



FLIGHT-WATCH



VOLUME 169

By: Alan Armstrong, Esq.

JUNE, 2006

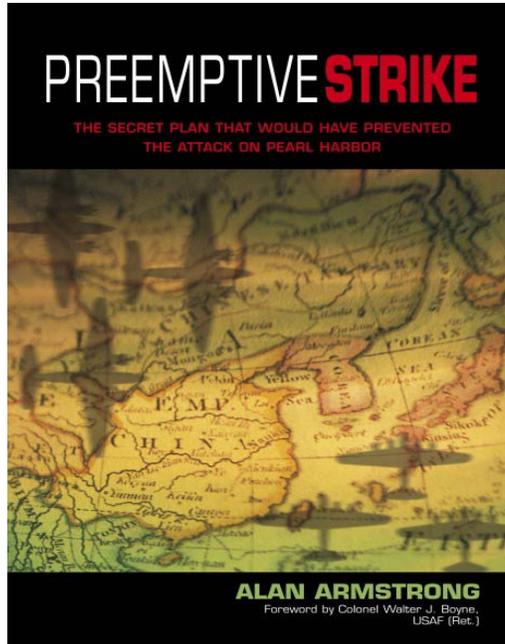
SINGAPORE IS CALLING?

I was standing in the shower when my cell phone rang. It was probably Katherine Walker, my assistant, or some client calling about one of my cases. The FAA had grounded one of my clients and I had been negotiating for weeks to get the planes back in the sky. Whoever it was could wait five minutes while I finished my shower.

The home phone rang next. My wife, Marlene, pulled back the shower curtain. Katherine was on the phone. It was important. I took the phone receiver. A news reporter had called about writing a review for my book, *Preemptive Strike – The Secret Plan That Would Have Prevented The Attack On Pearl Harbor*, in “The Straits Times”, the largest English speaking newspaper in Southeast Asia. The Japanese Emperor was visiting Singapore and the reporter had to finish the book review while the Emperor was still in town. As I scribbled down his phone number, water droplets fell on the paper obscuring my writing.

WHY HAD I BEEN CALLED BY A REPORTER FROM SINGAPORE?

When I wrote *Preemptive Strike* I suspected it would create a degree of controversy. My chronicle of American, Chinese and British bombing plans for Japan before the attack on Pearl Harbor challenges many widely accepted views of the events leading up to the day of



infamy, December 7, 1941. However, even I was surprised that my book would stir such interest half a globe away.

CHILDHOOD INFLUENCES AND ADULT DREAMS

Growing up as a child, the Flying Tigers or American Volunteer Group (AVG) had captivated my interest. Tales of their exploits in Burma and China were still fairly fresh during the 1950's. So, it was not unusual that as I approached my life's mid-point in 1999, that I would envision writing about their adventures.

I wrote half a dozen screenplay synopses, a treatment perhaps twenty-four pages long and a film proposal of approximately seventy pages. However, my friends in the film industry told me I either needed a really good script or, better yet, a successful book.

THE SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SECRET PLAN

Tom Pandolfi, a collector of Flying Tiger artifacts, had come across a bunch of top secret documents that were discovered by a sailor at the Pensacola Naval Air Station (“the Pensacola Papers”). Tom sent me a copy, and as I read the documents, I was surprised to see continuing references to American bombers going to China. In fact, there was a secret memorandum from President Roosevelt to Navy Secretary Knox of September 30, 1941, discussing America's provision of sixty-six bombers to China.

My appetite whetted by the bomber data disclosed in the Pensacola Papers, I began acquiring the information from a host of museums and research institutions such as The Roosevelt Presidential Library, The Hoover Institute, The National Archives and Records Administration, the McArthur Foundation and the George T. Marshall Foundation. The inescapable conclusion from reviewing materials from all of these facilities was that America and China had developed a secret bombing initiative directed toward Japan that was to have begun operation in early November of 1941, one month before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Even more ominous, was my discovery that Japan had discovered the plan by way of a spy in or near Chiang Kai-shek's government — and America knew it!

