



Gangsters of Capitalism - Jonathan M. Katz Pt. ½

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Talia Baroncelli (TB): Hi, you're watching *theAnalysis.news*, and I'm Talia Baroncelli. I'll shortly be joined by journalist Jonathan M. Katz to speak about his book *Gangsters of Capitalism* and the Marine Smedley Butler.

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I'm very excited to be joined by Jonathan M. Katz. He's a journalist and author of the book *The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster*. His second book, which we'll be discussing today, is called *Gangsters of Capitalism: Smedley Butler, the Marines, and the Making and Breaking of America's Empire*. Thanks so much for joining us again, Jonathan. It's great to have you back.

Jonathan M. Katz (JMK): It's wonderful to be here.

TB: So your book speaks about Smedley Butler, who is the highest decorated Marine in U.S. history. He was involved in numerous U.S. military expeditions in Cuba, in the Philippines, Northern China, Nicaragua, Haiti, as well as, in France during the First World War and numerous other places. After the First World War, he began giving lectures on the dangers of U.S. militarism and war profiteering. These lectures actually formed the basis for a pamphlet that he wrote in 1935 called *War Is a Racket*. That particular pamphlet traced the links between war, big business, and war profiteering. We'll at some point get to a foiled coup plot called the Business Plot in 1933, going into 1934. Before we speak about that, why don't we speak about who Smedley was? He was born in Westchester, Pennsylvania, to a senator. He grew up as a Quaker. What else can you tell us about his upbringing?

JMK: Yeah, a congressman was who his father was.

TB: Okay.

JMK: Yes, exactly. His father was a very prominent person in the country at the time. Yeah, he grew up a rich kid in suburban Philadelphia just off the main line, if anybody knows Philly, from an old Pennsylvania Quaker family. His family had been very involved in banking and railroads. His mother's family was the side that had the money. The Darlington family. His full name was Smedley Darlington Butler. He was named for his grandfather, Smedley Darlington, who was the congressman for the district who then retired and handed his seat to his son-in-law, who was Smedley's father. The Darlington's were the power in the area. If you go to Westchester today, there's still a fair amount of stuff in town named for the Darlington's. He went to school on the main line at what is now called the Haverford School. It still exists. At the time, it was called the Haverford College Grammar School. It shares a campus with Haverford College, which is a Quaker College. He effectively dropped out of school. He got his diploma mailed to him at the end, but he effectively dropped out of school and stopped his education in 1898 to join the Marines to fight in Cuba in what Americans know as the Spanish-American War. Cubans know it as the War of Independence or the Spanish-Cuban-American War. And for the Filipinos, who Smedley also ended up getting involved with going to the Philippines and actually spent a lot of time there. The full name of it is the Spanish-Filipino-Cuban-American War. Also, Puerto Rico is involved.

This is a war in which America really becomes an overseas empire. Butler lies about his age; he's 16 years old, but the Marines are desperate. They'll take anybody they can get. They ship him to Cuba to a little garden spot known as Guantánamo Bay, which the Americans had just seized a couple of weeks earlier. From there, Butler goes on a world tour. He goes everywhere that the flag goes. Everywhere that the Marines go. Everywhere that the United States gets involved in an overseas conflict, occupation, invasion, or war, with just one or two minor exceptions, from 1898 until the 1930s, until the eve of World War II. He starts off as a rich Quaker and then basically goes in a direction that a lot of Quakers don't go in, which is that he joins the military.

TB: Yeah, he really wanted to see combat, and he was completely convinced by this idea of the white man fighting in other parts of the world. Trying to bring about freedom but also prosperity to the United States. He was involved in numerous U.S. colonial expeditions. He fully bought into this idea of the American Empire and of exploiting racialized populations.

