

## Preemptive Strike

The secret plan that would have prevented the attack on Pearl Harbor.

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275 pages.

It has often been said that 9-11 was the modern day Pearl Harbor, yet are there really Parallels? If viewed from a distance yes; both came as a surprise, although this is debatable and as Alan indicates in his book, some people did know that the Japanese were on their way.

The book comes at a time when much of the world is beginning to wake up to an alternative view to history as we know it. Before 911 this book would not be popular or rather to say in current parlance; Politically Correct. It still isn't politically correct today for to doubt one's own government can lead to endless paranoia.

Alan Armstrong a well established aviation lawyer does bring up a good case. It is written as a fact and has plenty of documentation to support and establish the concept as a fact. And what is the concept? In essence America had been planning to attack Japan to prevent it from becoming a world power through aggression. The situation remains today, Japan, a tiny nation is in dire need of real estate. One of Japan's targets was the then fractured state of China. Nobody was really in charge there. The United States exercised gunboat diplomacy in China along the Yangtze River in the late 1920's. Japan's attack on China and countries south was an obvious choice. Not only did this provide real estate but also much needed oil and commodities for its rapidly developing industry.

The United States was in the late 30's not the super power it is today. On the contrary, the doctrine was as Theodore Roosevelt said, you should "walk quietly and carry a big stick". This was well documented in the 1966 movie the "Sand Pebbles", no aggression just a show of power. And so it was that a U.S. covert operation was initiated, headed by a "wild card" commander Claire Lee Chennault and his Flying Tigers. Here the pendulum swings from non-aggression to aggression in that the mission was to bomb Japan into submission. Only there was a slight difference which you will find in the book.

A series of events prevented this plan from happening in the way and time frame required. This situation does begin to have the smell of the establishment drift through it. One would think that the "obstructed" deployment of Chennault's air force was by pure chance. Alan's book will dispel any thoughts that it was a chance situation that allowed Japan to aggress and take the first shot. It is to be remembered that in politics nothing is left to chance.

The work done to document this black ops situation is definitely of the highest standard. Alan Armstrong builds an excellent case, however the question remains, who is the accused?

I certainly recommend this as required reading not only from an aviation standpoint but from an inquisitive mind wishing not to consume the Pablum dished out by the establishment propaganda machine.

The plot in this book has the making for an epic movie, yet it is to be remembered that this was very real. Again I revert back to the distinct smell of something not very right, the phrase "What's wrong with this picture" does come to mind. The book will be consumed by the conspiracy crowd in healthy numbers because as time moves on, conspiracy is rapidly becoming the new reality. It would be wrong for me to close this review without asking the question that the book highlights on. Are there factions behind the scenes that are fighting each other? Have these establishment elements been engineering wars we have had since the First World War? Reading between the lines you will begin to suspect that there definitely is something wrong with this picture.

Preemptive Strike, the book, has been a welcome member of my flight bag as I read and reread it during my daily travels. I am convinced you will do the same. It will cause a rethink of the history books you've read.

James van Etten

\* Preemptive Strike – America's Secret Plan to Bomb Japan

# Before the Attack on Pearl Harbor

## I. PEARL HARBOR AS AN ICON

Pearl Harbor is an icon that shapes America's identity as a nation. Traditionally, Pearl Harbor, like September 11, 2001, is viewed as a symbol of America's lack of preparation to anticipate and deal with a potential hostile force. In reality, President Roosevelt, his Aide, Dr. Lauchlin Currie and his key cabinet members were planning to initiate fire bombing raids on Japan before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Moreover, America's plans for a "preemptive strike" were begun before the Japanese began formulating their plans to attack Pearl Harbor. My manuscript is complete. When it is published, it will change the way America views not only Pearl Harbor, but also September 11, 2001, and the events that have taken place in this country since that tragedy. In reality, Pearl Harbor, like 9/11, represents a "missed opportunity." The men and equipment were being positioned to initiate preemptive bombing raids on Japan before the attack on Pearl

Harbor. America simply failed to act with dispatch. When word came that Japanese transport ships were sailing south from China on November 25, 1941, few imagined it signaled a massive offensive by Japan, not only in Southeast Asia, but across the Pacific and as far east as Hawaii. America provided the flight training to the terrorists of 9/11. America provided the aviation fuel [we sold large amounts of aviation fuel to Thailand before Pearl Harbor which American military leaders knew or reasonably concluded was going to Japan] and a substantial amount of the technology [aircraft and engine designs] employed by Japan on December 7.

## II. AMERICA'S HISTORICAL MEMORY

America's historical memory of the events surrounding the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor is shaped by the words of President Roosevelt before a joint session of Congress on Monday, December 8, 1941. The President declared that America had been "suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan." He further maintained that "The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its government...looking towards the maintenance of peace in the Pacific." As was true with the recent declaration by President Bush that Iraq possessed "weapons of mass destruction," Americans have relied, as they must always rely, on our President in evaluating military and political crises which confront our country. However, like it or not, we must expect there will be times when our government will say publicly it is following one course of action when, in fact, it is doing something entirely different. The ability of an American President to competently and effectively execute a war strategy becomes a very complex and demanding activity in our open and democratic society. This is discussed at length in my manuscript in relation to the struggle between President Roosevelt and Charles Lindbergh over whether America should have been isolationist or interventionist. The same debate continues today among Americans.

