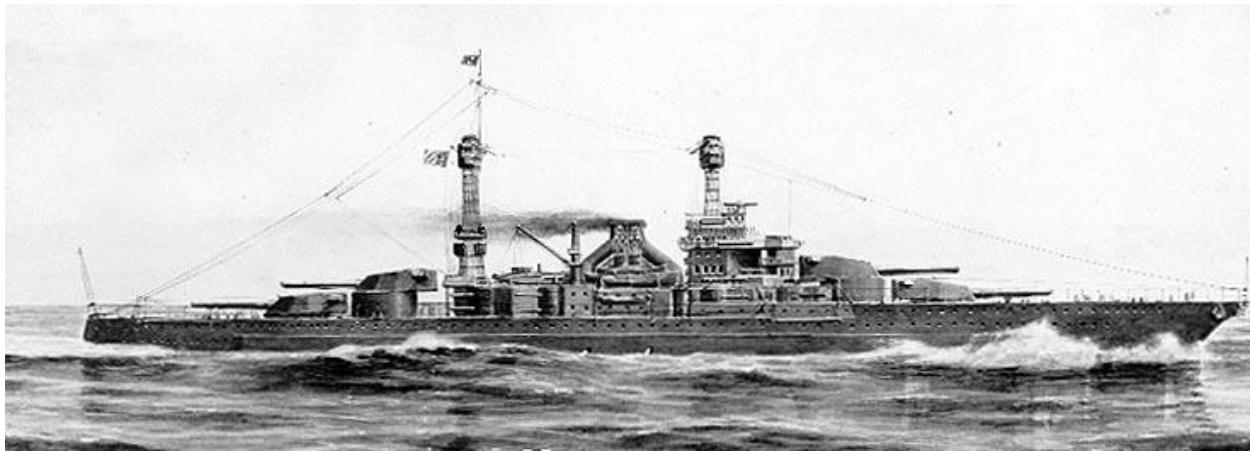
*Admiralty Trilogy Seminar
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Clash of Arms Games*





Overview

- ◆ Historical Background – a discussion of the state of the Pacific navies from 1922 – 1938 and the influence of politics on their development
- ◆ Bywater's "*The Great Pacific War*" – a novel about a large scale naval war between the U.S. and Imperial Japan
- ◆ Other Pacific Wars – a look at some alternative possibilities for conflict in the Pacific between the two world wars
- ◆ *Bywater's War* supplement discussion

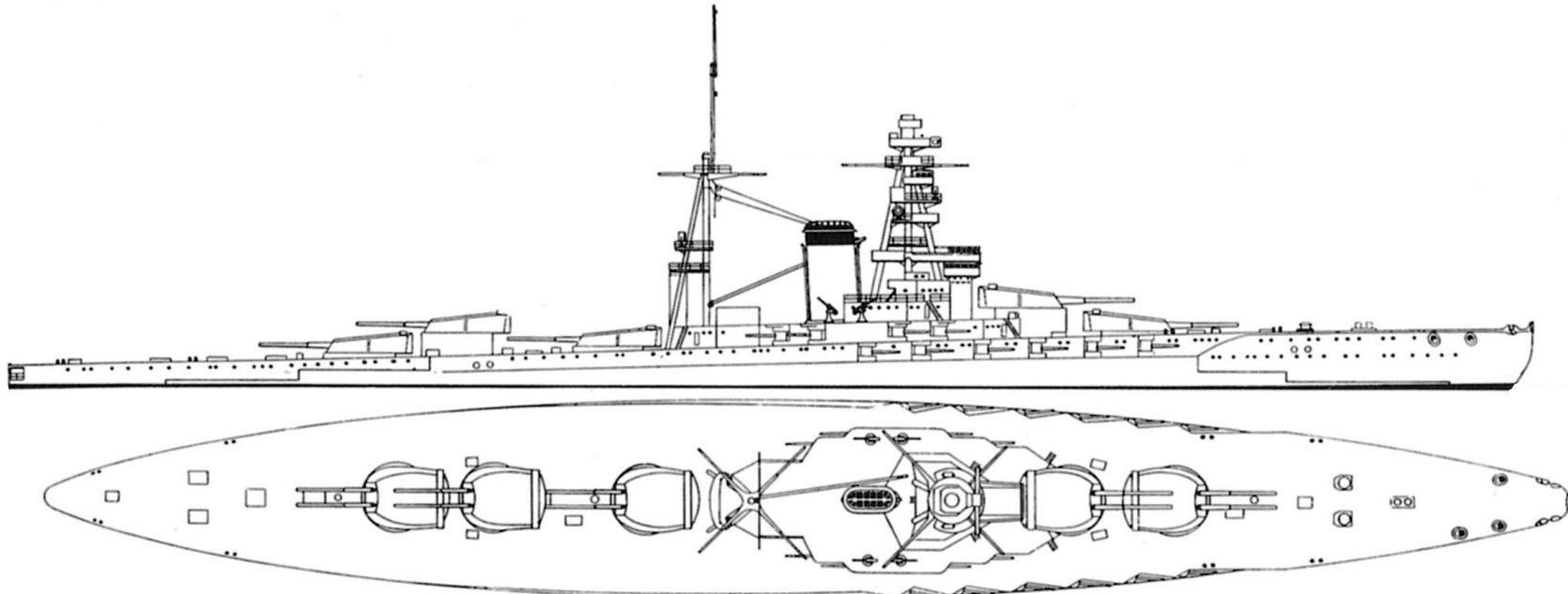


South Dakota
Class Battleship



The Pacific Navies in 1922

- ◆ The Japanese 8 – 8 Plan
- ◆ The American 1916 Naval Defense Act and subsequent plans
- ◆ Plans for a U.S. fleet base at Guam



