

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

James E. Webb  
 VADM. Chai Vellborn, Jr.  
 Maj. Gen. Durward S. Wilson  
 Mrs. Durward S. Wilson  
 Lt. Sadao Yamamoto  
 Adm. Katsunoshin Yamanashi  
 RADM. Shikazo Yano

Capt. Tadao Yokoi  
 Capt. Minoru Yokota  
 RADM. Ichiro Yokoyama  
 Adm. Zengo Yoshida  
 Takeo Yoshikawa  
 Cmdr. Chuichi Yoshioka  
 Mrs. Cassin B. Young

In addition to the above, a number who granted Dr. Prange interviews requested anonymity.

## Statements

The following submitted written statements in lieu of or in addition to personal interviews:

Lt. Cmdr. Heijiro Abe  
 Lt. Cmdr. Zenji Abe  
 Capt. Minoru Genda  
 VADM. Chuichi Hara  
 Lt. Takashi Hashiguchi  
 Col. Takushiro Hattori  
 Lt. Masanobu Ibusuki  
 Lt. Cmdr. Takemi Iwami  
 Lt. Ichiro Kitajima  
 Lt. Heita Matsumura  
 Lt. Cmdr. Iwakichi Mifuku  
 First Petty Officer Kazuo Muranaka

Lt. Tamotsu Nakajima  
 Lt. Keizo Ofuchi  
 Lt. Kiyokuma Okajima  
 Otojiro Okuda  
 Lt. Yoshikazu Sato  
 Lt. Yoshio Shiga  
 Adm. Mitsumi Shimizu  
 Lt. Saburo Shindo  
 Capt. Itaru Tachibana  
 Lt. Haruo Takeda  
 Cmdr. Hiroshi Uwai

## REVISIONISTS REVISITED

Gordon W. Prange, At Dawn We Slept:  
The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor  
 (NY: Penguin Books, 1981)

Kimmel mentioned:  
 pp. 851, fn 1, 840 (841), 842,  
 848, 849

Kimmel mentioned:  
 pp. 851, fn 1,  
 of PR Revisionism  
 criticism

In Chapters 139 through 143 of his original manuscript for Volume Four of his book, Gordon Prange discussed the revisionist school at great length. The following is a summary:

While the Pearl Harbor attack united the American people, it was too much to ask that unity in the war effort would also create political unity. The legend began that Pearl Harbor was Roosevelt's fault—a legend that flourished in the postwar revisionist school.<sup>1</sup>

NEUMANN AND CHAMBERLIN  
 The more reasonable revisionists confined themselves to criticism of Roosevelt's approach to foreign affairs. William L. Neumann believed that American foreign policy before World War II was unsound because the Soviet Union was the ultimate gainer.<sup>2</sup> The major thrust of William Henry Chamberlin's book *America's Second Crusade* was that if the United States had kept out of the war, communism would have been contained.

Neumann's and Chamberlin's conclusions were arguable for two reasons. First, a President and his State Department cannot be lords of the future. And in 1941 any menace to the United States from the Russians and the Chinese was problematical, while the threat from the Nazis and the Japanese militarists was immediate. Secondly, their theses tacitly implied that if the United States stood aside while Hitler swallowed the British Empire and the Soviet Union, *der Führer* thereupon would settle down with a contented sigh, and the Third Reich and the United States would coexist like the lion and the lamb. Even the most cursory look at Hitler's record makes this notion questionable.

Another brand of revisionists believed that Roosevelt deliberately dragged the United States into the war. This group stopped short of claiming that he schemed to have the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor. For example, Charles A. Beard, in *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War 1941*, wrote a blistering indictment of Roosevelt, his administration, and in particular, his foreign policy. According to Beard, the President was a warmonger who deceived the American people, violated

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occurred. The second one to be made ready was on the point of sailing and third was not yet ready."<sup>40</sup> O'Dell departed on December 3 and on the afternoon of the fifth sighted the coast of Indochina. Ten minutes later she received orders to return immediately to Manila.<sup>41</sup>

BARNES

In a wild flight of imagination Barnes wrote, "If the *Isabel* episode had been handled in the manner that Roosevelt wished and provided the maximum provocation to trigger-happy Japanese pilots or gunners there might not have been any attack on Pearl Harbor and the fleet there could have been saved."<sup>42</sup> This is leaping to conclusions with a vengeance. As the reader knows, Nagumo had exacted from Yamamoto an ironclad promise that no Japanese shot would be fired in Southeast Asia until he had commenced his attack on Pearl Harbor. Moreover, the Japanese were not striking Pearl Harbor just to oblige Roosevelt. They were out to immobilize the U.S. Pacific Fleet for at least six months. A hunter looking for bear will not call off the chase because someone else in the party has bagged a field mouse.

FDR'S MOTIVES?

What exactly did Roosevelt have in mind? So far no evidence has come to light beyond what is contained in the message initiating the mission. But anyone who had followed Roosevelt's career in relation to the Navy could have predicted that sooner or later he probably would engage in some such stunt. His track record shows that he had a well-nigh indestructible faith in small craft.<sup>43</sup> It was quite in character that he should want to use the "three little ships" for scouting even though Hart was already covering the job by aerial reconnaissance. The project was not one of Roosevelt's brighter ideas, but there is no concrete reason to cite it as an example of malice aforethought.