## III. FACTS IGNORED BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

President Roosevelt withheld or omitted the following material facts from his address before Congress:

(1) In order to circumvent the American Neutrality Laws, the United States had "loaned" China One Hundred Million Dollars to support the regime of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek then engaged in a brutal conflict with Japan, the Sino-Japanese War.

(2) In November of 1940, more than one year before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Chiang Kai-shek dispatched a secret message to President Roosevelt asking for the forma-

tion of a "special air unit" in China composed of American planes and pilots. He requested 350 fighters and 150 bombers and indicated this "Chinese Air Force" (in name only) could be employed to bomb Tokyo and other centers of Japanese population and industry.

(3) On December 8, 1940, almost one year to the day before the Japanese surprise attack, Roosevelt luncheoned with Dr. T.V. Song, China's Foreign Minister and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau at the White House. Writing later of that meeting, Morgenthau noted the President had indicated to him that "it would be a nice thing if China bombed Japan."

(4) On Monday, December 9, 1940, Dr. Soong delivered a hand-written note to Morgenthau which included a map of secret air bases in China within flying distance to key Japanese cities.

(5) On Tuesday, December 10, 1940, at 8:40 a.m. Morgenthau met with Secretary of State Cordell Hull when Hull declared: "What we have to do, Henry, is to get 500 American planes to start from the Aleutian Islands and fly over Japan just once. That will teach them a lesson. If we could only find a way to have them (the Chinese) drop some bombs on Tokyo?"

(6) Morgenthau, Hull, Secretary of War Henry Stimson and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox (known as the "Plus Four") met with President Roosevelt on December 19, 1940, when the President expressed delight at the idea of having ostensible Chinese aircraft bomb Japan. The President directed the "Plus Four" to work it out.

(7) On Friday, December 20, 1940, when Morgenthau had two meetings with Dr. Soong, Morgenthau also received a phone call from Knox at 5:13 p.m. The topic of conversation related to was the "hush, hush thing" and included discussions set for the following Monday about 300 P-40 fighter planes that could still be built by Curtiss Aircraft Corporation. During the phone conversation Knox declared: "Well, by God, we ought to grab some of those for the Chinese."

(8) On Saturday, December 21, 1940, at 5:00 p.m. Morgenthau met with, among others, Dr. Soong, General Mow and Captain Claire Lee Chennault. Chennault had been Air Corps pilot and instructor in fighter tactics at the Air Tactical School at Maxwell Field. His disagreement with Air Corps doctrine of bomber supremacy had forced his early retirement ostensibly for medical reasons. Chennault had found employment as a mercenary pilot in the service of the Chinese Government. With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, Chennault continued to fly in combat despite directives from the American Ambassador that Chennault and other mercenaries should leave China. Chennault presented Morgenthau with a plan to bomb Tokyo and other key Japanese cities employing either B-17 Flying Fortress bombers or Lockheed Hudson bombers. Incendiary bombs would be deployed to set the Japanese cities on fire and save weight so the bombers could carry more fuel.

(9) On Sunday, December 22, 1940, the Plus Four met with General Marshal who maintained Britain needed Flying Fortresses more than China. As a consolation prize, China would be allowed to purchase 100 Curtiss P-40 fighters

(10) On or before April 14, 1941, President Roosevelt gave an oral directive to Navy Secretary Frank Knox to allow American military pilots and technicians to resign from the Army, Navy and Marine Corps to serve in China.

(11) On April 14, 1941, Captain Frank Beatty, Aide to Secretary Knox wrote letters of introduction to commanders of Navy and Marine air bases on behalf of Chennault and Commander Rutledge Irvine (USN ret.) to visit those bases and recruit men to serve in the employ of the Central Aircraft Manufacturing Company (CAMCO), since CAMCO was used as a cover by the United States government which took the official position that these men were involved in a "commercial venture without any direct participation by the United States Government." Of Chennault and other confederates involved in this enterprise records of the United States Navy relate: "They realize the necessity for keeping the thing quiet and will take due precautions."

(12) On May 12, 1941, Chennault's plan to firebomb Japanese cities was resurrected with Dr. Lauchlin Currie as its champion. Dr. Currie had received his Ph.D. in economics from Harvard University and studied at the London School of Economics and was serving as Aide to President Roosevelt. The plan was now officially Joint (Army/Navy) Board 355, Serial 691 ("JB 355"). JB 355 envisioned 500 military aircraft being operational in China by October 31, 1941, including 350 fighters and 150 bombers. The fourth strategic objective of JB 355 was: "Destruction of Japanese factories in order to cripple pro-

duction of munitions and essential articles for maintenance of economic structure of Japan." Cities selected for firebombing included: Nagasaki, Kobe, Osaka and Tokyo.