The plan was called Joint Army/ Navy Board 355, and it had a number of strategic objectives including: (1) attacking Japanese troop ships that would be part of an invasion force directed towards Malaya, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines; (2) destroying Japanese factories; (3) attacking Japanese shipping; and (4) forcing Japan to commit more troops and military units to the Sino-Japanese War that had been raging since 1937. Because the Plan was designed to attack a Japanese invasion force that would (and eventually did) sail from China, it called for a "preemptive strike" on Japan and Japanese interest.

THE GENESIS OF THE BOOK

When I told two friends, Bill Wages and Phil Bellury, what I had discovered they suggested that I write a book. Bill is a director and director of photography in the film industry, and Phil is a writer and screenwriter. Before I wrote the book, I pitched the concept to a literary agent who said if I would write the book, he would represent me.

I labored over the manuscript from about October of 2003 until July of 2004. When my agent failed to find a publisher, I fired him and by June of 2005 I had a publisher in the form of

Globe Pequot Press/Lyons Press. From September of 2005 until March of 2006, the original manuscript was edited. There are eighteen different versions of the manuscript that occupy eight banker's boxes. Five people aided me in editing the manuscript, including Richard L. Dunn, a Senior Fellow at the University of Maryland, Thomas B. Steely, a retired journalist, and Holly Runbino, an editor of Globe Pequot/Lyons Press. I never imagined how time consuming the editing would be when I began work on the manuscript.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

At the time this article is written, the book has just been released. It has been sent to major newspapers and media contacts across the United States. In due course, it will be reviewed. I have been approached by a documentary film producer, and because I have adapted the book to a screenplay, I have also had some interest from several producers to make a dramatic motion picture. It will be interesting to see what the future holds for the story I discovered hidden in museums and libraries across America. Perhaps it is never too late to follow your dreams.

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Autographed copies of *Preemptive Strike* may be purchased at www.preemptivestrikethebook.com. Also, you may wish to visit the following websites: www.preemptivestrikethemovie.com www.flyingtigersfilm.com

June 13, 2006

**SITNews: *Japan perhaps not so guilty*
by Anthony Paul**

THE most dramatic photograph to emerge from the Pacific War - indeed, from almost any war - shows the US fleet burning at Pearl Harbour on Dec 7, 1941. Sulphurous with anger, then-president Franklin D. Roosevelt rose before Congress the following day to denounce 'a date that will live in infamy': The United States had been 'suddenly and deliberately attacked' by Japanese naval and air forces.

'The distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago,' the president raged. 'Always will our whole nation remember the character of the onslaught against us...'

A sneak attack? Yes - but in the circumstances, according to a book published in the US this month, perhaps not as unpardonable as the president insisted.



President Franklin

The book's most striking detail: Mr Roosevelt and his aides and allies were putting together a similar attack of their own on the Japanese homeland.

The book, a revisionist history of the months immediately preceding that 'infamous' Dec 7, implies that Mr Roosevelt's indignation concealed more than

a little American wiliness.

Pre-emptive Strike by Alan Armstrong (Globe Pequot Press, Guilford, Connecticut) presents evidence, much of it supported by Pentagon, State Department and White House documents, that Americans and Nationalist Chinese with British help would have struck at Japanese airfields and shipping more than a month before Japan's Pearl Harbour assault launched the war.

If the Allies had been able to assemble enough aircraft as quickly as they had at first hoped, the story goes, a bombing fleet owned by China but manned by US pilots, and with some of the aircraft possibly fuelled by British petrol stocks, would have launched the Pacific War.

America's 'historical memory' is that the Pearl Harbour attack was 'unprovoked', writes author Armstrong. 'The stark reality,' he says, 'is that America and Japan were (both) planning bombing initiatives and air attacks against the other if diplomatic solutions to the impasse created by the American trade embargo imposed on or about

July 26, 1941, were not resolved.'

