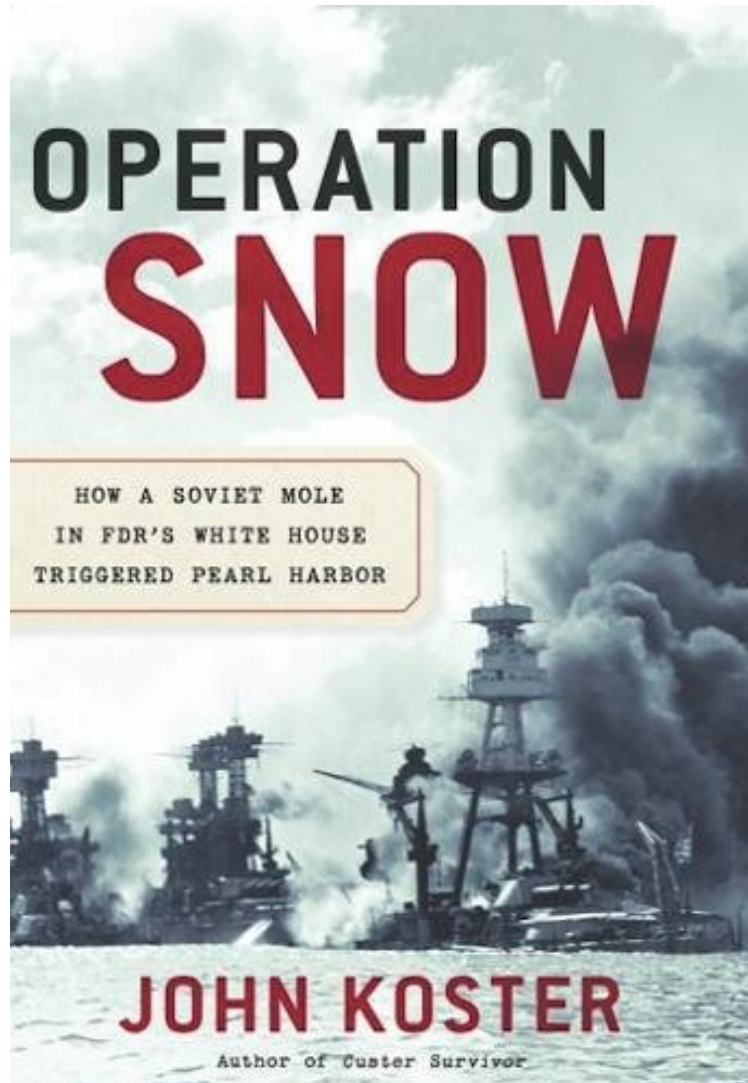


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Operation Snow: How a Soviet Mole in FDR's White House Triggered Pearl Harbor

John Koster

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John Koster : Operation Snow: How a Soviet Mole in FDR's White House Triggered Pearl Harbor before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Operation Snow: How a Soviet Mole in FDR's White House Triggered Pearl Harbor:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Triggering Pearl - The White House or H. D. White?By Hugh MurrayKoster has written an enjoyable, readable book. His thesis is that a secret Soviet agent in the Roosevelt Administration “triggered” the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, getting the US into war and eliminating the Japanese

