



FLIGHT-WATCH



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I.

SETTING THE STAGE

At about 3:00 p.m. on November 11, 2008, Mariko Fukuyama appeared in my office together with two gentlemen, one being named Toru who was the cameraman and the other being named Kazu who was the sound technician. Both Toru and Kazu live in New York but are Japanese by birth. Mariko Fukuyama worked for CNN and worked in Atlanta years ago. Unhappily, the newscaster and two directors were stuck on an airplane in Dallas, Texas. That meant that after Mariko dropped off Toru and Kazu, she had to drive back to the airport to pick up the remainder of her crew as she anticipated their arrival.

Tomoko Nagano, the newscaster, Ken Sawatari, a director, and Yasuyuki Ide arrived perhaps around 5:45 on November 11, 2008. I remember that the light was fading since it would get dark around 6:30. They wanted to get an outside shot of Tomoko walking into the building so they had to move quickly to get that footage.

After Tomoko changed clothes and the cameramen were ready, the initial shooting began around 6:00 p.m. and involved Tomoko walking through the front door of my office, knocking on the door, and me responding to her appearance at my doorstep, greeting her and inviting her into the office. We quickly moved to interview. At that

point in time, we transitioned from an area microphone to lapel microphones. This was a situation where she was seated across from me in chairs in my office, and she asked me a series of questions.

II.

THE QUESTIONS BEGIN

My recollection about the points covered in the interview are set forth in the numbered paragraphs below:

1. She asked about whether or not Japan was aware of the American bombing initiative in the form of Joint Army/Navy Board 355. I told her that Japan was aware of it by virtue of the Japanese Diplomatic message from Tokyo dated May 29, 1941, and intercepted by American cryptographers on June 3, 1941. We discussed the fact that in the ABC News show *20/20* the statement was made that no one knew whether or not the Japanese knew about the American bombing plan. I declared that to the extent the ABC news show indicated Japan was unaware of the plan that was simply wrong. We got into a discussion about the fact that in the spring of 1941, hostilities between America and Japan were becoming elevated. War appeared to inevitable. It was simply a matter of who struck first. Yamamoto and Genda were developing and implementing the plan for the attack on the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. President Roosevelt through his subordinates including Dr. Currie and Claire Chennault were working on their plan to bomb Japan from air bases in

Eastern China, and this was to be coordinated with B-17's that would fly from the Philippines under the ultimate command of General Douglas McArthur. Essentially, the Japanese plan moved forward without complications. The American plan had a series of stumbling blocks that led to it falling behind schedule. The net effect was that Japan beat America to the punch.

2. She asked about a secret press conference given by General George C. Marshall on November 15, 1941. She wanted evidence of the fact that the press conference took place. This was the press conference where Marshall announced (confidentially) to the press that America planned to begin bombing operations against Japan in early December of 1941. I then presented her with a copy of a letter from General Marshall to Hanson Baldwin, a newspaper reporter dated September 21, 1949, where General Marshall confirmed the fact that the press conference occurred.

3. We then got in to a discussion about President Roosevelt's endorsement of the Joint Board Plan on July 23, 1941, the same day Dr. Currie dispatched a secret telegram to the American Embassy in Chungking. I explained that communications between the American Diplomatic Corps and the Chinese Government were accomplished verbally because the American government did not want to have a paper trail. She wanted to know why there were only one or two documents with Roosevelt's signature on them. I responded by saying "Roosevelt was not a fool." The point is that Roosevelt was very discreet and used others to execute the plan so that his fingerprints would not be on the Plan.

4. Her final question during the sit-down interview was did I believe Presi-



The interview begins.

dent Roosevelt knew Pearl Harbor would be attacked and wanted the attack to happen. My response was that the America First Movement and Charles Lindbergh had posed a great problem for Roosevelt in terms of their ability to obstruct his desire to become involved in World War II. I related that today, we think about America being unified to fight in World War II. However, before Pearl Harbor, America was as it had been during the Vietnam War and during the early phases of the Iraqi War, a country that was fragmented with differing views about whether warfare was justified or in the best interest of our country. So, I explained that the net effect of the attack on Pearl Harbor was to galvanize American public opinion in favor of fighting in the war.

