

NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS  
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**Subject Index to  
Naval Intelligence Reports  
1940-1946**



NATIONAL ARCHIVES TRUST FUND BOARD  
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*Record Group 38*

SUBJECT INDEX TO  
NAVAL INTELLIGENCE REPORTS

On the 20 rolls of this microfilm publication is reproduced a subject index to the principal series of World War II era foreign intelligence reports maintained by the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). The index pertains mainly to reports for the years 1940-46, although there are a few index entries for reports dated as early as 1899 and as late as 1948. The index and related intelligence reports are part of the Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group (RG) 38.

History

On March 23, 1882, Secretary of the Navy William Hunt established the Office of Naval Intelligence under the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation (Navy Department General Order 292). The primary purpose of the new organization was "collecting and recording such naval information as may be useful to the Department in time of war as well as peace." ONI's first priority was to collect information about the organization, strength, tactics, technology, equipment, and personnel of foreign navies. But it also gathered information about internal political, economic, and social conditions in foreign countries and about diplomatic and military relations among governments.

In 1890 the Navy Department transferred ONI to the Office of the Assistant Secretary, but in 1898 returned it to the Bureau of Navigation. The next year, under an appropriation act of February 24, 1899, ONI received its first authorized budget and permission to assign permanent personnel. In 1909 ONI was transferred to the Office of the Aide for Operations under the Secretary of the Navy, further strengthening its role in providing information to the naval leadership. In March 1915 ONI became part of the newly created Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (Opnav), and in 1922 the official title of the office was changed to the Intelligence Division of Opnav, although it remained widely known as ONI. With the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, ONI began a period of great expansion, both overseas and in Washington. The size of the staff grew, the methods and sources of intelligence gathering expanded, and the scope of the information sought by ONI broadened.

Sources of Information

The services of naval attaches were the principal means by which ONI gathered information from foreign countries. The

first official attache was assigned to Great Britain in 1882. By 1900 ONI had dispatched naval attaches to the major capitals of Europe and Asia, while coverage of Latin America came shortly thereafter. During World War II there were 29 posts worldwide, manned by over 150 officers serving as naval attaches and assistant naval attaches.

Although he was not a diplomatic officer, a naval attache accredited to a particular country (or countries) served as a member of the U.S. diplomatic mission. The chief of the mission supervised him on matters of protocol, general procedures, and responsibilities within the U.S. mission, and the attache and the chief shared information of interest with their respective superiors in the Navy Department and State Department. The attache's paramount duty, however, was collecting naval intelligence; in this regard he received orders from ONI in Washington, not from the chief of the U.S. mission. The naval attache gathered information on the strength, organization, tactics, personnel, and technology of the naval forces of the countries to which he was assigned and also on broader diplomatic, military, and political matters. He sent this information to ONI, where it was analyzed, compared with information from other sources, and used in determining U.S. plans and policy.

The two principal sources of the attache's information were contacts with officials of the governments to which he was accredited and official publications. Beginning in the late 1930's, for example, the office of the naval attache in London duplicated large quantities of British scientific, technical, and operational documents, including those on the latest developments in radar, sonar, and cryptologic devices. Other sources of information for attaches were press reports, parliamentary and other open political debates, contacts with foreign attaches and foreign businessmen, clandestine sources, and personal observation.

During the World War II period, ONI increasingly used naval officers and civilians not designated as attaches to obtain foreign intelligence. Generally, these naval observers, naval liaison officers, shipping officers, consular agents, informants, and intelligence agents worked closely (often secretly) with the nearest naval attache. ONI operated 22 observer posts, 43 liaison offices, and 35 other posts during the war. These and other intelligence-gathering agencies (particularly the Military Intelligence Division of the Army, the Office of Strategic Services, and the British intelligence services) supplied information and documents to ONI. Throughout the war, but especially with the Axis decline, ONI also exploited seized enemy records and prisoners of war as sources of information.

### Content and Arrangement of Reports

The foreign intelligence reports that ONI received from naval attaches and other sources cover a wide range of military and nonmilitary subjects and vary in length, accuracy, source, and type of material. A report might, for instance, consist of any of the following: a compilation of unanalyzed data (such as the dimensions of a new warship); the casual remarks of a foreign diplomat; a description of the personality and physical characteristics of a foreign naval or government official; annotated clippings from foreign periodicals and newspapers; extracts from technical books; a monograph on the economic and social problems of a country; the personal observations of the attache during his travels and inspection tours; interviews with paid informants, defectors, escapees, or prisoners of war; maps of harbors, roads, and waterways; or photographs and drawings of new ships or aircraft.