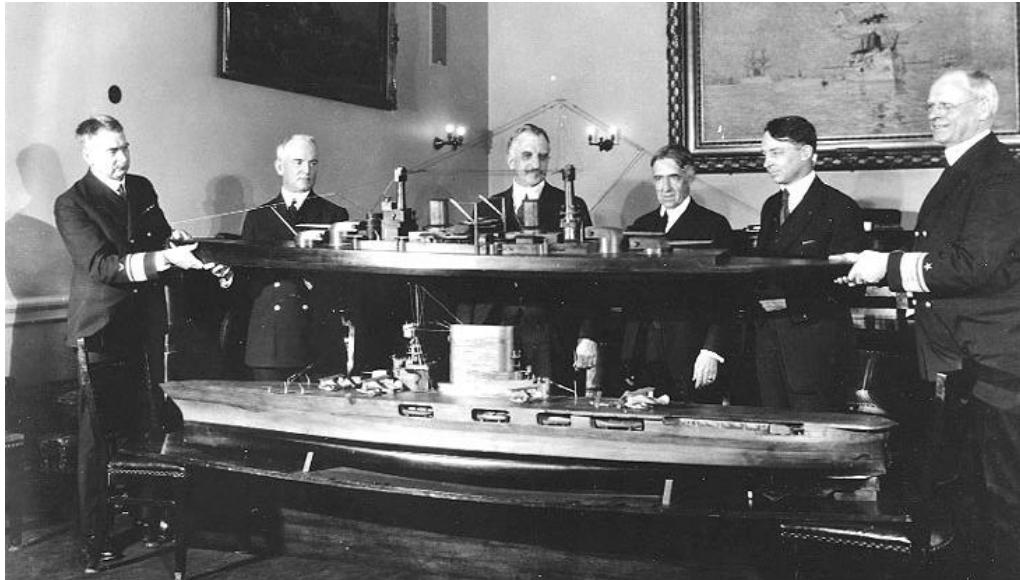
Kaga Class Battleship



Naval Limitations

The Washington Treaty of 1922

- ◆ Imposed a ten year holiday on capital ship construction
 - Some battleships on the ways were completed, some were converted to aircraft carriers
- ◆ Limited future battleships to 35,000 tons and 16-inch guns
- ◆ Limited cruisers to 10,000 tons and 8-inch guns
- ◆ Froze base construction and fortifications in the Pacific



Lexington Class Battlecruiser and Aircraft Carrier Models



More Limits

London Naval Treaty of 1930

- ◆ Placed limits on the numbers of 8-inch gun cruisers
- ◆ Limited future cruisers to 6-inch guns
- ◆ Placed tonnage limits on destroyers and submarines
- ◆ France and Italy *did not* participate

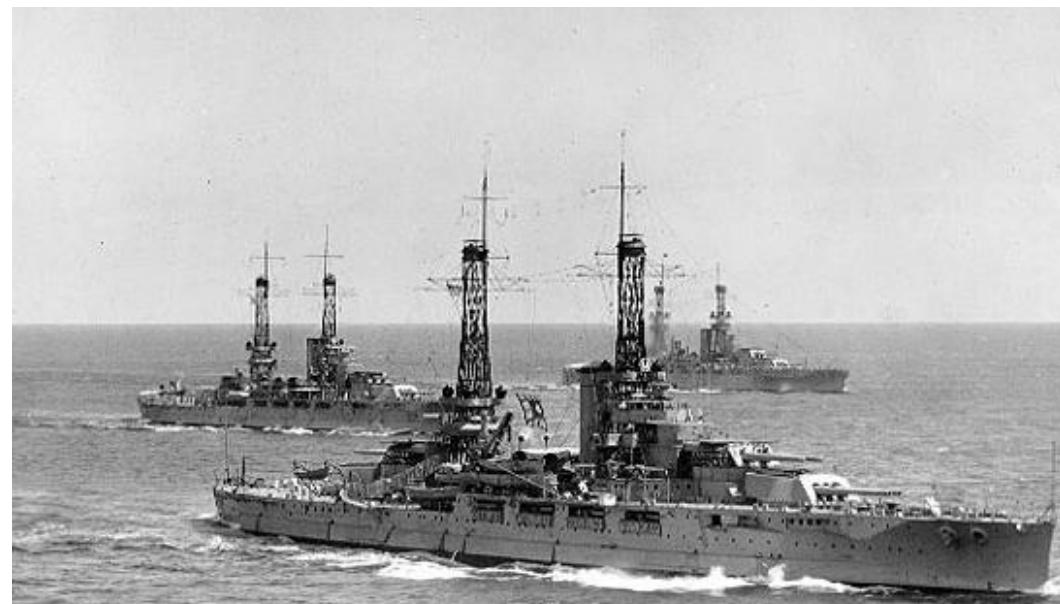


Furutaka Class Treaty Cruiser



The United States Fleet

- ◆ Created in 1922 by combining the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets into a single operational entity
- ◆ The Asiatic Fleet and the Special Service Squadron remained independent
- ◆ Battle Fleet originally based in the Pacific, Scouting Fleet based in the Atlantic
 - Scouting Fleet moved to the Pacific in 1932