5. She asked if the book was fictional or factual, and I handed her a white notebook consisting of perhaps 200-300 pages, including the Joint Board Plan, Japanese radio messages from Tokyo, Dr. Currie's telegram of July 23, 1941, the Report No. 161-40 from the American Naval Attaché in Tokyo, and other documents, and told her that those materials represented about 5-10% of my research. She then said that she wanted to see the remainder of the materials. At this point in time, we abandoned the sit-down interview and retired to

the library in my office. In the library, there were five banker's boxes of materials dealing with Joint Board Plan.

6. At this point in the filming, we began going through the contents of the boxes, and I extracted Henry Morgenthau's diary about the bombers for China that dated from December 3, to December 22, 1941. I showed her the memoranda summarizing the discussion at the luncheon at the White House on December 8, 1940, when T.V. Soong, China's Special emissary, requested 500 bombers. This notation by Henry Morgenthau includes the description of a conversation or statement by President Roosevelt to the effect "It would be a nice thing if they bombed Japan."

7. As we flipped through the pages of Morgenthau's diary, we came to the page where there was discussion between Morgenthau and Secretary Hull, who was Secretary of State. Hull echoed the sentiment that we should have the Chinese bomb Tokyo. She found these documents quite interesting.

8. Mariko asked about an Appendix to the Joint Board Plan describing Chennault's involvement, and I told her I was not aware of an Appendix, but I was aware of a document which describes Chennault as the "mainspring" of the plan.

9. The final topic while we were in the library, I believe, consisted of the existence of the New York Times story of November 18, 1941, about the *Philippines* as a *Fortress* and American ambitions to bomb Japan and the U.S. News story of October 31, 1941, entitled *Bomber Lanes to Japan.*" I was not able to quickly put my hands on those stories while the camera was running. I did, however, produce those



The Japanese film crew outside my office.



Tomoko Nagano examines the Diary of Henry Morgenthau while "Toru" films the event.



Author signs book with Mariko Fukuyama and Yashyuki Ide looking on.

newspaper stories after the equipment had been broken down and copies of those stories were given to Tomoko.

10. At one point during our review of the materials in my library, she asked me where I got the documents, and I said from the National Archives. She then made a point of saying on the tape that the next place to go would be to the National Archives. This was obviously true, because I understood that on the very next day, they would be in Washington and at the National Archives. When I made a comment in the presence of Tomoko about my assumption that she was going to Washington to the National Archives the next day, she said "Oh, I did you understand my Japanese?" No, I just inferred from the situation that that is what she was talking about, even though she was speaking in Japanese. It was a rather humorous moment.

11. I did learn from Mariko that besides going to the National Archives the next day, there was the possibility of filming Anna Lee Chennault, the widow of General Claire Chennault. I also learned that they are in communication with the son of Dr. Lauchlin Currie. Interestingly, Dr. Currie's son served in the American Army but had to endure a life of abuse because his father fled to Latin America on the accusation that his father had been a Russian spy. Dr. Currie's son is bitter about that experience. I did describe Dr. Currie as a soviet agent during our interview, and I hope that this will not offend Dr. Currie's son. The fact is that Dr. Currie is reported to have provided secret information to the Russians, and his call sign was "Page." However, at the time of the alleged disclosures, Russia was an "ally" of the United States in the struggle against Nazi Germany. In any event, Mariko promised to give me the con-

tact information for Dr. Currie's son. Apparently, Dr. Currie's son has 40 hours of tape recorded conversations between Dr. Currie and Shiang Kai-shek.

12. In the midst of these activities, I did obtain from Mariko the point of contact for Anna Lee Chennault, and I have written a letter to that person whose name is David Yao requesting a copy of General Chennault's diary.

III. WRAPPING IT UP.

As our filming wrapped up, I was given two copies of Preemptive Strike in Japanese and a Japanese cake wrapped in very attractive wrapping. I gave Tomoko Nagano an autographed copy of my book. Mariko Fukuyama already had a copy of my book, and I autographed her copy of the book.

I believe it was Tomoko who asked me had I been previously interviewed by the Japanese media, and I said no. When I said no, she acted surprised.

Mariko promised to get me in contact with a person at Asahi TV with whom I could negotiate using excerpts from the filming on my website and in promotional activities related to the book.



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

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