JMK: Reading his letters, which was a huge source for my research for the book, and also some of the memoirs that he wrote or participated in at the end of his life, it's very clear that he was very radicalized by the destruction of the battleship Maine, which people often hear about in school. The Maine was one of two steel battleships in the U.S. Navy at the time. It went to Cuba as a show of force to protect American businesses. Most Americans didn't really understand why it was there. All they knew was that it was blown up. It was destroyed in Havana Harbor and sunk with 260 American sailors and marines aboard. Contrary to popular belief, it wasn't really the U.S. government that blamed the Spanish. American popular opinion and American newspapers either directly implied or believed Spain was

responsible for it. There were also a lot of parallels here to 9/11. The anniversary just passed. In that, it's a *casus belli*. It plunges, especially a young generation of Americans. It gives them this jingoistic war fever, and it makes them eager for war and revenge. No one's really asking a lot of questions about why was this situation the way it was? This happened in the first place.

The other thing that I think it has in common, which complicates some of the narratives, especially some of the basic narratives on the Left, is that Spain, which was the colonizing power in Cuba, had owned Cuba as a colony since Christopher Columbus dropped anchor there in 1494. It was a horrible colonial empire, and it was doing horrific things. One of the things that Spain was doing that really radicalized a lot of Americans who were reading newspapers at the time was that they invented concentration camps to crush the Cuban Independence Movement. Cubans have been trying to fight for their independence for 30 years at this point. The war that America ended up getting involved in had actually started it. The Cuban War had started in 1895, so just before. There is some similarity there to Saddam Hussein who was really a bad guy. Al-Qaeda is really a bad malevolent force. Spain, who the United States was going to war against, actually weren't good people. It wasn't like Spain was innocent, and the United States just framed them and went to war against them. But just as in the Forever Wars, just as in the post-9/11 moment, which in some ways we're still in, it was sold to the American people as "We need to do this as a war for democracy. We need to do this as a war to free little Cuba," is the way that Smedley Butler remembered it. He said, "I wanted to shoulder a rifle and free little Cuba," in a very paternalistic sense. From the point of view of the U.S. government, they had significant business interests in Cuba. Once it became clear that there were these other Spanish colonies all over the world, the Philippines being the biggest, also Puerto Rico, and Guam; all of which ended up being part of the U.S. Empire, the Philippines gained their independence in 1946; they had their own ulterior motives. For a kid like Smedley, he was 16, he didn't know any of that. So he just went and just got a big old swig of the Kool-Aid. Then, when he was in the field, when he was in Cuba, and then especially when he gets sent to his next assignment, which is the Philippines. Just in time, the U.S. had just annexed the Philippines, and the Filipinos weren't happy about that because the U.S. fought on the side of both the Filipinos and the Cubans and then betrayed both of them.

TB: Just to highlight this one point. Initially, the Americans said that they were going into Cuba to fight alongside the Cubans against the Spanish. But then there's a racial element there because when they saw the Cubans and saw that many of them were of African descent, for example, and they're visibly darker, they started to think that, "Oh, well, maybe we can oppress them and exploit them instead." They turned on the native populations there in order to actually try to make it a project of the U.S. Empire to benefit the U.S. It plays into what someone like CIA whistleblower John Kiriakou would say, "I believed America could do no wrong." This is what Smedley Butler was essentially believing. He was fully indoctrinated. He went to these various places, and he really did believe that Brown or Black people should be "civilized" for people who are listening. That it was America's right in a way to actually annex land or to take abacá, bananas, or whatever other raw materials or resources were

there. Even if it meant using techniques such as concentration, harassment, or putting people in concentration camps, and that was all justified.

JMK: The Americans go to war with Spain, and part of the reason for the war, the *Maine* is the most famous, but part of the reason is because Spain is operating concentration camps. In Spanish, it's known as *reconcentración*. They're operating these *reconcentrados*, and then the Americans open their own concentration camps in the Philippines. They learn the technique from the Spanish. They also, by the way, in the Philippines, learn waterboarding. It's actually a much more brutal earlier form of waterboarding in which people were much more likely to die. Yeah, and because of the different ways that the internal politics and the ways in which within the United States, there was a significant caucus that didn't want to become an overseas empire. They didn't want overseas colonies. They wrote into the Declaration of War of Spain a provision which said that Cuba wouldn't become an American colony.