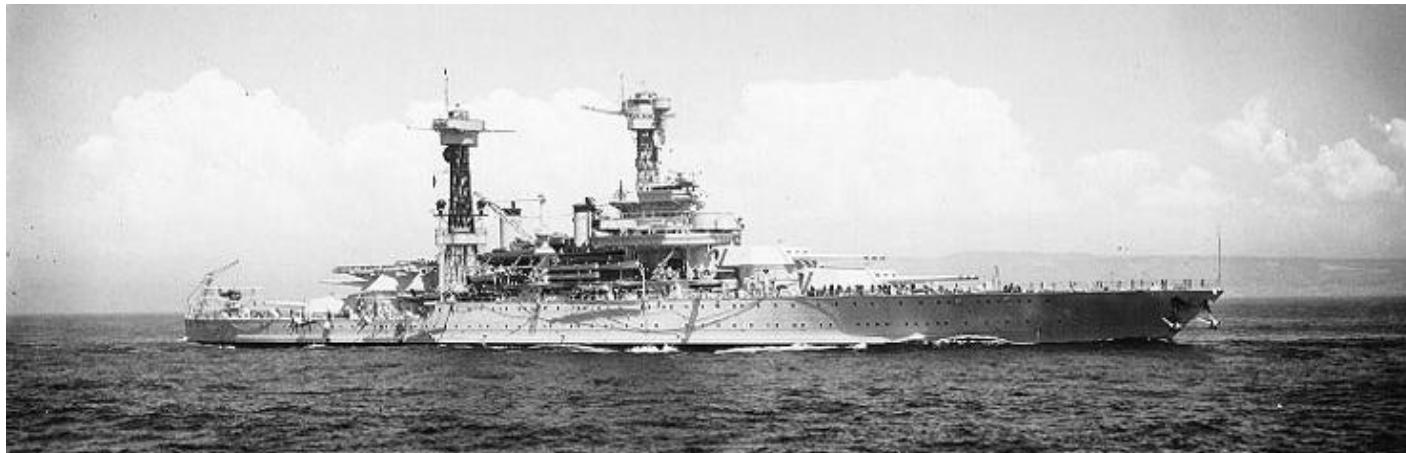


U.S. Navy Battleships



Organization of the United States Fleet

- ◆ Battle Force (Battle Fleet until 1930)
- ◆ Scouting Force (Scouting Fleet until 1930)
- ◆ Control Force (abolished in 1931)
- ◆ Base Force
- ◆ Submarine Force (from 1930, previously independent)
- ◆ Parallel structure of “type” commands for training and technical issues





Japanese Combined Fleet

- ◆ Not permanently established until 1924
- ◆ Did not have its own HQ staff until 1933
- ◆ Originally consisted of the First (Battle) and Second (Scouting) Fleets
- ◆ Number of Fleets expanded as situation with China worsened
- ◆ First Air Fleet not formed until 1941

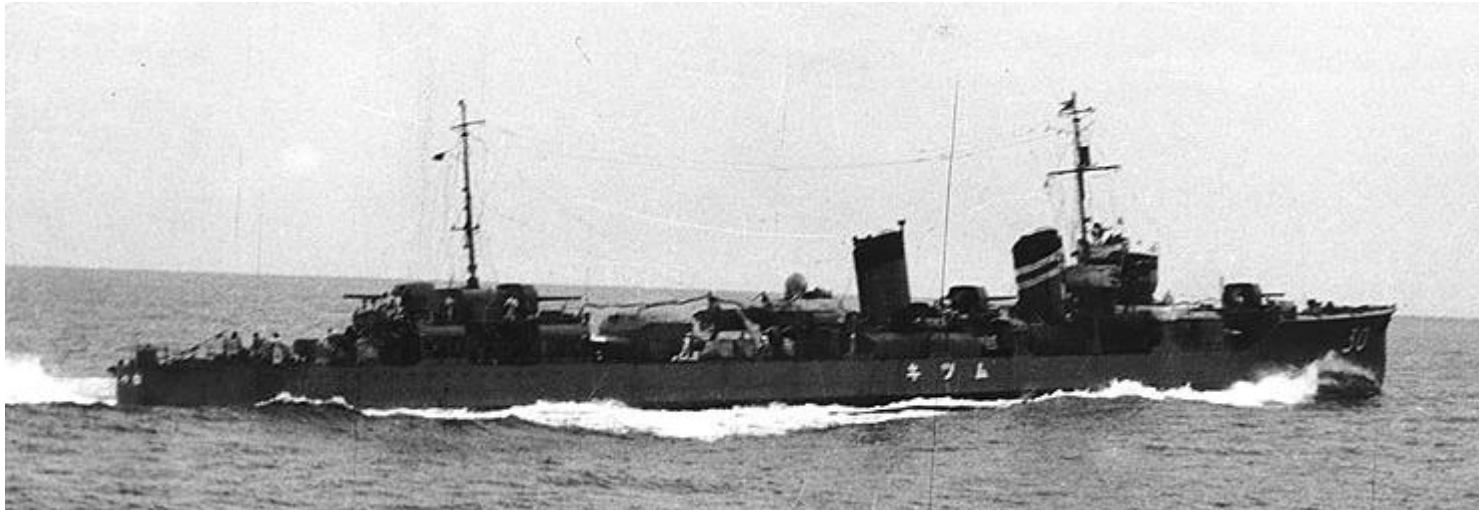


Akagi Class Aircraft Carrier



Organization of the Combined Fleet

- ◆ Each fleet contained multiple *Sentai*
- ◆ Unlike other navies, *Sentai* are numbered sequentially, not differentiated by type, although certain numbers are reserved for certain classes of ships
- ◆ Each fleet included one or more destroyer squadrons, submarine squadrons, and carrier divisions



Mutsuki Class Destroyer



Technical Trends Between the Wars

- ◆ Overriding influence of treaty restrictions
- ◆ Limitation on battleships meant increased emphasis on cruisers
- ◆ Development of naval aviation enhanced by the presence of big carriers
- ◆ Experiments with rigid airships and land-based aircraft
- ◆ Emphasis on increased operational radius for submarines



USS Saratoga



Who Was Hector C. Bywater?

- ◆ Naval analyst, spy, journalist, and author
 - Extensive world-wide network of sources on naval matters
- ◆ Spied on German naval installations for the Admiralty before World War I
- ◆ Became well-known for his coverage of the 1922 Washington Conference
- ◆ Published his novel “*The Great Pacific War*” in 1925
- ◆ Died under questionable circumstances in 1940





Imagining a Pacific War

- ◆ Bywater wrote his book after the Washington Treaty was signed, it was published in 1925
- ◆ Bywater did not foresee many developments like the 1925 treaty that outlawed poison gas and the 1930 London Treaty
- ◆ Bywater did correctly forecast the general outline of the Pacific War that actually occurred in 1941 – 45
 - Surprise attack by Japan
 - U.S. island hopping campaign
 - Under appreciated the role of airpower
 - Understandable in 1925



Bywater's Great Pacific War

- ◆ Begins in 1931 with a surprise Japanese attack with a suicide freighter that blocks the Panama Canal
- ◆ Small U.S. Asiatic fleet is destroyed and Philippines quickly conquered
- ◆ Guam falls after a heroic and prolonged defense
- ◆ Japanese submarines and aircraft raid the Pacific Coast of the U.S.