Three messages from widely separated sources provided the revisionists with more grist for their mill. One of these originated with the U.S. military attaché in Australia, Colonel Van S. Merle-Smith. He and his assistant, Lieutenant Robert H. O'Dell, attended a conference in Melbourne on December 4. This conference "principally concerned itself with the movement of a Jap Task Force in the South China Sea."

DUTCH AND RAINBOW PLANS

As a result of this meeting, Merle-Smith instructed O'Dell to prepare a cable concerning the convoy and the fact that "the Dutch had ordered the execution of the Rainbow Plan, A-2." This shook up O'Dell considerably. "That was to go into effect only in case of war and here the Dutch had ordered it." Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, chief of staff of the Royal Australian Air Force, asked Merle-Smith to hold up the cable until he had reported the information at a meeting of the War Cabinet scheduled for that evening. Meanwhile, O'Dell coded the cable, preparing one for MacArthur and one for Short, with the request that the latter repeat the dispatch to Washington. The attachés did not notify G-2 in Washington because of the time factor.<sup>44</sup>

Another reason impelling Merle-Smith to contact Short directly was the understanding "that A-2 fell into the Rainbow Plan and that certain action was called for by the American Navy under Plan A-2" and Short "would naturally inform the Navy" that the Dutch had activated it.<sup>45</sup>

Why, if he believed this to be a matter involving the U.S. Navy, did not Merle-Smith turn the problem over to his naval colleague, Captain Charles A. Coursey? He was informed of the incident, but O'Dell did not believe Coursey sent a message. "I'm not qualified to say for certain," O'Dell testified, "but he was not in the same state that we were about it."<sup>46</sup>

Perhaps Coursey took the incident more calmly because the Navy was already in close touch with the Dutch and British about those Japanese ship movements. In any case, it is well-nigh impossible to picture Kimmel sending his Fleet off to war on the basis of fifth-hand information—Dutch to Australians to U.S. attachés to Short to

Kimnel. At the very least the admiral would have sought confirmation from Washington. As it happened, the Hawaiian Department did not decode the message but sent it to the War Department to be decoded and repeated. The record indicates that the message was received in the War Department Message Center at "7:58 P.M." on December 7.<sup>47</sup>

BARNES

When Barnes discovered this message, he was sure that he had a great scoop. Morgenstern, Greaves, and later Ladislav Farago had mentioned the subject but "did not develop its full significance."<sup>48</sup> Either unable or unwilling to see the difference between a war plan and a duly ratified treaty or pact, Barnes declared that "the United States had been put into war with Japan by the action of the Dutch government, on December 3rd, Washington time. . . ." He decided that once more the authorities in Washington had deliberately withheld another warning from Short. "It certainly could have been sent to Short in time to produce an alert during the 5th, Washington time, and averted the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. . . ." The fact that the records indicate the War Department did not receive the message until about five hours after the attack had begun did not faze Barnes in the least. He concluded that the times of dispatch and receipt had been doctored.<sup>49</sup>

All of which was drawing a long bow because Rainbow Five was not an instrument to declare war; it was a plan for conducting the war once it started. Moreover, the Netherlands East Indies had no authority to commit the United States to war, regardless of what actions the Dutch took or recommended for their own protection.

Another message helped convince Theobald, for one, that war with Japan had already been arranged. This dispatch went from Budapest to Tokyo on December 7, 1941: "On the 6th, the American Minister presented to the Government of this country a British Government communiqué to the effect that a state of war would break out on the 7th."<sup>50</sup>

THEOBALD

Obsessed with Roosevelt's alleged iniquities, Theobald jumped to this conclusion: "Everyone in Washington and London, acquainted with Magic, was convinced that Japan would initiate war with the Anglo-Saxon nations that day. The British Government had so informed the Hungarian Government the day before."<sup>51</sup>

Actually this message had nothing to do with Japan and the United States. On December 6 Great Britain had served notice on the Hungarians—and the Finns and Rumanians—that if they did not agree to cease fighting the Soviet Union, London would declare war on them. This action was meaningless to the British war effort but would place these satellite countries on the Axis side of the table in peace talks after the conflict ended. Anyone could have determined the meaning of the Budapest-Tokyo message by checking the newspapers for December 6, 1941, where the story generally merited the front page.<sup>52</sup>

CREIGHTON AT SINGAPORE

The third of these messages went to Hart from Captain John M. Creighton, the U.S. naval observer at Singapore. This arrived in Manila on December 7 and quoted a dispatch that Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, British Commander in Chief, Far East, had received from London outlining three circumstances under which the British had "received assurance of American armed support" and authorized him to activate if necessary his defense plans covering those eventualities without reference to London.<sup>53</sup>

The congressional committee tried unsuccessfully to pinpoint the exact source of Creighton's information, but Creighton had forgotten. He had advised Hart because he considered it his duty "to try to give him any current information or reports. . . ." He realized "that a policy involving whether we were going to assist Britain in a contingency

his antiwar campaign pledge of 1940, and maneuvered the Japanese into firing the first shot. **BEARD**

Nowhere in his book did Beard directly accuse Roosevelt of knowing that the Japanese were going to attack Pearl Harbor. But he made his points in a subtle and sophisticated way. Without actually misquoting, he judiciously pruned the evidence. For example, he wrote, "Secretary Stimson testified before the Army Pearl Harbor Board that he was not surprised by the Japanese attack—on Pearl Harbor."<sup>3</sup> Here is the actual exchange in question: Russell asked Stimson, "Then you were not surprised at the air attack on the 7th of December?" Stimson replied, "Well, I was not surprised, in one sense, in any attack that would be made; but I was watching with considerably more care, because I knew more about it, the attack that was framing up in the southwestern Pacific."<sup>4</sup> This conveys quite a different impression from Beard's selective extract.