option of striking north against the USSR. Since the Japanese were thus occupied elsewhere, Stalin could safely move men and material from Asia to be sent to aid in the war against Hitler. Presumably, without Harry Dexter White, America might not have entered WWII. The book is a good read, and Koster includes a chapter "cast of characters," identifying many of those to be discussed in the volume. Unfortunately, he does not include a chronology, which would have been most helpful to the reader. Using both recently released information from an NKVD operative and older sources, such as sworn testimony before the House un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), Koster concludes there is no doubt that White was a Soviet agent. And the logic of his book is also simple - Soviet agent Vitalii Pavlov in March 1941 urges White to foment war between Japan and the US. According to Koster, the NKVD had its "own foreign policy," and it believed that Hitler's Germany would soon turn against its Soviet ally and there would be war between the two dictatorships. Stalin did not accept this view.(pp. 1, 22, 108-09) But on behalf of the NKVD, Pavlov sought to engulf Japan in a war with the US so it would not have the strength to also strike its northern neighbor. White agreed with Pavlov's analysis, and though White was merely an Undersecretary of the US Treasury Department; Director of the Division of Monetary Research, "Behind the scenes, White was the brains behind Henry Morgenthau, Jr. (Treasury Secretary), who in turn tried to be the brains behind Franklin D. Roosevelt."(9) In Koster's view, Morgenthau was simply White's "puppet."(122) Koster writes fascinating history, some deemed too far afield to be discussed in most works. In Japan, there were those who urged a strike north, against the Soviets, and others who thought it better to attack south. Even before Pavlov had given instructions to White in spring 1941, Japan had already engaged in a strike north. Disputed border areas between Manchukuo (ally of Japan) and the People's Republic of Mongolia (a Soviet ally) resulted in an undeclared war between the Soviets and Japanese. In May 1939 incursions escalated. While at first the Japanese did quite well, Soviet Gen. Zhukov counter attacked with "the BT tank, the greatest in the world at that time,...designed in the United States by J. Walter Christie,..."(33) This Nomonhan Incident was not an official war, but the Soviets lost 8,000 men and the Japanese some 9,000. On 15 September 1939 both sides signed a cease fire, but both recognized that war in that quarter would be costly for both sides. (In 2011 the South Koreans released one of their most expensive films, "My Way," in which fighting around Nomonhan is a major feature of the movie.) Only after the cease-fire with Japan was signed on 15 September did Stalin then join in the spoils of Poland. The Germans had begun their blitzkrieg against Poland earlier in September, and Stalin waited till he was sure of peace in the east before he joined in the dismemberment of Poland on 17 September.(34) Koster records some of the political violence in depression Japan. He almost justifies the hostility toward bankers and politicians, and even against the Emperor, by "young officers" who thought themselves the heirs of the samurai and defenders of the poor. These officers attacked, assassinated, and attempted coups. (Of course, FDR was nearly assassinated a month prior to his inauguration as President, 15 February 1933.) Koster's description of the incident by the Marco Polo Bridge just outside Beijing is amusing. Never the less, it led to the 2nd Sino-Japanese War. Koster also discounts what he believes are vastly inflated figures for the horrors of the "Rape of Nanking" - he thinks the most likely death count is 42,000.(29) Even more heretical, he suggests Nanking may have been better off under the Japanese occupation than under the corrupt Nationalist government. In his discussion of the American Communist Party, Koster alludes to 2 incidents involving possible murders. He states that Communist Joseph Katz lost favor when he refused to kill another American Communist, Elizabeth Bentley, because she had become an anti-Communist. And one reason Whittaker Chambers defected from the Communist movement was when long-time American Communist Juliet Poyntz "disappeared" during party purges. Were people killed in the US for splitting with the Communist movement?(7-8, 20) There is an interesting note on whistle-blowers under FDR. A Korean who was involved in an anti-Japanese, pro-Korean underground alerted the US of a forthcoming attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor. He even provided the exact date of the attack. His warning was ignored. Ignored until AFTER the attack. "That afternoon, Kilsoo Haan,...received a telephone call from Maxwell Hamilton (US State Dept., Far Eastern Affairs). If his (Haan's) December 5 warning of an attack on Pearl Harbor were released to the press, Hamilton warned Haan, he would be 'put away for the duration.'"(151) Koster includes the pressures to round up Japanese and Americans of Japanese origin and place them in concentration camps. Liberal Pres. Roosevelt signed the order. Both the CP, USA, and the ACLU supported this assault on civil liberties. Republican conservative Sen. Robert Taft and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover opposed the round up.(160) Strangely, Koster does not mention another strong proponent of the round up, then California Atty. Gen. Earl Warren, who is best known as a liberal Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court. Clearly, I enjoyed much of the book. Why do I demur? "On Dec. 11, 1941, four days after Pearl Harbor, Hitler spontaneously declared war on the United States. With the Wehrmacht at the gates of Moscow and Leningrad, Russian morale was crumbling...Then hundreds of thousands of reinforcement and more than a thousand tanks arrived from Siberia and Mongolia, freed by the Japanese war with the United States."(163) The Germans had to retreat. Pavlov's order to Harry Dexter White, culminated with White's memorandum that became the ultimatum causing Tokyo to decide on war and attack Pearl Harbor, thus saving Stalin and the Soviet Union. But Stalin's counter offensive began 5 December 1941, before the Japanese attacked Pearl. Stalin had already shifted men and material from Asia to the European front. German Communist Richard Sorge's spying in Japan may have provided information of the planned attack on Pearl so Stalin believed he could win the gamble of shifting troops. Still, Koster's writing is deceptive on this