Bywater's Great Pacific War (Part 2)

- ◆ The U.S. Scouting Fleet is attacked by Japanese submarines as it rounds Cape Horn
- ◆ An American attempt to attack the Bonins is repulsed with heavy losses
- ◆ A Japanese expedition against Samoa is destroyed, providing the first U.S. victory of the war
- ◆ The Americans advance and seize Truk as an advanced base

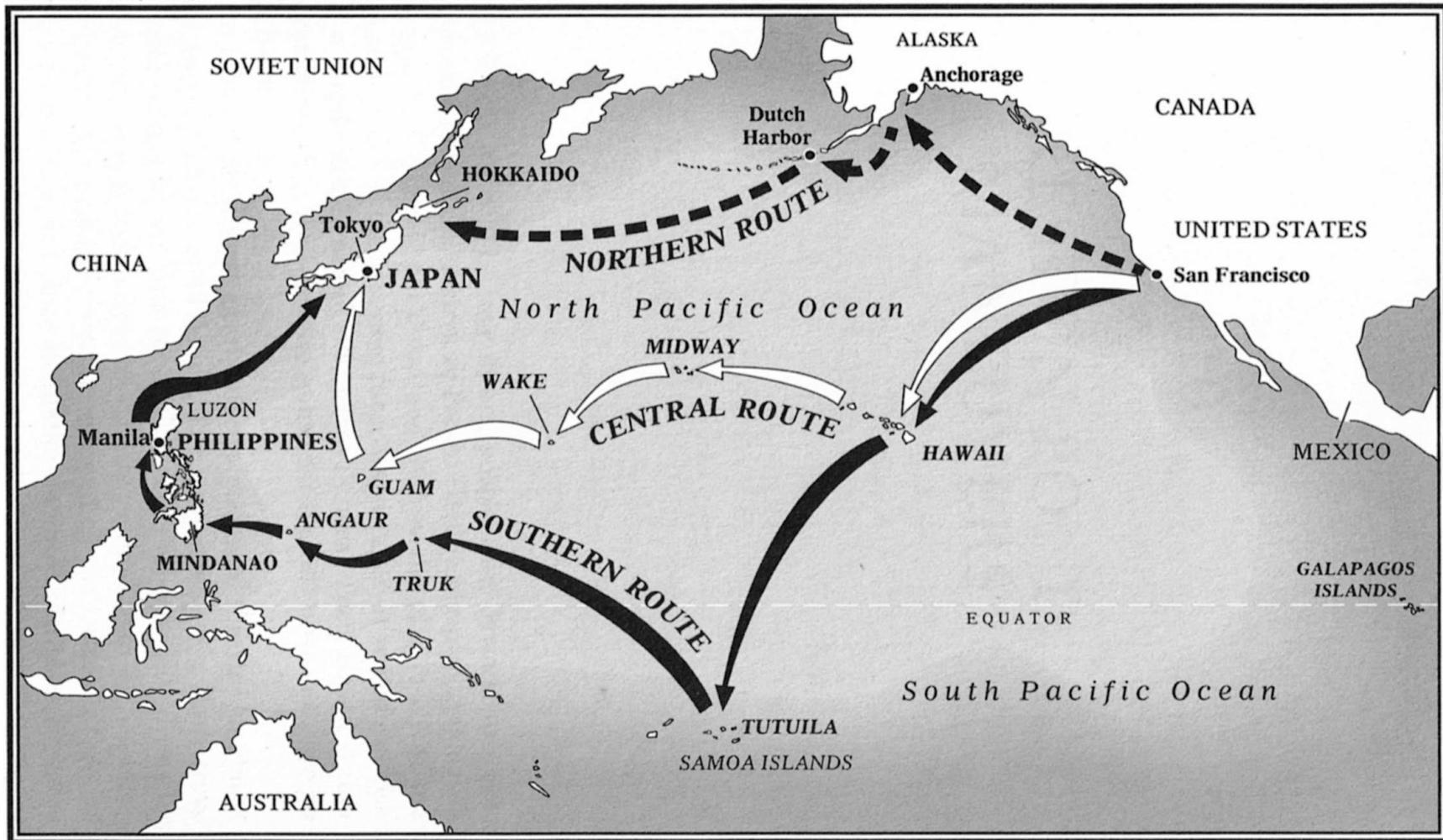


Bywater's Great Pacific War (Part 3)

- ◆ The Americans use dummy battleships to deceive the Japanese
- ◆ The Japanese sortie to attack the U.S. dummy fleet off Yap, only to find themselves cut off from their base by the real U.S. Fleet
- ◆ The United States wins the climatic battle off the island of Yap, sinking five Japanese capital ships while losing only two