**GREAVES** Percy L. Greaves, Jr., too, conceded, "Washington did not know, or at least no evidence has been adduced that Washington knew, precisely, that the attack would fall on Pearl Harbor although they [sic] had good reason to expect that it might."<sup>5</sup>

**FLYNN** John T. Flynn, in his pamphlet *The Truth About Pearl Harbor*, believed that the President "wanted to provoke Japan to attack. But he . . . certainly never looked for an attack that would kill 3,000 Americans and knock the American Navy and Army out of the war in a day. . . ."<sup>6</sup>

**BARNES' "TRIPLE CONSPIRACY"**  
Harry Elmer Barnes was the leading spirit of the thesis that Roosevelt had planned the whole thing deliberately, knew about the attack on Pearl Harbor in advance, and wanted it to happen. He believed the President guilty of a triple conspiracy. First, Roosevelt needed an attack on this country because of his campaign promise that Americans would not be sent to war unless the United States was attacked. Secondly, to permit such an attack unobstructed, he arranged that Kimmel and Short should receive none of the information available in Washington from Japanese decoded material. Thirdly, he conspired to cover up the failure to warn the Hawaiian commanders.<sup>7</sup>

A surprising number of naval personnel interviewed for this study fell into the Roosevelt-planned-it category.<sup>8</sup> To such dedicated Navy men it seemed impossible that the U.S. Pacific Fleet could have been so appallingly surprised and defeated unless treachery had been involved, and they identified with Kimmel's interests. ". . . I am glad to learn you are going ahead on Kimmel," wrote Rear Admiral Dundas P. Tucker to Lieutenant Commander Charles C. Hiles on June 2, 1968, "because you will be clearing not only him, but the professional Navy as a whole. . . ."<sup>9</sup> **CHAMBERLIN**

Some of the more vociferous revisionists were careless with facts. Although Chamberlin's book was published in 1950, by which time the composition of Nagumo's task force was known, Chamberlin stated that it was "under the command of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto. . . ." Such a mistake is not evidence of bad faith, but it is the sort of factual error that casts doubt upon a historian's credibility. Chamberlin also wrote, "As early as November 28 it was known in Washington that a Japanese flotilla . . . was steaming down the China coast toward an unknown destination. Only the main objective of the impending offensive, Pearl Harbor . . . did not visibly figure in Japanese calculations." Of course, this fleet was not the one headed for Hawaii, as a glance at the map would show. Further, Chamberlin would have us believe that "The commanders on the spot were encouraged to maintain a normal, 'business as usual' attitude until the attack actually took place. . . ."<sup>10</sup> This was far from the case.

**THEOBALD**  
Rear Admiral Robert A. Theobald's book *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor* was the quintessence of revisionism. It pictured the Navy as a collective Andromeda chained to the rock of Pearl Harbor while Roosevelt and subsidiary vultures Stimson, Marshall, et

al. hovered around, waiting for the Japanese dragon to play its predestined part. In reviewing this book, Commander Masataka Chihaya, formerly of the Imperial Japanese Navy, put his finger on the key weakness of this position: "Even . . . one admits Adm. Theobald's assertion that President Roosevelt wanted to have Japan strike first, there would have been no need to have all the major ships of the U.S. Fleet sit idly in the harbor to be mercilessly destroyed and many killed."<sup>11</sup>

Such a blood sacrifice was by no means necessary to force the American people to accept entry into the war. The loss of men, ships, and planes grieved and shocked the nation; what angered it, as we have seen, was Japan's striking under cover of diplomacy before declaring war. **BARNES**

No such considerations disturbed Barnes. According to him, when Hitler did not oblige by attacking the United States:

. . . it became essential for Roosevelt to do all possible to assure that Japan would provide the indispensable attack that was needed to unite the American people behind him in the war. To bring this about it appeared necessary to prevent Hawaiian commanders from taking any offensive action which would deter the Japanese from attacking Pearl Harbor which, of necessity had to be a surprise attack.<sup>12</sup>

This peculiar concept ignores two facts: The Japanese never expected Operation Hawaii to be a shoo-in, and the reason for the Hawaiian Department's existence was to protect the Fleet and the Islands against a Japanese attack.

**Note**  
Therefore, if the President planned to enter the war by the so-called back door, every dictate of common sense urged that he take Kimmel and Short into his confidence, at least to the extent of warning them that the Japanese were coming. In that case, the Pacific Fleet's carrier task forces would have been lying in wait, reinforced by the battleships; the radar systems would have been operating at full strength; reconnaissance aircraft, destroyers, and submarines would have been scouting the area; anti-aircraft batteries would have been in position with ammunition at the ready; the Hawaiian Air Force's planes would have been fueled, armed, and poised for immediate takeoff. Under those circumstances Pearl Harbor could have been an entirely different story, as the Japanese acknowledge.<sup>13</sup>

Barnes assumed that if Nagumo knew his target had been alerted, he would have called off the strike.<sup>14</sup> Research shows that during Kusaka's briefing at Hitokappu Bay the admiral stated that if the enemy sighted the task force before X-Day minus one, Nagumo would return to Japan. But if the Americans spotted only part of the Japanese fleet, Nagumo would change course and proceed toward Oahu. Moreover—and this is most important—if fired on, the Japanese would fight it out. Genda echoed these instructions.<sup>15\*</sup> But it is difficult to regard as realistic the suggestion that Operation Hawaii would or could have been aborted had the Americans discovered the task force before December 6. Nothing in the planning and training for the venture lends credence to the idea that Nagumo was to scratch the mission if sighted.