TB: That was Senator [Henry M.] Teller's amendment, right?

JMK: Exactly. Cuba becomes a client state instead. Instead, we basically install a public government and ensure that we maintain control over Guantánamo Bay. But then the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico, there's no such provision. So all of those just became U.S. colonies with the help of the Marines and Smedley Butler.

TB: There was another general; I can't remember his name. I think it was Jacob Smith. He was someone who was really famous for his 27 years in the U.S. for fighting the Indigenous population and fighting the Native Americans. He developed or implemented these techniques, if you will, of concentration of harassment. He was hired to actually go to the Philippines and use those same techniques on the local populations there. In a sense, you could see the native populations in the U.S. as forming technological testing grounds. It's kind of similar to what's going on in the Middle East right now, in Gaza, where the Israelis develop all these different weapons using AI and surveillance. They test them on the Palestinians. Then, these techniques and these weapons are sold to other countries for them to use on their own populations. This is being done in the EU, in the Central Mediterranean, as well as along the U.S.-Mexico border. Could you speak a bit more about that particular technique, which was honing these techniques in North America and then exporting them rather abroad?

JMK: It wasn't just Smith, who was horrific, and he factors into a chapter. It's a really horrific chapter in both my book and also in American history on a specific island in the Philippines called Samar.

TB: Oh, it was brutal.

JMK: There's basically a guerrilla massacre of occupying U.S. troops who have been harassing and taking advantage of, and there were rumors of sexual assault and things like this by the Americans against the local population in a town called Balangiga. The Balangiga

non-locals and also some other guerrillas from other places in the Philippines attacked the Americans and massacred a bunch of them at breakfast one morning.

TB: Yeah, like 47 of them or something.

JMK: I think that's the number, yeah. Then basically, the Americans go on just an orgy of revenge. They launch an enormous revenge massacre, which is still known in Marine Corps lore, especially, as the March on Samar. Butler actually isn't involved in that personally. He would have been there because his unit essentially is part of it. He was in China right before that, suppressing the Boxer Rebellion, when he contracted typhoid and ended up getting sent home. Smith is sent in to oversee that and issues a notorious order to basically kill every male on the island over the age of 10, which is not followed to the letter, but it certainly helps set the tone for what happens.

It's not just Smith. The entire officer class of the military, especially at the beginning of this period, all came up through what is known in American and U.S. history as the Indian Wars. The wars of ethnic cleansing, displacement, concentration, and harassment against the Native Peoples, especially in the Western United States. Adna Chaffee, who was a very important military leader, was also an army officer and the general in charge of the invasion of China and the Boxer Rebellion. He also came up through that war. All the old men who Smedley is serving under at the beginning, the oldest of them, actually fought in the Civil War because it was 30 years before at that point. In the time between the Civil War, the U.S. Civil War, and this period that we're talking about, the main task of the U.S. military was fighting native peoples, fighting the Lakota, fighting the Dene, fighting the Apache, the Comanche, all of those wars. They hone these tactics, and then they use them; they employ them in the field. The Philippines is, in a lot of ways, the biggest cauldron of that, although there are other examples of colonial warfare tactics that the Americans are using. The Americans are also learning from other empires. The Americans, especially in China, fought alongside the British, the French, and the Germans.

TB: The Russians too, right?

JMK: Russians, yeah. The Italians, the Austrians, and the Japanese in that particular war. I feel like I'm forgetting one, but it doesn't matter.

TB: Japanese, did you say that?