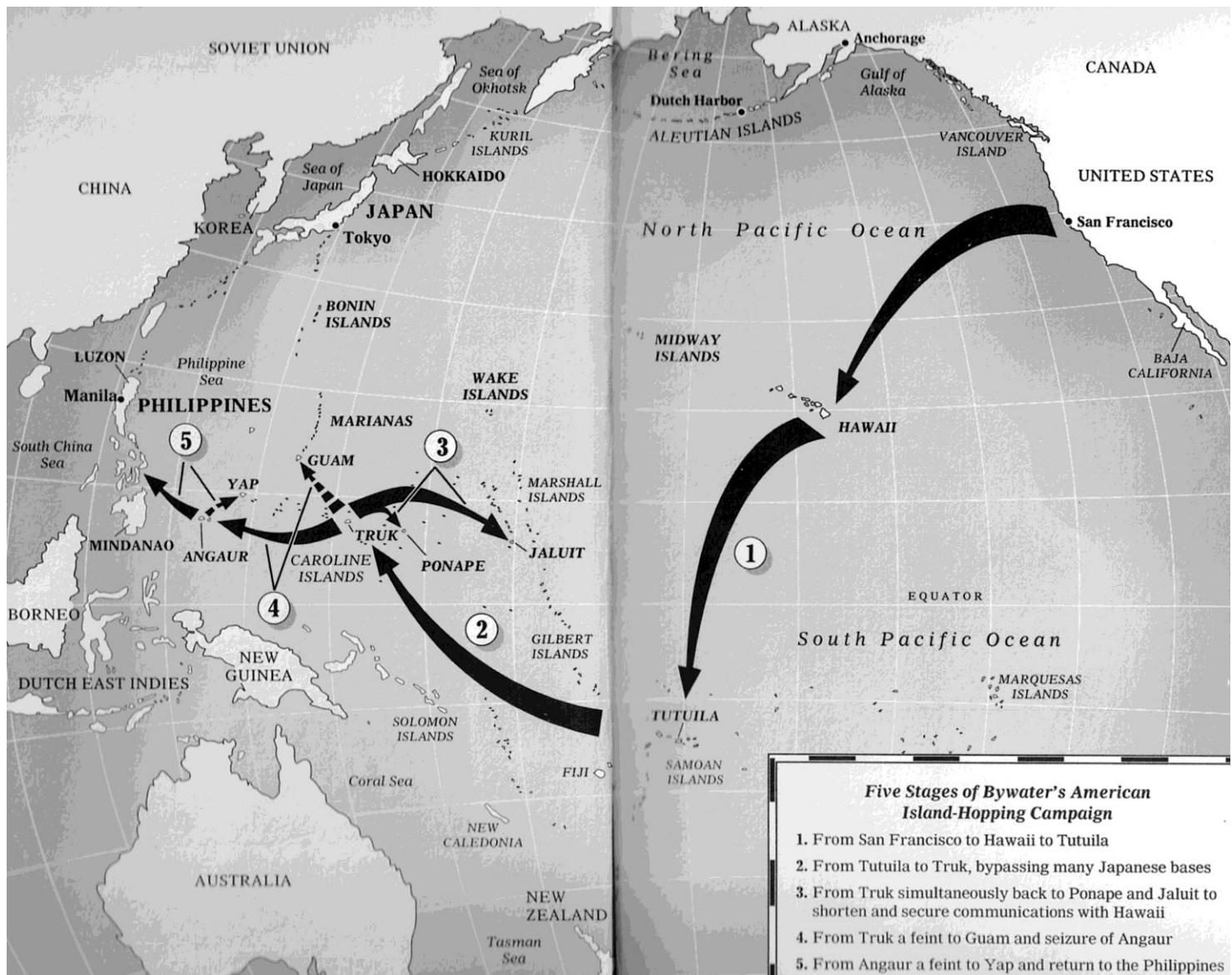
Bywater vs War Plan Orange



Possible avenues of attack by the U.S. Navy in Bywater's "The Great Pacific War"



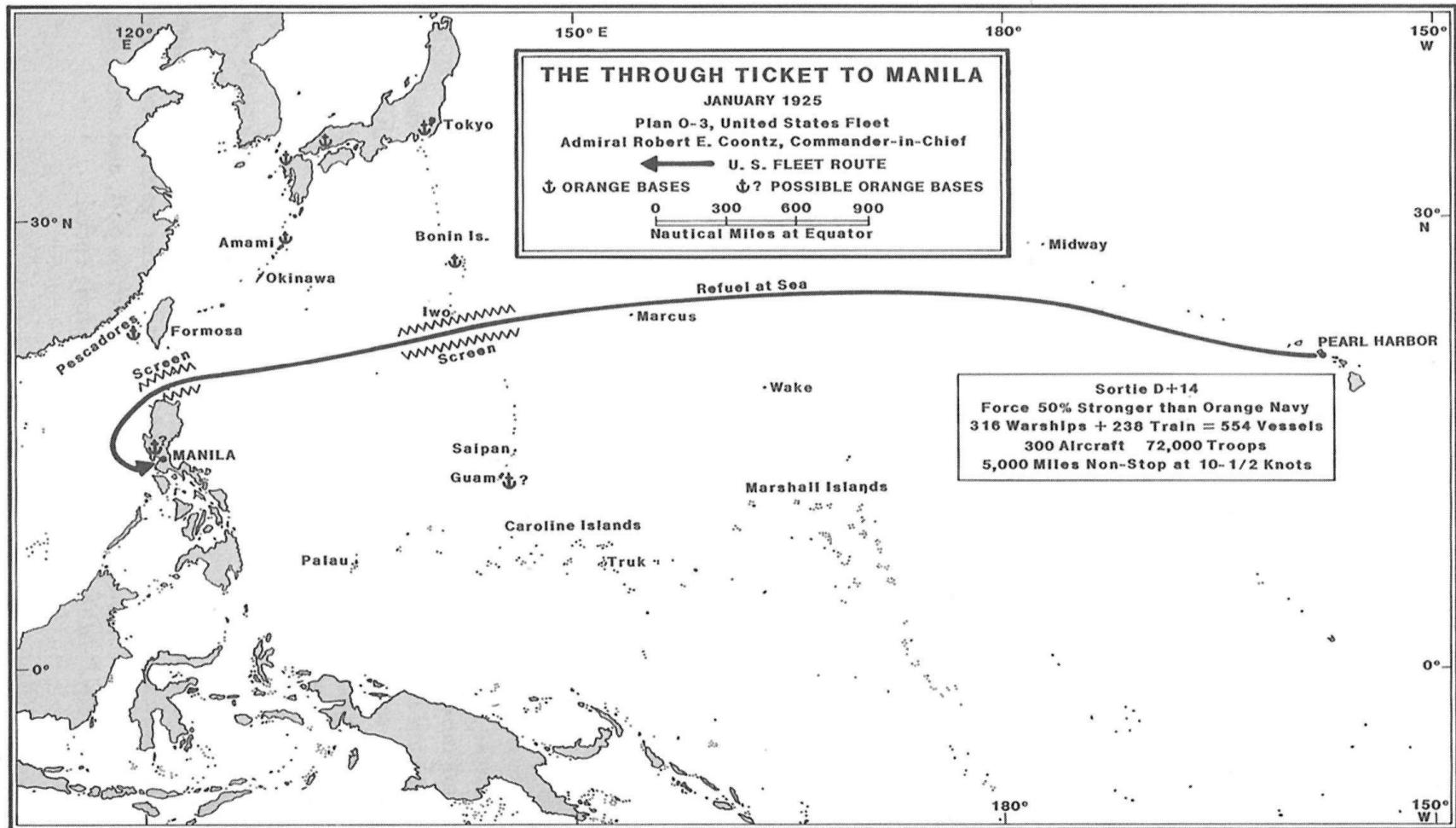
Bywater vs War Plan Orange



Route taken by U.S. Navy in “The Great Pacific War”