(13) JB 355 was an ambitious project. It would be accomplished in three stages. The first stage was the 100 P-40 fighters the Plus Four had allocated to China and which sailed for Rangoon, Burma in the spring of 1941. These planes would be used to provide air cover to keep the Burma Road, China's only lifeline of supplies to the outside world, open. They were to be operational by July of 1941. The second stage included 100 bombers for offensive operations and 200 additional fighters. The bombers were to be shipped to Burma by May of 1941. The third stage included another 50 bombers and 150 fighters to keep a full force, anticipating a loss rate of 15%. The third stage was to be completed by November of 1941.

(14) The first 100 P-40 fighters [actually, only 99 reached Rangoon] were unloaded on the docks of Rangoon, Burma. The Japanese maintained a diplomatic office in Rangoon. Mingaladon Airfield where the P-40 fighters were assembled and test-flown was only 12 miles north of Rangoon. It is difficult to believe the Japanese were unaware of the American "guerilla air corps" being assembled and training in Burma where they were safe from attacks by Japanese bombers in French Indo-China, unless Japan wanted to provoke an incident with Great Britain, since Burma was a British Colony.

(15) On July 23, 1941, President Roosevelt authorized JB 355 by affixing his signature to the recommendation from American military commanders. On the same day Dr. Currie dispatched a top secret telegram to Madame Chiang Kai-shek in care of the American Embassy in Chungking relating: "I am happy to be able to report today the President directed that sixty-six bombers be made available to China this year with twenty-four to be delivered immediately." What was unknown to Dr. Currie and to Madame Chiang was the existence of a Japanese collaborator in or closely connected to the Chinese Nationalist Government who was feeding this very secret information to the Japanese. American initiatives to serve as a non-belligerent ally to China were not unknown to Tokyo. Further, if the Roosevelt administration was going to sponsor the operation of an American guerilla air force in China, would not Japan be well-advised to seize the initiative and attack America first?

(16) Through the summer of 1941, Dr. Currie struggled to get bombers released for service in China.

(17) On July 9, 1941, an American reporter filed a news dispatch that American technicians and pilots were sailing from San Francisco for service in China. En route to Rangoon, the Japanese broadcast a radio message declaring that the ship transporting the American Volunteers would be sunk.

(18) On September 30, 1941, wrote a secret memorandum to Knox and Stimson declaring that in addition to the 100 P-40 fighters already in Burma, the United States was sending China 66 bombers and 269 additional fighters. America's buildup of air power was a subject of discussion between President Roosevelt and Japanese Ambassador Nomura. Again, the Japanese could not have been unaware of America's intentions in Southeast Asia.

(19) On October 31, 1941, The United States News carried a two page story entitled: "Bomber Lanes to Japan--Flying Time from Strategic Points." The story included an illustration depicting bases in Chungking, Hong Kong, Singapore, Cavite, Vladivostok, Guam and Dutch Harbor from which American bombers might be launched to bomb Japan.

(20) On November 15, 1941, General Marshall gave a secret briefing to the New York Times, New York Tribune, Newsweek and the Associated Press asserting that bombing operations would be initiated against Japan in the first ten days of December.

(21) On November 21, 1941, Army Air Corps strategists were selecting targets in Japan to be attacked by heavy bombers. On the same day, the Second American Volunteer Group [the men that would man and service the "Chinese" bombers] sailed from San Francisco. The Lockheed Hudson bombers were sitting on the tarmac in Burbank, California waiting to be flown across the Pacific.

#### IV. THE SCOPE AND CONTENT OF PREEMPTIVE STRIKE

The author has invested approximately four years of research and nine months of writing in formulating the manuscript entitled: "Preemptive Strike--America's Secret Plan to Bomb Japan before the Attack on Pearl Harbor." This is an extremely thorough and very

well documented work which includes appendices that list the formerly classified and secret documents which are the basis of my manuscript. The facts set forth above are matters of record. The conclusion a reader draws from them is another matter. The author's opinion is that had Chennault and China been supplied the men and equipment needed to attack Japanese interests on a timely basis, the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor may never have happened. Indeed, in "pitching" his idea for a "special air unit" to Roosevelt, Chiang Kai-shek postulated it would prevent Japan's expansion to the south, including Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, Burma and the Philippines. Others may reach another conclusion and argue that timely provision of supplies would have accelerated the conflict in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The purpose of the book is to make people think about when the President should employ military power preemptively.

## V. ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author is an aviation attorney in Atlanta who is an active pilot and who flies a replica Japanese bomber in air shows. The author is a contributing editor to the Lawyer Pilots Bar Association Journal and has written articles on aviation law printed in The Journal of Air Law and Commerce, the Transportation Law Journal and Air Law. The author has testified before the House Aviation Subcommittee of the House of Representatives, is Chairman of the Aviation Section for the State Bar of Georgia and is a founding member of the National Transportation Safety Board Bar Association. The author is an active member of the Dixie Wing of the Commemorative Air Force and is a pilot in that organization. The author is married and has a daughter. He resides in Tucker, Georgia. For more complete information on the author please visit the following websites:

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