JMK: We were fighting alongside the Japanese in China in 1900. We're learning, especially from the British and the French, a lot of their colonial techniques as well. Techniques that they've been honing in centuries of colonial warfare, but especially in terms of modern warfare at that time in Africa, especially, and also Asia. Sometimes, they're learning these techniques alongside the Americans at the same time. One of the lesser-known findings of my book, and I think my book is still the first place that put this together, it seems I found very clear evidence that the British employed chemical weapons in China in 1900, which is

14 years earlier.

TB: Woah, okay.

JMK: The standard history says that they were first employed on the battlefield in World War I in 1914. There's very clear evidence, looking at Chinese sources, that they were employed in a battle in which the Americans and Smedley Butler participated in 1900 in China. All that's to say that, yeah, this is still how war is done. War is, in a very perverse way, there's technology, learning, experimentation, development, theory, and debates over the theories. Ultimately, the battlefield is the laboratory for this kind of science. It's a sick science, but it's a science. A lot of the techniques are learned in the wars against Native Americans. All of these things remain part of the lexicon of the U.S. military in a lot of ways up until this day, certainly in the Vietnam War. If you look at letters and documentaries from then, people often talk about going into Indian country, by which they meant hostile zones controlled by the Viet Minh or the Viet Cong.

TB: Was it the bundók [boondocks], which was one term that was taken from the Philippines as well?

JMK: So bundók basically comes from a term that means mountain, but it comes to mean wilderness. The Americans start saying that they're heading into the bundóks to fight against the Filipinos. The Filipinos were very badly outmatched on the battlefield in a straight fight, so they started adopting guerrilla tactics, which then drew the Americans further into the boonies. The boonie hat is still, I think to this day, the floppy hat that some of the branches of the U.S. Armed Forces wear. They still call it a boonie hat. There are other terms as well that I'm not pulling off the top of my head, but there are others as well. All these things really come out of the cauldron of this time. The other thing, and I don't know if I'm getting too far ahead of ourselves here, but a thing that Smedley Butler is personally involved in, he plays a lead role in, is the development of counterinsurgency theory or COIN. He really develops it in Haiti, which is a place where he's posted for a really significant portion of his career. It's actually where I encountered him first in terms of our...

TB: I was wondering where you first encountered him, so that makes sense because he was there in 1915.

JMK: Yeah, exactly. I first encountered Smedley Butler when I moved to Haiti in 2007. We lived in the same place, fourth dimensionally. He shows up in some histories of Haiti because he's a very important person in the U.S. occupation of Haiti, which happened from 1915 to 1934. Butler is a part of the initial invasion force. He played a significant role in setting up the occupation, including setting up a colonial military constabulary, which ended up becoming the Haitian Armed Forces, which has been disbanded and is now back. One of the things about him that's interesting, and I think this is one of the things that makes him a more subtle character, is that he's serving in Haiti under Littleton Waller, who is a dyed-in-the-wool, white supremacist, and extremely racist. From an old slave-holding family

in Virginia. One of his ancestors was the enslaver of Kunta Kinte, for people who are familiar with him. He was the enslaver of an enslaved person named Toby Waller, who Alex Haley identifies as Kunta Kinte in *Roots*. There's a rabbit hole there, but it just gives you a sense of who this guy is. He's super racist. A lot of the Marines come from the South. This is a period of high Jim Crow lynchings, the whole nine. It really is the establishment of the Jim Crow South that is happening at this same time. It's happening in this same period.

Butler comes from Philly. He comes from Philadelphia. He's a Quaker. His family was adamantly anti-slavery. In fact, both of his grandfathers, like him, made an odd choice for Quakers, and they both served in the Union Army during the Civil War because, for some Quakers, the need to abolish slavery was more important than the need to adhere to their peace testament. At least, that's how they felt their moral drive drove them at the time. Butler comes from a family that is not racist. I wouldn't say that they're necessarily anti-racist. By the time he's growing up, they just don't think about race. If you asked them, they would say, "Of course, we're against slavery." His attitude is very different from that of a Waller, but he has a lot of deeply ingrained white supremacist attitudes that are just typical of white Americans at that time.