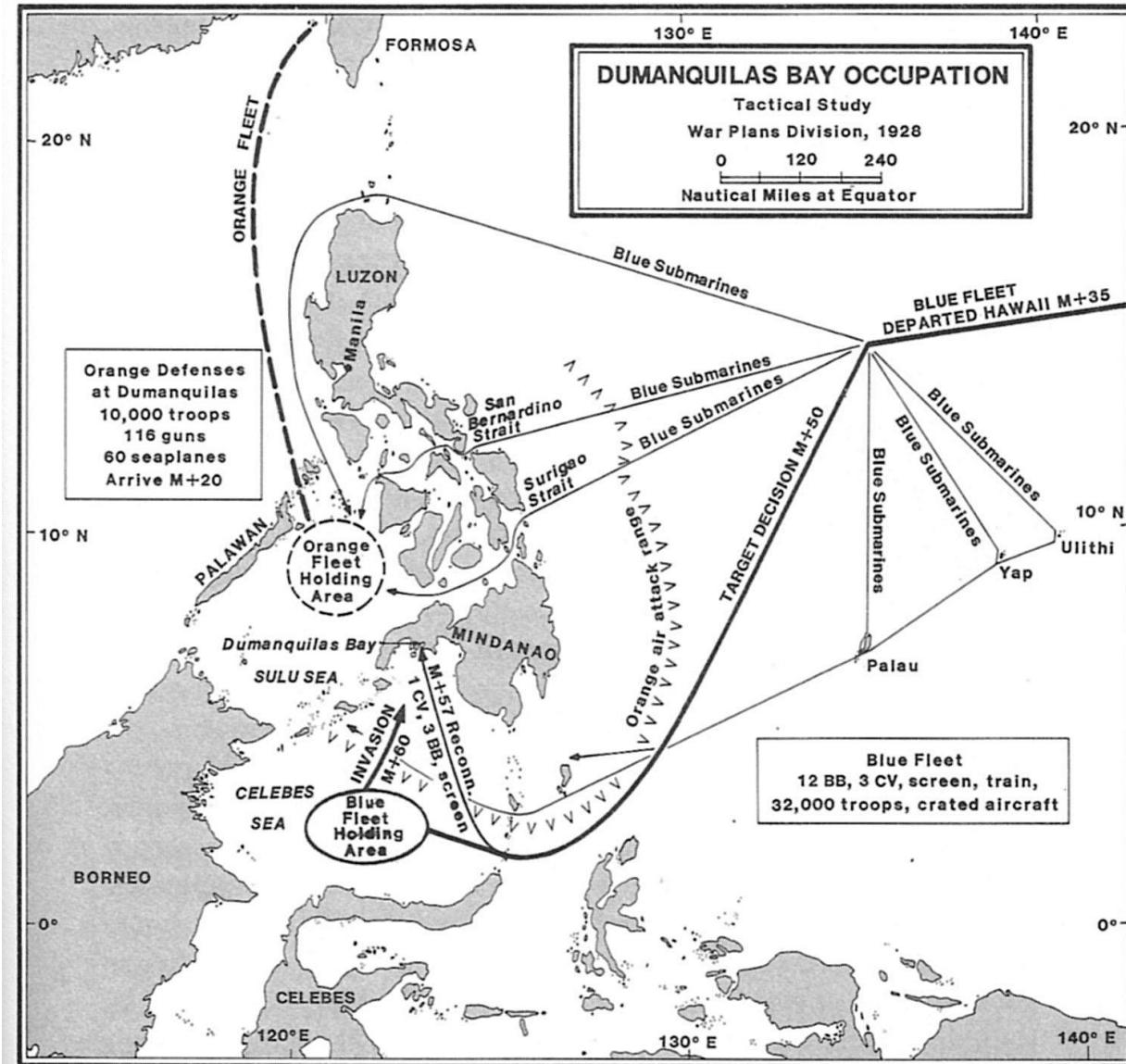
Bywater vs War Plan Orange



War Plan Orange, "Through Ticket" in 1925 – Central Route

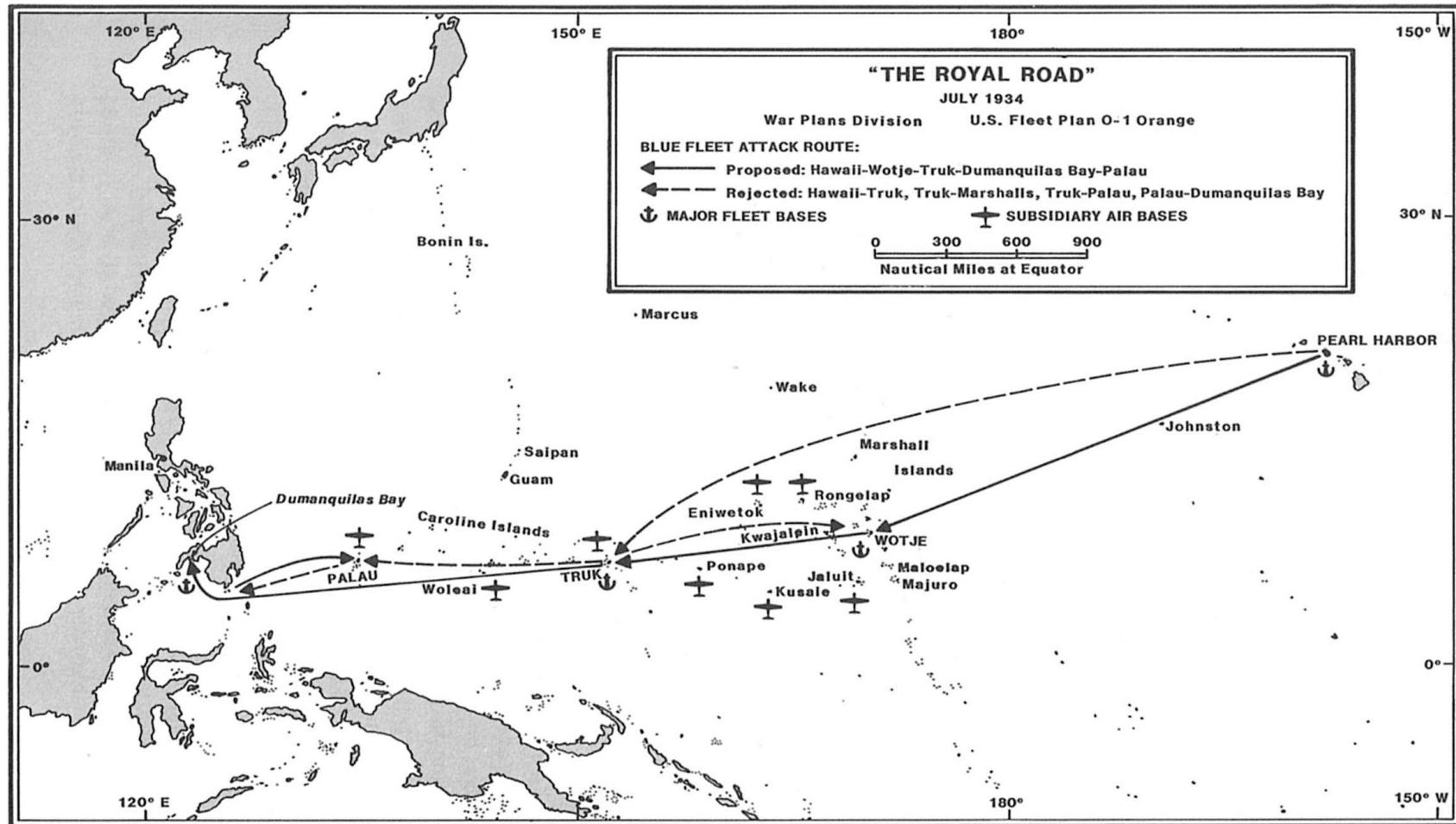


Bywater vs War Plan Orange