Barnes's theory assumes that Nagumo had complete control of the situation and could go ahead or turn homeward at will. But on December 6 Nagumo was well east of Midway, heading southeast. That night he turned due south. Even in the best of times a Japanese carrier task force would have difficulty explaining its presence in that location. It is absurd to suggest that in December 1941 a U.S. fleet encountering Nagumo's armada would figuratively say, "Anybody can get lost. Just go home and no harm done."

\*See Chapter 46.

Then, too, the whole object of the attack was to destroy Kimmel's ships wherever they might be found, in port or at sea. In fact, the Japanese would have preferred to sink their prey in waters deep enough to swallow them forever. Therefore, it is probable that had Nagumo encountered a U.S. task force while he was en route to Pearl Harbor, he would have attacked at once, not turned tail.

Most important, a ready foe was precisely what Nagumo expected. Yamamoto had instructed him and his officers that they must be prepared to fight their way in to the target. When they actually did achieve complete surprise, the Japanese were as amazed as they were elated.

In brief, Barnes and some of his followers indulged in a prime example of reverse logic. With all the force at their command, these people wanted to prove Roosevelt guilty of Pearl Harbor. To do so, they had to convince the public that the President deliberately withheld information from Kimmel and Short. And the only way to make sense of that concept was to hypothesize that the Japanese would have turned back if detected.

Yet had Kimmel taken the actions which the Navy Department expected when it issued the war warning of November 27, he would have been alerted and scouting his sea area for possible intruders. Suppose he found them? Stark, no firebrand, testified that if the enemy were spotted within 800 miles north of Oahu, he would have fired.<sup>16</sup> No doubt the much more aggressive Kimmel would have done the same. Failure to do so would have, in Gerow's words, "jeopardized his defense" and constituted failure to obey the warning contained in the message of November 27.<sup>17</sup>

Neither Stark nor Gerow considered such a forceful meeting of an obvious peril to constitute an "overt act" within the meaning of the warning message. While Washington wanted the Japanese to bear the onus of aggression, it certainly did not intend Kimmel and Short to stand still to be attacked if they knew danger was approaching. Had the defenders of Hawaii discovered and tried to fight off the Japanese task force, there would have been the shooting war, without the element of surprise and with no help from Roosevelt.

If the revisionists claimed that the President lured the Japanese into sending the bulk of their carrier strength across the Pacific so that the U.S. Navy could destroy it, this would make sense strategically. It would be Japan's Great All-Out Battle concept in reverse. However, Prange thought it an absurdity to assert that Roosevelt risked the prime units of the U.S. Pacific Fleet—the very tactical tools the United States would need in a Pacific conflict—to justify a declaration of war.

Kimmel attempted to reconcile this incongruity with his own firm conviction of Roosevelt's and Marshall's guilt. In an interview with Neumann, Kimmel stated that he did not believe they "wanted to sacrifice the Pacific Fleet." He thought, as did Neumann, that "... they assumed that one American could deal with five Japanese and that even a surprise attack would be beaten off without great losses. . . ."<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, if by some quirk of logic one could accept tethering a few obsolescent battleships in Pearl Harbor to tempt the Japanese, one boggles at the idea of staking out the whole military establishment on Oahu for that purpose. The revisionist position implied that Roosevelt and his advisers knew that the Japanese would hit the ships rather than the much more strategically and logistically important shore installations and fuel supply. Washington had no way to determine this. In fact, sound strategy dictated the reverse and, as we have seen, all concerned could not believe that the attackers would sail away without striking these vital targets.

Furthermore, any "baiting" on Roosevelt's part presumably would be aimed at

Tokyo's foreign policy level, including the War and Navy minister and indirectly the General Staffs. Yet those were the very elements that fought the Pearl Harbor plan tooth and nail. The President could not hypnotize Yamamoto into planning to attack Pearl Harbor and imbue him with the courage to buck the Naval General Staff. Certainly Roosevelt could not foresee that organization's folding up under Yamamoto's threat to resign. *ultimate absurdity*

Another consideration reduced the extreme revisionist thesis to its ultimate absurdity. How could the President ensure a successful Japanese surprise attack unless he confided in the Hawaiian commanders and persuaded them to allow the enemy to proceed unhindered? Kimmel's and Short's business was to be on the alert at all times. Roosevelt would have to assume that the Hawaiian outpost would be on its toes. To carry the revisionist theory to its logical conclusion, one would have to include as parties to the plot Kimmel, Short, their subordinate commanders, and key members of their staffs. In no other way could the alleged plotters have ensured that the Japanese would come in unopposed.