From the late 19th century through World War II, ONI filed individual foreign intelligence reports in folders (originally called registers) arranged by subject; reports within a folder are generally chronological. Each folder (register) has a title, file designation, and register number. The title reflects the contents. The file designation, a three-part alphabetical-numerical code, is also indicative of the subject. For example, the designation of a folder titled "German Foreign Trade" (B-7-a) indicates the folder belongs under the main subject COMMERCE and subtopics for Trade and Germany. Register numbers for each folder have no relation to the title or the alphabetical-numerical file designations but were assigned sequentially as the need arose to establish a new folder. For example, the register number for German Foreign Trade is 15205. If the reports on a subject physically could not be encompassed in a single folder, the register number was amended with letter designations indicating additional folders. Reports on German Foreign Trade that did not fit into the original file folder (B-7-a, 15205), therefore, are continued in a second folder (B-7-a, 15205-A); especially large subject areas often have many letter folders, sometimes to the point of using double letters (AA, BB, etc.). All reports dated 1946 are filed in separate folders. For example, 1946 reports on German Foreign Trade bear the designation B-7-a, 15205/1946.

The intelligence reports for the period 1940-46 are filed in three separate series according to the original security classification (confidential, secret, and top secret) of the folders. The subject index reproduced in this microfilm publication is for confidential and secret reports only. Within the confidential and secret series, the folders are arranged by the file designation (alphabetical-numerical code) and thereunder by register number. Because cards in the subject index do not

always indicate whether a folder is in the secret or confidential series, the user may need to search both series to locate a specific report.

Arrangement of the Index

The subject index for the period 1940-46 consists of 3-by-5-inch cards filed under 19 alphabetically arranged (AERONAUTICS to WAR OPERATIONS) main subject categories (branches). Within each branch, the cards are arranged into successively more detailed categories (primary, secondary, and tertiary divisions). Subject headings are generally arranged alphabetically in each division. Below is a sample of the subject levels:

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Primary Division</u>	<u>Secondary Division</u>	<u>Tertiary Division</u>
COMMERCE	Germany	Personnel Trade	German Blacklist Trade Relations
	Japan	Personnel	Merchant Marine Schools Training of Officers in Merchant Marine
		Shipbuilding	Shipbuilding in Japan and Possessions Shipbuilding Costs
		Subsidies Trade	Strategic War Materials

Usually, either the primary or secondary division consists of alphabetically arranged names of countries preceded by the subject heading "All Nations," which is used for indexing reports not related to a specific country. Because the names of countries changed during the period covered by this index, the subject headings for countries are often inconsistent. For example, Siam and Thailand, Persia and Iran, Salvador and El Salvador, Jugoslavia and Yugoslavia, Arabia and Saudi Arabia, Roumania and Rumania, Abyssinia and Ethiopia, Holland and Netherlands, and Eire and Ireland appear in the index. Russia is used in the index for the U.S.S.R. Colonies, dependencies, and members of the British Commonwealth, such as Canada or the Belgium Congo, are included after the mother country rather than in alphabetical order.

A list of the 19 branches and their primary divisions appears at the end of this introduction. A complete list of the subject headings (approximately 10,000 entries) has been reproduced on roll 1 of this publication. On each of the remaining 19 rolls, the part of the subject heading list that relates to the cards filmed on that roll has been reproduced. The list includes all of the subject headings on the tabbed divider cards, although in some cases there are no index cards for the subjects listed; it is unknown whether the cards are missing or whether divider cards were prepared for subjects that were never used. In one case, however, where a section of the index was clearly missing (NAVY-Personnel, England to Germany), National Archives personnel have reconstructed index cards for relevant subjects.

The typewritten list of subject headings greatly facilitates a search in the index because reports on one subject may be located in widely separated parts of the index. For example, someone searching for materials on German trade relations may find information under COMMERCE (Germany, Trade); GOVERNMENT, FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL FORCES (Germany, Foreign Relations); WAR OPERATIONS (Germany, Capture of Merchant Vessels); and COMMUNICATIONS (Steamship Lines, Germany).

#### Index Cards

The cards contained in this index follow a standard format; indeed, most are on printed forms. The top line of each index card indicates the subject or title of the ONI file to which the index entry relates; generally this title is the same or similar to the subject of the primary, secondary, or tertiary division divider cards under which the index card is filed. The filing designation under which the documents can be located among the secret or confidential ONI reports is provided in the lower right part of the card. To locate the file, both the number ("Register No.") and the alphabetical-numerical designation ("File") are required.