Bywater vs War Plan Orange



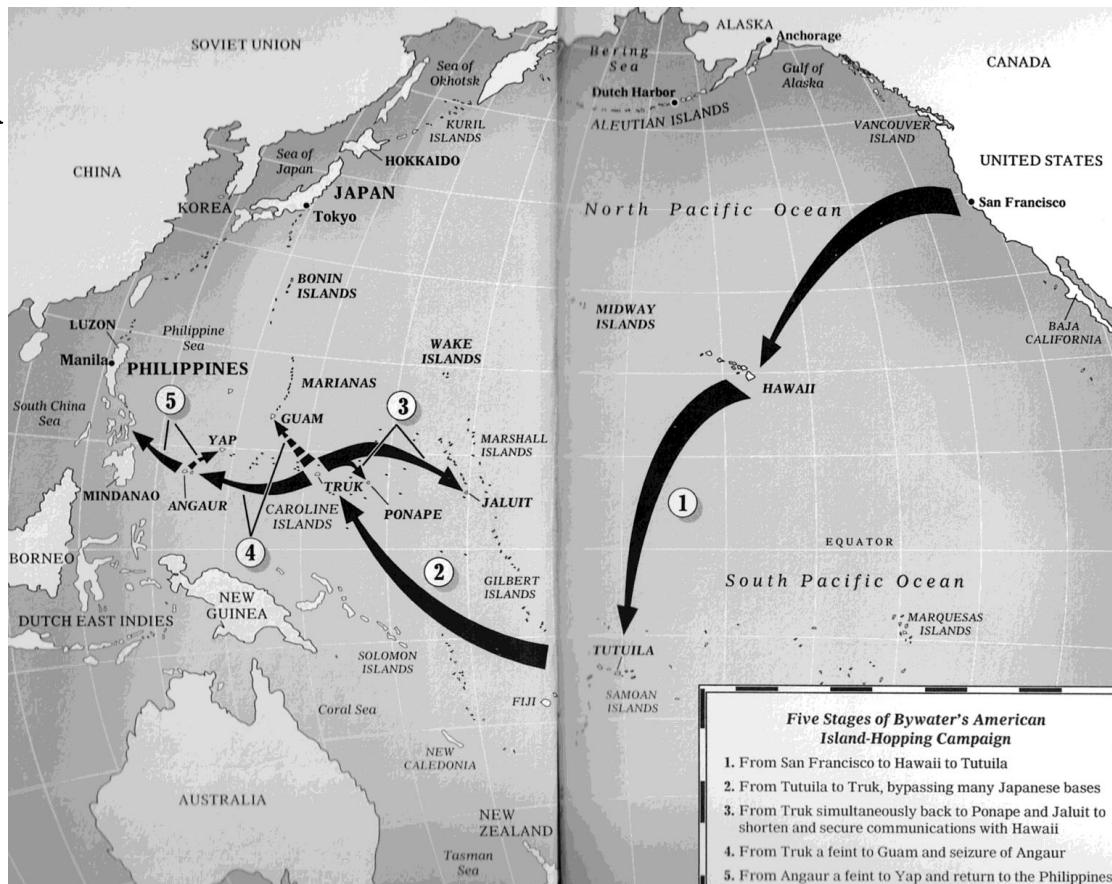
War Plan Orange, "The Royal Road" in 1934 – Southern Route



Bywater vs War Plan Orange

◆ How much influence, if any, did Bywater have on U.S. Navy planners?

