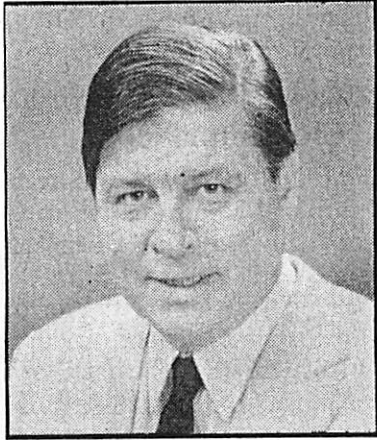


# Meet Your Enemy

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by Joe Sobran



It has now been 59 years since the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and the debate continues: Did Franklin Roosevelt know of the attack in advance and deliberately refrain from informing the American commanders in Hawaii?

The controversy has been renewed by Robert B. Stinnett's recent book, *Day of Deceit*, which argues that Roosevelt did know and did withhold the information for the purpose of allowing the United States to be drawn into the war the great majority of Americans passionately wanted to stay out of. The interesting thing is that Stinnett thinks Roosevelt was justified in doing this, on grounds that only the United States could prevent a German victory in the war

and had a duty to do so.

Critics retort that Stinnett hasn't fully proved his case. Roosevelt did try to provoke the Germans and Japanese into some military strike that would inflame American opinion and lead to war, they agree, but he didn't necessarily know that Pearl Harbor would be the site of the crucial incident. Besides, he couldn't have known that Adolf Hitler would be foolish enough to declare war on the United States a few days later, thereby giving Roosevelt license to enter the war in Europe.

What nobody now disputes is that Roosevelt lied to the American public for two years when he continually insisted that he was trying to keep America out of the war. He was secretly scheming with Winston Churchill for precisely the opposite purpose, and he told his advisor Harry Hopkins that he could be impeached if the extent of his illegal aid to the British were discovered. Roosevelt knew very well what he was doing.

Apart from being diabolically treacherous, keeping the people in the dark about the fateful decision to go to

war is the antithesis of everything democracy is supposed to be. Like most demagogues, Roosevelt flattered the people and pandered to them while holding them in profound contempt. Those who defend him are forced to defend lies that are no longer deniable.

The alleged "lesson of Pearl Harbor" is that we must always be ready for war. But the real lesson is broader: your own government is your natural enemy. Those in power can't be trusted. They will take your money, your freedom, and if necessary your life.

That's why we have constitutional safeguards, dividing power to prevent the sort of one-man rule Roosevelt, like Hitler, Stalin, and so many others, aspired to. One of the "evils" of monarchy, as opposed to the republican form of government envisioned by the Framers of the U.S. Constitution, was that a king could, by his own arbitrary will, plunge his nation into war. Roosevelt saw the Constitution purely as an obstacle to be surmounted.

But the wars of the old kings were minor skirmishes compared with the total wars waged by modern

rulers who don't call themselves kings. Men like Stalin and Roosevelt didn't wear jeweled crowns and ermine robes; they styled themselves "men of the people". But they were far deadlier than any George III or Ivan the Terrible.

Over two centuries our rulers have learned to outflank, ignore, or destroy many of the limits on their power. They pose a greater threat to us than the foreign countries and "terrorists" they warn us against and claim to protect us from. It's not a hypothetical threat, either: by expanding the taxing power and debasing money, they have made government a system of organized plunder.

The most successful terrorist organizations on earth are government tax agencies, which are called revenue "services." When the government gives things names, you should keep your sense of irony handy. These "services" serve only the state; they control the rest of us by force and fear.

There are many evil governments around the world, but they are chiefly the enemies of their own subjects. By the same token, our own enemies are not in Baghdad

or Tehran or Peking, but in Washington. That is where the immediate peril to our freedom resides. Saddam Hussein may be a beast, but you aren't forced to work for him five months of every year.

Fifty-nine years ago the real enemy of the American people was not Hitler or Hirohito. It was the man they had elected to a third term as their president.

Joe Sobran is the author of *Hustler: the Clinton Legacy*. His columns are archived at [www.sobran.com/columns](http://www.sobran.com/columns).

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