TB: Just to interject, there were a lot of, I think, policy debates, too, at the time. I don't know if it was between Chaffee or was it Taft? I can't remember, but very minute differences. Either, "Oh, we want to support our Brown brothers," so to speak.

JMK: Exactly.

TB: Then the opposite of that would be, "No, we should just slaughter all of them." But implicit in both positions is that those people abroad are essentially not really first-class citizens, and they're inferior to white Americans.

JMK: Those are the two flavors at the time. William Howard Taft, who was a colonial governor of the Philippines, obviously ended up becoming President of the United States and then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. He, somewhat infamously in the Philippines today, infamously to even modern-day Filipinos, calls Filipinos our little Brown brothers. He says that in time and with great American care, they can learn Anglo-Saxon principles. Then the other flavor is just "Kill them all."

TB: Not a Metallica album, but actually, yeah.

JMK: Exactly, yeah. Chaffee, as we noted, comes from the experience in the wars against the Native Americans. Waller is from a similar background. Certainly is a hardcore white supremacist. Waller is the guy who actually leads the March on Samar. He's actually the guy on the ground who leads this revenge massacre and the atrocities that the Americans committed on Samar in 1901. He is then Butler's senior commander in Haiti during the invasion. What Waller would want to do to Filipinos, he wants to do 10 times over to Haitians because Haiti occupies a really central place in the American imagination,

specifically in the Southern American imagination. In the years leading up to the Civil War, Americans who became the Confederacy, ultimately, are living in abject fear of the Haitian revolution coming to their shores and the people that they were inflating doing what the Haitians did, rising up against the power, freeing themselves, and in some cases, taking revenge against their masters. There are reasons for them to be concerned about this because Black people and African Americans are learning from Haiti. They're aware, in some cases, of what has happened in Haiti. There are actually some small attempts to rise up that are, in some cases, inspired directly by events that happened there. John Brown is reading the biography of Toussaint Louverture, who's one of the leaders of the Haitian Revolution, in his cell as he's waiting to be hanged for trying to incite a slave rebellion. Littleton Waller grows up hearing about this place. He doesn't even call it Haiti because he calls it Saint-Domingue, because that's the old French colonial name. It was a 19th-century white supremacist trolling to call Haiti by its colonial name, by its slave name. Waller is just like, "Let's just kill all these people. Let's just kill them until they submit to American rule." Butler, because he comes from a different background and is in some ways able to see Haitians more as people than his commanding officers, especially Waller, is like, "No, we could actually work with some of these people. We can work with villagers." We can create daylight between some of the rural villagers, some of the peasants or peyizans, as they call them in Haiti, and the insurgents, the Cacos, who are fighting against the Americans.

This ends up becoming both much more effective and also more destructive. By working with the local population, by enlisting Haitians as this armed constabulary force, and by inventing counterinsurgency, he makes a much more durable occupation and a much more effective and ultimately much more brutal occupation than it probably would have been otherwise, or at least than it might have been otherwise. His tactics, the tactics that he and his Marines invent in the mountains of Northern Haiti, they write down, and those notes become the *Small Wars Manual* of the U.S. military. They become the basis of counterinsurgency theory. In 2004, James Mattis, when his troops were going to Iraq, ordered all of his... he encouraged, but he was obviously their commanding officer, so basically, he ordered his officers and his non-coms to read the *Small Wars Manual*. To go back to the things that Smedley Butler was coming up with. That legacy is still very much a part of the U.S. military.

TB: Well, to talk about James Mattis, you also brought him up in the Filipino context, because you were traveling to the Philippines as you were doing research on Smedley Butler. You travel to a lot of different places that you discuss in the book. I guess you could call it a past or present frame is how you've discussed it. I don't know if there's an actual literary term for it, but you're discussing the historical event, and then you actually visited these places, spoke to people there, and did research. When you're in the Philippines, you went to the place of the Balangiga Massacre. I think at the time, [Rodrigo] Duterte was President, and he wanted to get these two bells back from the U.S. because the U.S., I think they stole these two bells. I don't know, they have some sort of historical significance.