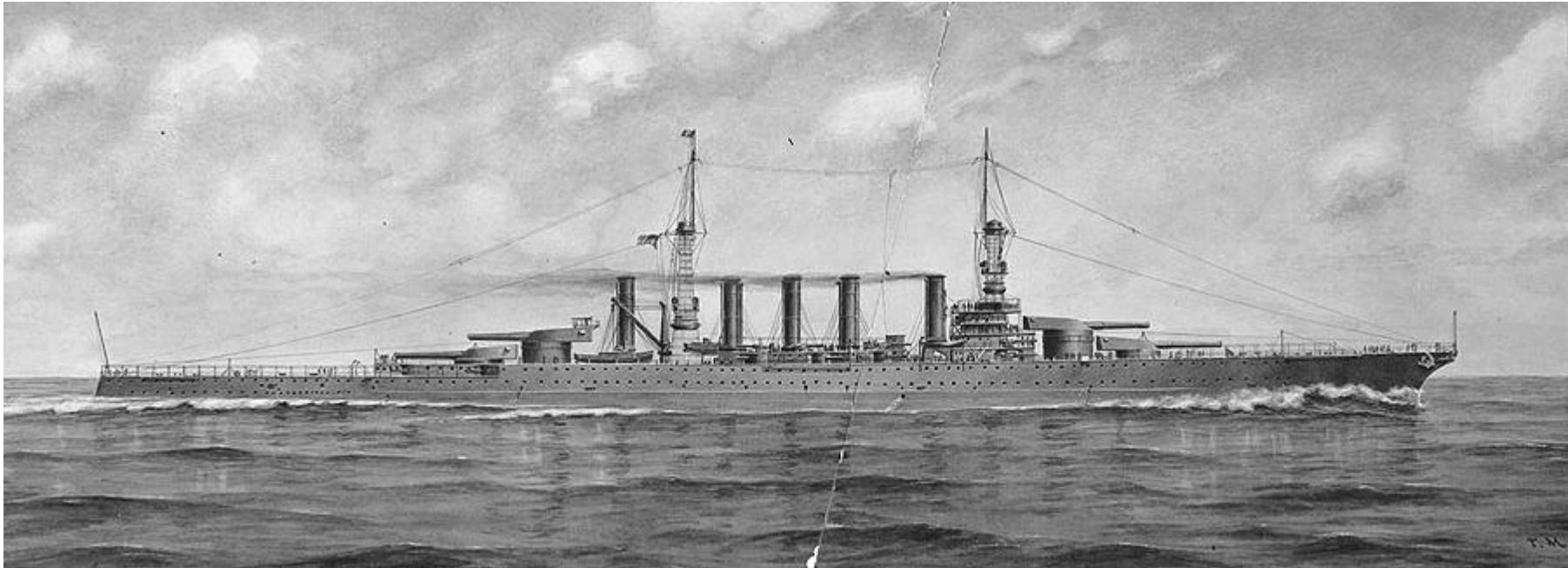
- War Plan Orange changed to a more southerly route by the mid-1930s
- Focus on Philippines and Guam as launch sites for attacks against Japan





Other Pacific Wars

- ◆ What if the Washington Conference had failed?
- ◆ The Shanghai Incident of 1932
- ◆ The *Panay* Incident of 1937



Lexington Class Battlecruiser



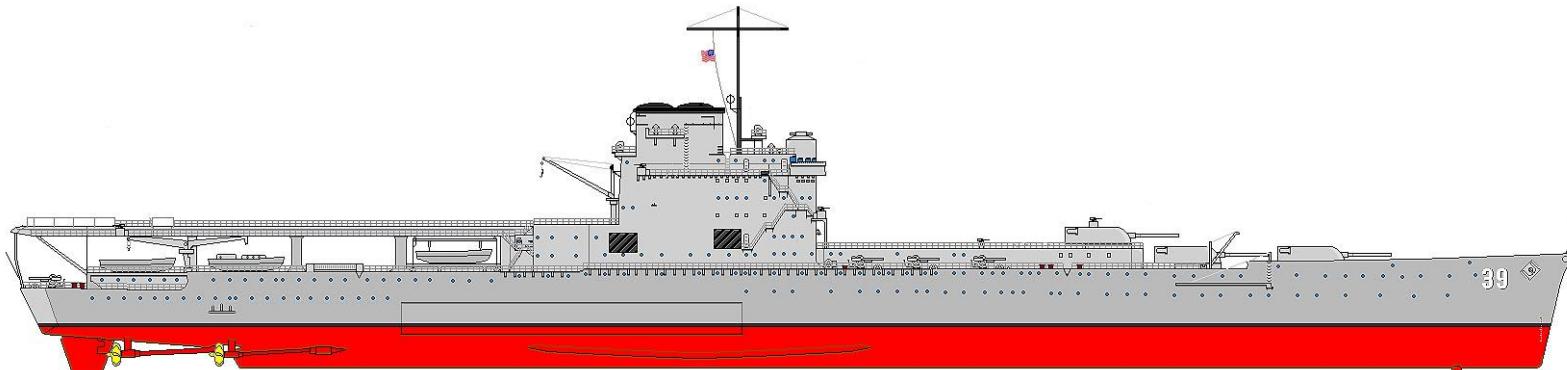
Recommended Reading

- ◆ Hector C. Bywater, *The Great Pacific War*
- ◆ Hector C. Bywater, *Navies and Nations*
- ◆ Hector C. Bywater, *Sea-power in the Pacific*
- ◆ William H. Honan, *Visions of Infamy*
- ◆ John Jordan, *Warships After Washington*
- ◆ Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange*
- ◆ David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun*



Bywater's War

- ◆ *Command at Sea* supplement
- ◆ Thirteen scenarios depicting incidents from Bywater's novel, including the climactic Battle of Yap
- ◆ Six scenarios from a hypothetical 1926 war with no Washington Treaty, including many uncompleted U.S. and Japanese capital ships
- ◆ Three scenarios from a hypothetical 1932 war, including one with the airship *Akron*
- ◆ Seven scenarios from a hypothetical 1939 war, including some with the hypothetical flight deck cruiser



U.S. Navy Flight-deck Cruiser Design



Questions