One of the principal, if unofficial, objectives of the congressional committee was to clarify Roosevelt's role in relation to Pearl Harbor. But a number of publications had already made up their minds. In September 1945 John Chamberlain asserted in *Life*, "... Roosevelt . . . knew in advance that the Japanese were going to attack us. There is even ground for suspicion that he elected to bring the crisis to a head when it came."<sup>19</sup>

For sheer scurrility, however, we could award the wreath of poison ivy to a small Chicago newspaper, *Women's Voice*, which editorialized on December 27, 1951, concerning alleged events on Oahu: "The order the night before, to go into town, to get drunk. . . . Those who returned to the ships in the night were kept from coming on board by officers with drawn revolvers. . . ." Planes had been defueled "to make absolutely sure that no plane could be gotten into the air. . . ." A staff sergeant, prudently unidentified, claimed that he did take off in his aircraft. And what did he find? ". . . planes manned by white men, men whom I knew—British and Americans. There seemed to be a few Japs, but the shooting was done by white men. . ." Three other young men contributed enthusiastically to this myth: "There were Jap planes mixed in, but a lot of them did not shoot, and we afterward found they were photo fellows. . . ."

A "civilian contractor" put on the capstone: "He said it was well known that Roosevelt with Churchill's help planned the whole thing, and called in the Japs to help, promising them the Philippine Islands." That remark really ties up the revisionist package with a neat bow. If one believes this article, Roosevelt did not merely bait the Japanese into attacking; he bribed them into partnership. And the Japanese did not truly attack at all; the Americans with a few British did it. The Japanese just trailed along to take pictures. *MYTH THAT STALIN KNEW*

Another widely circulated myth claimed that Roosevelt knew about the Pearl Harbor attack well in advance thanks to the Soviet Union. This tale credits Richard Sorge, head of the famous communist spy ring in Tokyo, with learning about Japan's plan to strike Hawaii and passing the information to Moscow, which thereupon informed Washington. A host of correspondents and writers bought this yarn and from it wove a whole fabric of indictments and unverified conclusions.<sup>20</sup> However, a slight tug at the end of the yarn unravels the whole fabric. Research reveals that Sorge did not crack the Pearl Harbor secret, hence could not advise Moscow, which hence could not advise Washington, which hence could not sit on the information.

The Roosevelt-as-villain thesis tacitly assumed that if Pearl Harbor had not occurred, the United States would not have entered the war. Yet if the Naval General

Staff had vetoed Yamamoto's plan or if, once under way, Nagumo had aborted the air attack, the political situation between the two countries would not have changed. Precisely the same forces that launched the war would have remained—the same tensions between Tokyo and Washington, the same conflicts of interest, the same ideological antagonisms, the same determination on Japan's part to absorb Southeast Asia into its Co-Prosperity Sphere, the same American commitment to China; the same obligation on the part of Washington to protect American territory and citizens outside the continental United States.

Japan's massive Southern Operation for the conquest of Southeast Asia and command of the western Pacific was under way well before December 7, 1941. And that offensive included an attack on U.S. forces in the Philippines preparatory to taking over the islands. Can one seriously believe that Washington would have shrugged off such an attack on American lives and property as Japan delivered against the Philippines?

Nor were Japan's belligerent actions triggered by Hull's so-called ultimatum of November 26. The Pearl Harbor games of September 16, 1941, were predicated upon an X-Day of November 16.<sup>21</sup> Only when it became evident that the task force could not be ready by that date was the attack postponed until December 7.

Prange hesitated to deal in absolutes, for he believed that the human equation was always subject to change without notice, but in the context of the time, he felt that war between Japan and the United States was virtually inevitable by late 1941, Pearl Harbor or no Pearl Harbor.

He also believed that one must consider the situation in the Atlantic, which could have been more explosive. Both Washington and Berlin had ignored incidents at least technical excuse for declaring war. Almost certainly, sooner or later something would have happened that the United States or Germany would have found impossible to brush aside. If Roosevelt wanted war, he had no reason to push for it in the Pacific, especially in such an insane manner as encouraging the Japanese to hit Pearl Harbor.

Roosevelt never pretended to be neutral in thought and paid only lip service to neutrality in deed. He sailed exceedingly close to the wind. Yet he knew that the United States was not ready militarily to take up the terrible burden to which history called it. Hence the apparent inconsistency of American actions in the late autumn of 1941. Perhaps no President ever faced a more cruel dilemma than Roosevelt at that time. One may well believe that he felt an enormous release from tension when the Japanese took him off the hook. The entire timing of Pearl Harbor argued against the revisionist position. Throughout 1940 and 1941 U.S. diplomacy vis-à-vis Japan reflected a determined, almost frantic desire to buy time while the armed forces built up to the point where the country could become the "arsenal of democracy" and at the same time be able to resist Axis aggression in both theaters. On December 7, 1941, they still had a long way to go. Deliberately to bring about the very eventuality against which both Army and Navy had pleaded would have been the sheerest madness.

What is more, Germany need not have invoked the Tripartite Pact when Japan struck the United States. The treaty called for Japan and Germany to come to each other's aid if attacked by a power not then in the war. Nothing was said about mutual aid if Germany, Japan, or Italy did the attacking. Japan used this loophole to escape joining its Axis partner in the Russo-German war, so why should Hitler feel any obligation toward the ally that had turned him down?

In his speech of December 8, 1941, asking Congress to declare "a state of war" with Japan, Roosevelt carefully avoided including Germany, although Stimson urged him to

do so. The fact that Hitler decided upon war with the United States was probably less to honor the Tripartite Pact than a practical decision that the time was ripe. Otherwise, Hitler could have played a diplomatic masterstroke by disassociating himself from Japan's action. This would have given the United States and Great Britain precisely what they did not want—a war in Asia that would divide British strength and drain off American arms and supplies from the European front. ALLEGED SECRET AGREEMENT WITH CHURCHILL

Basic to the argument that Roosevelt wanted to haul the United States into war by way of Japan is the assumption that during much of 1941 the President had a secret agreement with Churchill that if Japan struck British territory, the United States would enter the conflict. Revisionists hold to this theory tenaciously despite evidence to the contrary.