issue, implying the shift occurred after Pearl. More troublesome is the utter absence from this volume of any mention of Robert Stinnett and his *DAY OF DECEIT: THE TRUTH ABOUT FDR AND PEARL HARBOR*, published in 2001 by Free Press, and made into a program shown on the History Channel. Stinnett's hypothesis was that FDR had decided on war with Japan and provoked it. Because of advances in American code-breaking, Stinnett contended that FDR knew of the attack coming, and did nothing to stop it (indeed, Gen. Marshall is included among the do-nothings as I recall). Review some of Koster's points. The Hull Note of 26 Nov. 1941, based upon the memorandum of NKVD agent Harry D. White, was an ultimatum to Japan that it could not accept. Japan's late offer of peace, including withdrawing from most of China, were rejected by Sec. of State Hull and State Dept. expert on China, Stanley Hornbeck, neither of whom were sympathetic to communism.(125) FDR was already risking war with Japan when in April 1941 he authorized American pilots who could fly for Chiang's air force.(38) Koster adds, "While Roosevelt himself had probably not actively conspired to provoke the Japanese, the Hull note had made war all but inevitable, and he had done little to interfere."(153) Even Koster concedes that code breakers and other warnings, like that from Kilsoo Haan, were ignored. No one informed Admiral Kimmel or Gen. Short in Pearl Harbor of the approaching danger. Koster writes: "Washington sat on the information – apparently because they wanted some sort of war but did not expect anything like what they got.(154) FDR read a decoded message from the Japanese and stated, "This means war." Even Koster adds, "...why didn't the White House or the War Department telephone Hawaii when the President decoded the message...?"(159) In some of his rhetoric, Koster seems to blame all the deaths at Pearl Harbor, and perhaps in WWII on Harry Dexter White. White was a spy and a man of influence seeking to push America to advance the cause of Communism. But Roosevelt was engaged in many war-like actions against Germany in 1940 and 41. He was risking war with Japan too. If Stinnett's thesis is correct, FDR did not require Harry White to trigger Pearl Harbor. It is sad that Koster decided not to consider the Stinnett view in this book. While Koster presents a thesis that it was all the fault of Harry White, even his own quotations force one to question the actions of Roosevelt in the lead up to war with Japan in December 1941.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A disappointment on an Important Topic that needs further expositionBy Crash jrI looked forward to reading this book, having read many books on Communist activity and Soviet Espionage in the US. But, this book was somewhat of a disappointment and deserved better treatment, so, to my mind, the story will have to be left to others to handle better. What stands out is that the author takes up the mantle of an apologist for the actions of the Japanese military to its victims. A visit to WIKI under the topic of war dead during WWII gives a number nearing 30 million for nations where Japan alone was the aggressor, and mostly to non-combatants. A much less chivalrous picture than the author describes to us. The excuses he gives to the commanders in these areas seem to strain credibility. My own knowledge of victims can't be uncommon. One family friend was captured at Corregidor and was killed on the way to a camp. Another family friend died 10 years after the war from the ravages of medical experiments done on him while under captivity. A third man I worked with of Philippino decent while a boy remembered the Japanese severing heads of his countrymen and festooning posts with them. I'm one average Joe, and not unique in who I know. His indictment of FDR seems a bit of a stretch. Kilsoo Haan, while perhaps correct in his warning about Pearl Harbor would likely have been considered a wack-job for his warnings of a Japanese invasion with complicity of Japanese Americans. Certainly, the internees didn't do so well from his hysteria. What fact of his being Korean would've made American analysts think he had some special knowledge? Also, his portrayal of the diplomatic intercepts don't reveal what he claims. They did not specifically mention Pear Harbor, and there were many vulnerable US military holdings closer to Japan that would likely have stirred concern, perhaps ahead of Pearl. I don't mean to imply that there was not negligence also. But, even the author seems to doubt there was any culpability by FDR or a desire to enter into a war. He makes clear they thought that Japan would not dare do so and I think he's correct in that assessment. His description of Harry Dexter White, I believe, is spot on and points to him as likely the most heinous traitor and soviet spy/operative in US history. It just seems his treatment of White and the circumstances identifying him is sloppy and not well structured. This and his constant attempts to convince the reader of an over stated guilt of the Japanese for their conduct of the war makes it hard to get through at times. To be fair, the author has Japanese family ties and his familiarity and dialogue with acquaintances may lead him to conclude the spirit of the times in the minds of the Japanese was different than the way we think of them, and perhaps he's right. But his Apologia goes a bit far in those areas.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Harry Dexter White: Guilty of TreasonBy AletheuoThe author has tried to prove that Harry Dexter White was the primary protagonist catalyzer of the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Unfortunately, he did not succeed. However, he did do a marvelous job demonstrating White's culpability and involvement in the operation to bring the U.S. and Japan into war against one another. The author wastes very little ink tying one Harry Hopkins to the infamous event. However methinks Hopkins likely deserves more "credit" for the bombing than White. Nevertheless, the book reads well and is probably mostly accurate. The author's bibliography is quite impressive. There are a few minor points on which I disagree (with regard to interpretation), but I won't "pen" my objections here, since they are not particularly important.