Normally each index card lists several individual documents comprising one ONI file; frequently the list continues on the reverse of the card and often on additional cards that are numbered consecutively ("Card No. 2," etc.). The entries for the individual documents making up the file include some indication of the originator or the serial number assigned to the document by the originator ("Dept. of State," or "X-1263"), date of the document ("Dec. 4, 1940"), and a brief description of the subject of the document ("German mines in shipping lanes"). Often the descriptions also include cross-references to related files, which give register number, alphabetical-numerical file designation, and subject "(see also . . .)." Most of the documents listed on these index cards are filed in the confidential series

of reports; documents filed in the secret series are usually indicated in the individual document description.

Also indicated on the front sides of the index cards is the source of the documents included in the file (almost always "various") and the inclusive dates of the documents listed on that card. On the left side of the cards, below the descriptions of the individual documents, is listed the hierarchy of subject levels (branch and primary, secondary, and tertiary divisions) under which the specific card is filed ("1. War Operations, 2. All Nations, 3. European War, 4. Mined Areas").

#### Microfilm Format

When both sides of the index cards contain descriptions of documents, both sides have been filmed. Up to four card surfaces have been filmed on each 35mm microfilm image. The fronts of four cards are filmed on one image, followed on the next image by the reverse sides of the same four cards filmed in the same relative position.

#### Security Classification

The index cards reproduced in this microfilm publication have been declassified. Information that the Navy Department has deemed to require continued security protection has been deleted from a few cards.

#### Related Records

Related records created by ONI include intelligence reports other than those indexed by this microfilm publication. There are intelligence reports and accompanying indexes for the period 1882-1939, formerly top-secret reports for the period 1944-47, and geographically arranged reports for the year 1946. A special collection of selected naval attache reports, 1937-43, has been microfilmed and described as M975. Also among the records of ONI in RG 38 are correspondence with naval attaches, personnel records, publications, and records of domestic investigations.

Other related records include Army intelligence records created by the Military Intelligence Division among the Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG 165, and records of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Intelligence, among the Records of the Army Staff, RG 319. The decimal file of the Department of State in General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, contains political and economic information on many subjects discussed in the naval intelligence reports.

Rebecca Livingston wrote these introductory remarks and prepared the index cards for filming.



APPENDIX

<u>BRANCHES</u>	<u>PRIMARY DIVISIONS</u>
AERONAUTICS	Accidents-War Operations
ARMY	All Nations and Albania-Venezuela
CAMOUFLAGE	All Nations and Argentina-Japan
CHEMICAL WARFARE	All Nations and Chile-United States
COMMERCE	All Nations and Arabia-Venezuela
COMMUNICATIONS	Air Routes-Voyages
FINANCIAL MATTERS	All Nations and Argentina-Venezuela
FUEL	All Nations and Arabia-Venezuela
GOVERNMENT, FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL FORCES	All Nations and Afghanistan-Venezuela
INDUSTRY AND INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES	Chemicals-Standards
MAPS AND CHARTS	All Nations and Abyssinia-Venezuela
NAVY	Depots and Bases-Vessels
ORDNANCE	Ammunition-Torpedoes
PEOPLE AND SOCIAL FORCES	Labor and Wages-Societies
PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AND DETAILS OF PLACES	All Nations and Albania-Venezuela
PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDS	All Nations and Abyssinia-Venezuela
SCIENCE	Aerology-Technical Information
SUPPLIES	All Nations and Afghanistan-Venezuela
WAR OPERATIONS	All Nations and Africa-United States

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<u>Roll</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	AERONAUTICS (Accidents-Bombs and Bomb Dropping)
2	AERONAUTICS (Commercial Aviation-Navigation)
3	AERONAUTICS (Organization-War Operations)
4	ARMY - COMMERCE (Estonia)
5	COMMERCE (Ethiopia) - COMMUNICATIONS (Radio Communications)
6	COMMUNICATIONS (Radio Equipment-Voyages)
7	FINANCIAL MATTERS - GOVERNMENT, FOREIGN RELATIONS (Chile)
8	GOVERNMENT, FOREIGN RELATIONS (China-Greece)
9	GOVERNMENT, FOREIGN RELATIONS (Guatemala-United States)
10	GOVERNMENT, FOREIGN RELATIONS (Uruguay) - INDUSTRY AND INDUSTRIAL FORCES
11	MAPS AND CHARTS - NAVY (Personnel, Honduras)
12	NAVY (Personnel, Hungary-Vessels, England)
13	NAVY (Vessels, England Colonial-Vessels, Submarines)
14	ORDNANCE - PEOPLE AND SOCIAL FORCES (Personalities)
15	PEOPLE AND SOCIAL FORCES (Population) - PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY (Chile)
16	PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY (China-England Colonial)
17	PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY (Estonia-Japan Colonial)
18	PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY (Jugoslavia-Turkey)
19	PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY (United States) - SCIENCE
20	SUPPLIES - WAR OPERATIONS