Of course, the beleaguered British desired the United States as an active ally. But—and this is what the revisionists did not appear to understand—the British believed that a firm commitment from the United States in regard to the Far East would be the surest way of guaranteeing Japan's good behavior. Churchill yearned to see full American might brought to bear in the Atlantic. But preattack documents make it quite clear that he wanted Japan reined in lest it cut the British lifeline in the Indian Ocean.<sup>22</sup> So he would have preferred American involvement in Europe without the British being plunged into a major war in the Far East. In a telegram to Roosevelt on May 15, 1940, he listed Britain's "immediate needs," which ended, "Sixthly, I am looking to you to keep that Japanese dog quiet in the Pacific. . . ."<sup>23</sup>

By October 1940 matters had simmered down sufficiently for Churchill to risk reopening the Burma Road. He asked Roosevelt if the President could send a large American squadron "to pay a friendly visit to Singapore. . . ." He explained, "I should be very grateful if you would consider action along these lines as it might play an important part in preventing the spreading of the war."<sup>24</sup>

Churchill realized that a formal British-American alliance against Japan would entail certain risks. Japan might lower its head and charge instead of pulling in its horns. Nor did Churchill minimize the problems war with Japan would pose. But in his view, ". . . the entry of the United States into the war would overwhelm all evils put together."<sup>25</sup> So Churchill, as positive a thinker as ever looked for the silver lining, was prepared to make the best of it regardless of which way the Japanese jumped.

There could be no question that most American hearts, as well as the national interests, pulled toward the white cliffs of Dover. And Roosevelt, backed by a majority of Congress, had bent neutrality far off center with the lend-lease arrangement. Therefore, the United States most urgently wanted to concentrate upon the Atlantic and avoid a confrontation with Japan. Stark's famous Plan DOG laid it on the line: "Any strength that we might send to the Far East would, by just so much, reduce the force of our blows against Germany and Italy."<sup>26\*</sup> GRAVES

Greaves asserted, "Early in 1941 administration officials reached a secret agreement with British and Dutch officials, which committed us to go to war against Japan if Japanese forces crossed a certain line."<sup>27</sup> It so happened that representatives of the U.S. and British Army and Navy staffs held discussions in Washington from January 29 to March 27, 1941. These discussions culminated in a secret military agreement (ABC-1 of March 1941).<sup>28</sup> Roosevelt did not approve ABC-1, but the United States later amended Rainbow Five (its major war plan) to fit this strategy. Attempts were made at Singapore in April 1941 to work out an American-British-Dutch operating plan for the Pacific which set forth certain Japanese actions, which failure to counteract would place the signatories

\*See Chapter 5.

at a military advantage.<sup>29</sup> Doubtless this is the "secret agreement" to which Greaves referred. However, both Marshall and Stark withheld approval because, among other reasons, ABC contained "political matters" and the proposals set forth did not constitute "a practical operating plan."<sup>30</sup> These plans and discussions did not commit the United States politically to go to war with Japan, Germany, or both; they outlined the military strategy to be followed if the country joined the conflict.

The transferring of ships from the Pacific to the Atlantic and the institution of patrols in that ocean strained neutrality.\* Still, all this de facto support fell short of a formal alliance. Never famous for consistency, Roosevelt could have called a halt should circumstances appear so to dictate.

#### ATLANTIC CONT

The famous meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill in Argentia Bay is a favorite target of revisionists. Barnes entertained no doubt that at Argentia Roosevelt and Churchill "arranged the details of entering the second World War through the backdoor of a war with Japan."<sup>31</sup> Actually Churchill's prime consideration in the Pacific was not to spread the war but to contain it. He feared that the Japanese Navy might cut Britain's lifeline to the Commonwealth. And he believed that only a firm declaration of mutual commitment by the United States, the British Empire, the Netherlands, and perhaps the Soviet Union would restrain Japan.<sup>32</sup>

For all of Roosevelt's sympathy with the British, at Argentia he knew that the time was not ripe for a promise to threaten Japan with war for the sake of a third party. All moral considerations aside, he held a very poor hand. The United States was militarily unprepared to challenge Japan and in short order might be in even worse shape. In a few days the draft extension would come before the House of Representatives. If Congress scuttled the draft, the United States would not have enough of an army to defend itself, let alone help anyone else. What actually happened as a result of Argentia was that Roosevelt presented to Nomura a note promising to take "any and all steps which it may deem necessary" to safeguard the rights of American nationals and the security of the nation. It contained no word about American action in the event the Japanese attacked British or Dutch territory.<sup>33\*</sup>

Matters took a sharp turn on December 1, when Roosevelt met with Harry Hopkins and British Ambassador Lord Halifax. He thought the time had come for London and Washington to "settle what they would do in the various situations which might arise." If Japan attacked the British or Dutch, they "should obviously be all together. . . ." But to clear up certain matters "which were less plain," he wanted Halifax to ask for his government's policies in various eventualities.