JMK: They were church bells.

TB: Church bells, right.

JMK: Balangiga is a small town, and the church is a very important part of the town. What ends up happening is that during the revenge for this massacre, the Americans burn the town of Balangiga to the ground. They destroy the church, and they take the bells from the church. The Americans believed, and people who are very deeply seeped in American military lore still believe that these bells were rung to signal the beginning of the massacre of the Americans. It's a little unclear whether that's true or not, but it doesn't really matter. We're talking about a historical memory. To some extent, what matters is what people believe. The Americans take these bells as revenge. They take them as war trophies, and they house them at what's first an army base in Wyoming. It becomes an Air Force base. Then, another one of them ends up in Korea because of the movement of the unit that is involved in this campaign, the army unit. For well over 100 years, almost 120 years, the people of Balangiga, especially, want the bells back. The bells, in a lot of ways, they become; the French term is lieu de mémoire. It's like a site of memory. Statues are sites of memory. Places can be sites of memory. Films and books can sometimes be sites of memory. But this is a very physical and tangible site of memory. They almost become like a Horcrux from *Harry Potter*. They become almost a thing in which all of these feelings about American imperialism, writ large, the Filipino-American War, the domination of the Philippines by other empires as well, and, of course, the memory of this particular revenge massacre, all get stored psychically in these bells.

Duterte is an interesting figure. He's trying to play the U.S. and China off one another. He is eager to maintain U.S. support. He likes his ties with Donald Trump, who was President of the United States at the time. Kind of in a way that Filipino presidents typically hadn't up until this point. The Philippines for many years in this interim, are ruled by the Marcos dictatorship. Ferdinand Marcos Senior. His son is now the President of the Philippines. Imelda Marcos is the wife of Senior. Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, it's a period called martial law, but they controlled the Philippines as a one-man dictatorship with the blessing of the U.S., especially the Reagan administration, until he was overthrown by a popular uprising in the Philippines in 1986. All that's to say, it's pretty rare for a Filipino president in all this time to bring up the Filipino-American War, but Duterte does. He makes a big deal about wanting to get these bells back. When I visited there, especially when I went to Balangiga, everybody in town was like, "Oh, have you seen the bells? Can you get a message to the U.S. that we want the bells back?" Somebody asked me if it's true that the bells are made of solid gold. They're not. Gold would be [inaudible 00:35:38].

TB: So fast-forward, Mattis actually does give the bells back to Duterte. The reason I brought it up is more of a question of collective memory because Mattis, in doing so, he's not really giving in to the Philippines. He's actually saying these bells represented a marking of time, but the courage of our soldiers is timeless, something like that. He actually spins it, and he's saying, "Our troops were incredibly heroic, and giving this symbolic site of memory back to the Philippines is in no way trying to rewrite our own history." In a way, the collective

memory there is not being changed. If anything, it's actually being weaponized, which I thought was really interesting. I guess on both sides, there are different perceptions of their own history and of collective memory as well.

JMK: Yeah, it's interesting. In some ways, it reminds me a little bit of the redeemer period in the U.S. when the former North and the former South came together. Really, in the Spanish-American War, more specifically.

TB: The redemption era, right?

JMK: Yeah, the redemption era. There are these ways in which the myth of the lost cause in the Confederacy gets in some ways adopted by the North, and it turns into— this really sticks with American culture up until this day. I'm blanking on the name of the scholar, I believe. I can remember it later. But there are a number of scholars who have noted that this is basically like a union, no pun intended, between the whites of the North and the whites of the South with each other and capital. There are compromises made to further a military project. There are compromises made in this rapprochement, which include basically the North for much of the 20th century, basically until the 1960s. There are exceptions, but ultimately, tolerating, to some extent, Jim Crow segregation.