'The day America imposed the trade embargo, July 23, 1941,' notes the author, 'is also the date president Roosevelt endorsed the plan to bomb Japan.'

A spy called PA

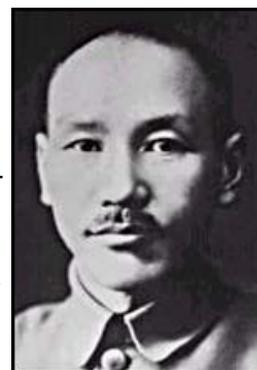
SINGAPORE figured prominently in the US-China-UK war preparations, the book says. To this British island-fortress in July 1941 flew an emissary from Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's embattled Chungking-based government assigned to help with the operation.

The Japanese were aware of all this - and the Allies knew that they knew.

Tokyo had a spy in Chungking whom Allied counter-intelligence identified only as 'PA'. Electronic eavesdroppers in Hong Kong or possibly the Philippines intercepted the agent's warning that bombers stowed 'on board a steamship belonging to the Ford

Company' would reach Rangoon in late July and then be transferred to China.

Armstrong cites a document that reports the spy's telling Tokyo that the generalissimo's emissary had gone to Singapore 'to discuss plans with the British and American officials'.



Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek

Documents also record that the effort to use American pilots against China's Japanese invaders emerged from a meeting in the Washington home of then Treasury secretary Henry Morgenthau on Dec 21, 1940.

Attendees reportedly included Mr Morgenthau, Colonel Claire Chennault, a retired US Army Air Corps (USAAC) fighter pilot who had been advising the Chinese, Dr T. V. Soong, China's special envoy to the US, and China air force general

Mow Pang Tsu.

They were said to have discussed firebombing Japanese cities using B-17 Flying Fortresses operating from secret airfields then being built in south-eastern China's Zhejiang province.

The original idea was to have 450 fighters and 150 bombers in place by October 31, 1941 - based in China, flown by Americans, but without any direct ties to the US government.



Emperor Hirohito
US\$750 a month plus a US\$500 bonus for each downed enemy plane, very good money in an America just emerging from the Great Depression.

Secret notices went out to army and navy flight training schools in the US publicising something called the American Volunteer Group (AVG) forming in Kunming under Col Chennault.

There was little talk of 'freedom's struggle' or other such military rhetoric. Recruiting was based on a business deal -

Flying P-40B Tomahawk fighters with tiger shark teeth painted on their engine cowlings, this mercenary force - soon named the Flying Tigers by the press - engaged Japanese bombing fleets and their fighter escorts above Burma and China from December 1941 to July 1942, when the unit was disbanded.

Col Chennault got some of his fighters but there appear to have been no bombers in that Rangoon shipment. Bombers were in desperately short supply, especially in Europe and the Middle East. In June, German forces had invaded the Soviet Union and were threatening the Suez Canal, Britain's lifeline to its Asian empire. Only those Tomahawks reached the AVG.

When Pearl Harbour was attacked, some Lockheed Hudson bombers earmarked for the colonel were still in Burbank, California, AVG historian Dan Ford tells The Straits Times. The Army Air Corps (precursor of the US Air Force) quickly repossessed them.

'One AVG bomber pilot and a bunch of ground crew were at sea on Dec 7,' says Mr Ford. 'They were diverted to Australia and re-inducted into the army.'

In his post-war memoirs, AVG commandant Chennault, by then a major-general, regretted his inability to get bombers: 'Begun in time and delivered with sufficient weight, an air offensive from China could have smashed the Japanese southern offensive before it left its home ports and staging areas.'

What if...

AUTHOR Armstrong also ponders the difference the bombing plan might have made. His book's sub-title is America's Plan To Attack Japan Would Have Prevented Pearl Harbour. It claims that 'timely implementation would have preempted Japanese aggression in South-east Asia and the western Pacific'.