Halifax already had instructions to tell the United States government that the British expected the Japanese to hit Thailand. Such an attack probably would include "a seaborne expedition to seize strategic points in the Kra Isthmus." The British "proposed to counter this . . . by a rapid move by sea into the Isthmus" to hold a line just north of Singone. But because of the dangerous political disadvantages should the Japanese beat the British to the punch, London "wanted to know urgently what view the United States Government would take of this plan, since it was most important for us to be sure of American support in the event of war."

Roosevelt assured the ambassador that his country "could certainly count on American support, though it might take a few days before it was given."<sup>34</sup>

On December 2 Churchill informed Foreign Minister Anthony Eden by memorandum:

\*See Chapters 15 and 16.

\*See Chapter 23.

. . . If the United States declares war on Japan, we follow within . . . hour. If, after a reasonable interval, the United States is found to be incapable of taking any decisive action, even with our immediate support, we will, nevertheless, although alone, make common cause with the Dutch.<sup>35</sup>

Thus Churchill pledged support to the United States in much less equivocal terms than those Roosevelt used to Halifax.

Despite all these developments, Churchill and his government could not be certain that American "support" in Southeast Asia would mean that the United States would enter the European war. Hitler had only to keep his brown shirt on, and Great Britain might find itself with war on another front, assured of American "support" but not necessarily armed participation, and with the United States still out of the major conflict in Europe.

On the evening of December 3 Roosevelt informed Halifax that the British could count on "armed support." But the British understood that he still clung to a faint hope that he might work out a temporary truce with Japan through his personal approach to the Emperor.<sup>36</sup>

So, after dodging the issue all year, on December 1 Roosevelt promised the British support in the Far East, and on December 3 armed support. The reason was clear: The problem was no longer one of restraining the Japanese; they were on the move. The only question was exactly where they would strike first. Of course, Roosevelt could not commit the United States to war with Japan on behalf of the British, the Dutch, the Thais, or anyone else. For this he would need congressional authority. "Armed support" for the British did not automatically involve going to war on their behalf; the United States had been giving Britain "armed support" against Hitler for months while technically clinging to neutrality.

In any case, the President's somewhat equivocal commitment came much too late to have any relationship to the Pearl Harbor attack. Throughout 1941, while Roosevelt hesitated and the British fretted, the Japanese planned and trained for Operation Hawaii. By December 5 Nagumo had received orders to "Climb Mount Niitaka" and his ships' prows were irrevocably headed eastward. Shimizu's submarines were lurking in Hawaiian waters. Above all, neither Yamamoto nor the Naval General Staff was considering Roosevelt's preferences. The Japanese based their naval strategy upon the foreign policy of one country and one only—Japan.

Now let us consider a few incidents not previously mentioned in this study. These occurred in the week before Pearl Harbor, and all appeared highly suspicious, if not downright proof of Roosevelt's guilt in the eyes of certain revisionists. One of the best known of these incidents is that of the "three little ships." "DANKAI"

Stark had been speculating with the President about the ultimate target area of the Japanese expedition headed south. To assist in reaching a conclusion, Roosevelt directed that a special mission of three small vessels be dispatched toward the Indochina coast as pickets.<sup>37</sup> Accordingly, on December 2, 1941, the Navy Department instructed Hart to comply "as soon as possible and within two days if possible. . . ." The little craft were to "establish identity as U.S. men-of-war." One was "to be stationed between Hainan and Hue, one vessel off the Indo-China Coast between Camranh Bay and Cape St. Jacques, and one vessel off Pointe de Camau."<sup>38</sup>

The Navy was not particularly thrilled with this mission because it was already receiving information about those areas from Hart's aerial reconnaissance.<sup>39</sup> And Hart did not seem to feel any sense of urgency: ". . . the *Isabel* was dispatched in consequence of this instruction and was nearing her station when the Japanese attack

had to come from Washington," not London.<sup>54</sup> So did Hart, apparently, for he radioed OPNAV with information copy to CinCPAC at about 0645 GMT on December 7: "Learn from Singapore we have assured British armed support under three or four eventualities. Have received no corresponding instructions from you."<sup>55</sup>

Therein lay the problem. However Creighton received the word, it was accurate, and had Washington been as prompt to clue in its armed forces as London had been, much confusion at the time, and much postwar suspicion, could have been avoided. Gerow, for example, knew of "no such assurances" as Hart cited.<sup>56</sup> Noyes assumed Hart's message to be "somebody misinterpreting the ABC agreement," which of course was "purely a military agreement."<sup>57</sup>

Certainly the United States was not formally allied to Great Britain until Congress so declared. But revisionists continued to assert that, in Barnes's words, "Roosevelt knew by the forenoon of the 6th, if not on the 5th, that the United States was already at war with Japan due to our commitments to the British and Dutch under ABCD and Rainbow 5."<sup>58</sup>

Revisionists such as Barnes and Theobald believed their tissue of unsupported assumptions and assertions. By the same token, those who cannot swallow their thesis are not necessarily blind adulators of Roosevelt. The President made his mistakes in 1941, as did almost everyone else involved in Pearl Harbor. But in a thorough search of more than thirty years, including all publications released up to May 1, 1981, we have not discovered one document or one word of sworn testimony that substantiates the revisionist position on Roosevelt and Pearl Harbor.