Americans have long debated the cause of the December 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor. Many have argued that the

attack was a brilliant Japanese military coup, or a failure of U.S. intelligence agencies, or even a conspiracy of the Roosevelt administration. But despite the attention historians have paid to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the truth about that fateful day has remained a mystery—until now. In *Operation Snow: How a Soviet Mole in FDR's White House Triggered Pearl Harbor*, author John Koster uses recently declassified evidence and never-before-translated documents to tell the real story of the day that FDR memorably declared would live in infamy, forever. *Operation Snow* shows how Joseph Stalin and the KGB used a vast network of double-agents and communist sympathizers—most notably, Harry Dexter White—to lead Japan into war against the United States, demonstrating incontestable Soviet involvement behind the bombing of Pearl Harbor. A thrilling tale of espionage, mystery and war, *Operation Snow* will forever change the way we think about Pearl Harbor and World War II.

From the Inside Flap: PEARL HARBOR WAS MORE THAN A SURPRISE ATTACK. It was, argues celebrated historian John Koster, part of a deep Soviet plot—"Operation Snow"—to divert the Japanese into fighting the Americans rather than the Russians. Even more startling, Koster reveals how Harry Dexter White, one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's most important men in the Treasury Department—and also a Soviet spy—was a key figure in the plot. In *Operation Snow* Koster reveals: The previously neglected (and untranslated) sources that expose the Soviet conspiracy. How Harry Dexter White got away with one of the most devastating acts of treason in American history. How Japan and the United States were manipulated by Russian agents and propaganda. Why, if *Operation Snow* had failed, the Soviet Union might have collapsed under the combined might of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Stalin's unwitting stooge—how FDR's Secretary of the Treasury was manipulated to promote policies that provoked war with Japan. It didn't end with Pearl Harbor: how Harry Dexter White continued to act as a Soviet agent into the postwar era, until exposure prompted a disguised suicide. Full of shocking detail, *Operation Snow* is a riveting exposé of an extraordinary intelligence operation that radically altered the Second World War, with consequences that are almost impossible to measure. Think you know the story of Pearl Harbor? You don't know the full story until you read *Operation Snow*.