The author is an aviation lawyer based in Atlanta. He became interested in the subject when an AVG historian gave him a collection of old papers found in a desk at the US Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida.

Marked 'secret' or 'confidential', the documents referred to the mercenary guerilla air force put together by Col Chennault at a time when the US was supposed to be a neutral power.

Further research at New York's Franklin D. Roosevelt Library confirmed that Washington had plans for attacking Japan before the Pearl Harbour incident, the author tells The Straits Times.

One of Armstrong's reasons for writing Pre-emptive Strike was apparently to generate enthu

siasm among possible backers for a movie about the Flying Tigers (see author's website: www.flyingtigersfilm.com).

Word of a bombing wing - a so-called 2nd AVG - to serve beside Col Chennault's fighter group has been in print since the late 1980s when a US trade journal for mercenaries, Soldier Of Fortune (not the most respectable of magazines), published an article containing word of America's precocious bomb-Japan plans.

But how much credence should be given to a book that appears to have been written in order to attract investors for a Hollywood movie? 'Because the facts presented in my book are at odds with widely accepted views about the events leading up to the Pearl Harbour attack and contemporaneous Japanese military initiatives,' Armstrong says, 'I believed it was imperative to present the reader with evidence that a Chinese-American (and British) bombing initiative directed towards Japan was real.'

His book has 589 footnotes and a nine-page bibliography.

Why it has taken so long to reveal all this remains something of a mystery. But the heavy documentation - largely the result of enthusiastic cooperation of US government personnel, says Armstrong - does support the view that Pre-emptive Strike is serious history.

It will present wartime history buffs with some intriguing what-ifs, especially in South-east Asia. As the book says, the bombing raids planned for Nov 1, 1941, 'could have smashed Japanese troop transports destined to invade Malaya, the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines before they left port'.

Imagine our region's post-1940 history if 150 or so bombers sent this way had indeed foiled the Japanese advance and thus the occupation of much of the region.

No precipitous British and US surrenders in Singapore and the Philippines. No conditions permitting communist guerilla leader Chin Peng's insurgency to flourish for a time in the late 1940s. And probably long postponements in the termination of British, American, Dutch and French colonial empires in the region.

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Anthony Paul

The fax which appears on the next page was received on 6/16/06 from Tokyo.

送信者: "shioya" <kosh206@ybb.ne.jp>
宛先: <contact@flyingtigersfilm.com>
送信日時: 2006年6月15日 15:14
件名: Greetings from Tokyo

Dear Mr. Armstrong,

As an author/journalist who in 2004 did a lengthy piece (for Japan's influential monthly magazine "Bungei Shunju") on Claire Lee Chennault and his abortive plans to bomb Japanese cities like Osaka from bases in China, I read about your book "Pre-Emptive Attack" with keen interest.

My research took me to the National Archives and the Hoover Institute (in Stanford) and I became thoroughly convinced that there definitely was a plan by the U.S. government to bomb Japan before December 7, 1941. (At the National Archives, I did obtain a copy of the letter to FDR from the Acting Secretary of War and the Secretary of Navy dated July 18, 1941, on which FDR left his signature on July 23, obviously approving Col. Chennault's plan to bomb Japan preemptively.)

Could you tell me if your book is being — or will be — translated into Japanese? I believe most strongly that your book should be read by many Japanese. Getting a translation out in Japan is a must, I believe, if you are considering attracting funds for a movie based on your book.

I'd appreciate hearing from you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Ko Shioya
Former North American Bureau Chief
Bungei Shunju magazine
Tokyo

*Dear Mr. Armstrong,
I'm faxing this as I have failed
to send it via the Internet.
Warm regards,
Ko Shioya*

2006/06/16

Alan Armstrong is engaged in the general practice of law with an emphasis in the following areas:

Aviation Matters, Personal Injury,
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