TB: It's like the legislation that was signed at the time was cementing the exploitation of Black people, even though slavery had been abolished. It was like another way of perpetrating those inequalities.

JMK: Yeah, exactly. If slavery had been abolished in the reconstruction era, formerly enslaved people, Black men, would have been holding office in the South. Basically, the agreement that has come between the Northern capital and the Southern capital is to just unite and let bygones be bygones on their side, but then just cut out the Black population entirely.

There is something similar in what Mattis is doing here, just like rhetorically, especially. There's a way that after two sides who have been at war are no longer at war with one another, they can use their common experience of having been at war as a way to bond. It's a very strange thing. It actually almost depends on very imprecise language and a healthy dose of historical amnesia. He's doing that because he's in the Philippines talking about how brave American soldiers are. He has to do that also because he's Trump's Secretary of Defense. Also, it was not without controversy, especially within the Republican Party, to give these bells back. In some ways, he has to pay lip service and make it very clear that this is not a capitulation. We're not surrendering. We're not saying that, in retrospect, you guys actually won the war. We're just doing this as a friendship gesture so that the Philippines and the United States can form more of a united front against China. From the perspective of the defense establishment, especially. I think from Trump's perspective— I don't even know what Trump thought about this if he was even aware it was happening. If he was aware, he may have just been like, "Yeah, Rodrigo Duterte is a good guy. Let's do him a solid. He's one of my kinds of dictators. I like him." I think from the perspective of the defense establishment,

the national security establishment especially, the Philippines is a really important geographic location now, as it was in 1899 and 1900, because of its position, specifically with regard to China.

TB: That's why you had, two years later during COVID, that Pentagon operation, trying to spread misinformation to convince Filipinos not to take the Sinovac vaccine so that they would create distrust towards China, essentially, to exploit that and to try to position the Philippines more on the side of U.S. Empire as on the side of China.

JMK: If you look at a map, the Philippines are almost like 7,000 extremely large barrier islands, in a way, off of Asia. They are directly positioned to force deployment and force projection toward China. The reason why, even in World War II, on December 7 and December 8, because of the International Date Line, in 1941, the Japanese attacked at the same time that they attacked Pearl Harbor, they attacked the Philippines, and they attacked a number of other colonial possessions, both American and British in the Pacific Rim. But in a lot of ways, what Japan was really trying to do in the war, and this is very clear if you look at the scope of American-Japanese relations over the 40 years leading up to this, basically from the Boxer Rebellion to 1941. It is very much that the United States controls the Philippines, which then allows the United States to project force and control or at least have significant military influence over the Asian mainland. Japan wants that because, in a lot of ways, in the Pacific, the war between the United States and Japan is really a war over control of China. In a lot of ways, that's actually what's happening here.

There's a whole chapter in *Gangsters* about an earlier Pacific war scare in 1907, where Smedley Butler is based in another part of the Philippines. In a spot called Subic Bay, where he's like, mounting guns. He's installing this gun battery to defend against a legitimately feared Japanese attack. Anyway, all that's to say, especially when you're talking about the military, geography is, in a lot of ways, destiny. The Philippines are this very important geographic feature that anybody who wants to control the Pacific Rim and anybody who wants to, especially either have power as China or keep China in check, wants control over in whatever way is possible. So, yes, the U.S., then as now, wants the Philippines both for access to China's markets and also as a counterbalance and a forced projection point to stop any kind of Chinese military expansion in the region. In a lot of ways, that's what the return of the bells is in a lot of ways about. It's this gesture that's like, let's let bygones be bygones. He employs this redeemer, redemption era language that's just like, "There were heroes on both sides. Some mistakes were made, but didn't we all just come out of that experience just a little more manly than we went in?"

TB: Yeah, bonding. That was part one of my discussion with Jonathan M. Katz. In part two, we discuss the role that class played in politics at the time of Smedley Butler, as well as the foiled Business Plot. Thanks for watching.

END

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