Donald M. Goldstein  
Katherine V. Dillon

Notes: Revisionists Revisited

1. Some major revisionist books include Charles A. Beard, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War 1941*; William Henry Chamberlin, *America's Second Crusade*; John T. Flynn, *The Roosevelt Myth*; George Morgenstern, *Pearl Harbor*; Frederic R. Sanborn, *Design For War*; Charles C. Tansill, *Back Door to War*; Robert A. Theobald, *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor*; Harry E. Barnes, ed., *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace and The Court Historians versus Revisionism*; Husband E. Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story*.
2. William S. Neumann, "How American Policy Toward Japan Contributed to War in the Pacific," *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, p. 265.
3. Charles A. Beard, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War 1941* (New Haven, Conn., 1948), p. 373.
4. PHA, Part 29, p. 2080.
5. Percy L. Greaves, Jr., "The Pearl Harbor Investigations," *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, p. 425.
6. John T. Flynn, *The Truth About Pearl Harbor* (pamphlet privately printed in New York City, 1944), pp. 3, 13, 28.
7. See, for example, Harry E. Barnes, "What Happened at Pearl Harbor?" *Peace News* (London), December 7, 1962.
8. Gordon W. Prange, interviews with Crawford and Rafsky, August 8, 1964; Johnson, August 8, 1964; Smart, August 21, 1964; Burford, August 18, 1964; Forrow, August 16, 1964.
9. Hiles Papers, Box 15.
10. William Henry Chamberlin, *America's Second Crusade* (Chicago, 1950), pp. 165, 120, 159.
11. *Nippon Times*, May 2, 1954.
12. "Pearl Harbor After a Quarter of a Century," p. 18.
13. *Nippon Times*, May 3, 1954.
14. "Pearl Harbor After a Quarter of a Century," p. 90.
15. Gordon W. Prange, interview with Genda, August 31, 1947.
16. PHA, Part 5, pp. 2475-76.
17. *Ibid.*, Part 4, p. 1671.
18. Letter, Neumann to Barnes, June 21, 1961, Barnes Papers, Box 58.
19. John Chamberlain, "Pearl Harbor," *Life* (September 10, 1945), p. 110.
20. See, for example, John O'Donnell's column "Capitol Stuff," *New York Daily News*, May 17, 1954; Ralph de Toledano, *Spies, Dupes and Diplomats* (New York and Boston, 1952), p. 4; Hans-Otto Meissner, *The Man with Three Faces* (New York, 1956), p. 218. Dr. Prange made a special study of the Sorge case. A condensation of his manuscript book on the subject appeared in the *Reader's Digest* (January 1967) under the title "Master Spy."

21. *Hawai Sakusen*, pp. 102-103.
22. See Sum Welles's "Memorandum of Conversation" with Churchill on this subject, *PHA*, Part 14, pp. 1273-74.
23. Roosevelt Papers, Map Room File, Box 1.
24. Telegram, Churchill to Roosevelt. October 4, 1940, Roosevelt Papers, Map Room File, Box 1.
25. Winston S. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance* (Boston, 1950), pp. 587-88.
26. Roosevelt Papers, PSF, Box 63.
27. "The Pearl Harbor Investigations," *op cit.*, p. 410.
28. The text of ABC-1 is reproduced in *PHA*, Part 15, pp. 1485-1550.
29. *PHA*, Part 15, p. 1564. See pp. 1551-84 for full text of ABD.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 1678-79. For an excellent account of these prewar discussions and plans, see Mark S. Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations* (Washington, 1950), pp. 367-410. This volume is one of the series *United States in World War II*, subseries *The War Department*.
31. "Pearl Harbor After a Quarter of a Century," p. 19. For similar views, see Robert A. Theobald, *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor* (New York, 1954), p. 4; the San Francisco *Examiner*, January 2, 1946.
32. State Department Memorandum of Conversation, August 10, 1941, *PHA*, Part 14, pp. 1269-74.
33. State Department Memorandum of Conversation, August 17, 1941, Hull Papers, Box 60.
34. Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, Vol. II (London, 1971), pp. 170-71.
35. *Grand Alliance*, pp. 600-01.
36. Woodward, *op. cit.*, p. 173; The Earl of Birkenhead, *Halifax* (Boston, 1966), p. 529.
37. *PHA*, Part 5, pp. 2190-91.
38. *Ibid.*, Part 14, p. 1407.
39. *Ibid.*, Part 9, pp. 4252-54.
40. *Ibid.*, Part 10, p. 4807.
41. Log of *Isabel*, December 5, 1941, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
42. "Pearl Harbor After a Quarter of a Century," p. 110.
43. Rear Admiral Julius Augustus Furer, USN (Ret.), *Administration of the Navy Department in World War II*, p. 47.
44. *PHA*, Part 34, p. 60. The full text of this message appears in Part 34, p. 172.
45. *Ibid.*, Part 29, p. 2303.
46. *Ibid.*, Part 34, p. 63.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
48. "Pearl Harbor After a Quarter of a Century," p. 112. See George Morgenstern, *Pearl Harbor: The Story of the Secret War* (New York, 1947), pp. 306-07; "The Pearl Harbor Investigations," pp. 430-31; *Broken Seal*, pp. 347-49.
49. "Pearl Harbor After a Quarter of a Century," pp. 106-14.
50. *PHA*, Part 5, p. 252.
51. *Final Secret*, p. 117.
52. See, for example, the *Washington Post*, December 6, 1941.
53. *PHA*, Part 10, pp. 5082-83.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 5081-89.
55. *Ibid.*, Part 14, p. 1412.
56. *Ibid.*, Part 3, p. 1000.
57. *Ibid.*, Part 10, pp. 4762-63.
58. "Pearl Harbor after a Quarter of a Century," p. 36.

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