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Gold Warriors: America's Secret Recovery of Yamashita's Gold

Book Review

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Global Research, May 27, 2018

Region: Asia, USA
Theme: Economy, History

In the book Gold Warriors by Sterling & Peggy Seagrave the authors reveal one of the most shocking secrets of the 20th century the amazing story of a vast treasure that Japan managed to loot across Asia which is today worth hundreds of billions if not trillions of dollars, the concealment of this treasure in hundreds of sites, and the secret recovery of much of this treasure by what would become the CIA.

America would help Japan cover up this vast fortune fooling the world into believing that Japan was bankrupt after the war and was unable to pay reparations for their mass murder of tens of millions of civilians or the massive profits they generated from slave labor and the global heroin trade.

The treasure much of it buried in the Philippines would fuel the rise and fall of Ferdinand Marcos. Most of this vast fortune would remain in the hands of fascist Japanese war criminals and would for decades be used to prop up Japan's corrupt one party democracy ruled by the Liberal Democratic Party with the CIA and the Yakuza pulling the strings behind the scenes. It would be controlled by men like Allen Dulles, John J. McCloy through their Black Eagle Trust which managed both Japanese and Nazi War loot. The Gold would be deposited in the Federal Reserve, The Bank of England, Union Banque Suisse (UBS) in Switzerland, Citibank, HSBC and other major banks who often stole it for themselves. The gold was also used to manipulate the entire global economy , finance assassinations and covert ops bribe politicians and finance right wing political movements like the John Birch Society domestically.

Indeed after reading this book one may well wonder how much of this gold is involved today in financing charlatans like Alex Jones and the rest of the patriot movement since as everyone knows these "Patriot Radio" stations are heavily involved in selling gold and silver. The vast treasure was also one of the largely unknown aspects of the Iran/Contra scandal and was used to fund WACL The World Anti-Communist League two of my favorite obsessions.

The book offers a window to the vast and mysterious world of offshore banking and the Gold Cartel. The authors estimate that today the ultra-rich are hoarding over 23 trillion dollars mostly in offshore bank accounts while around the world health and education are being cut poverty and homelessness are on the rise, and the rest of us are constantly told to tighten our belts. Gold Warriors tells a compelling tale of secrecy, greed, treachery, murder and lies.

The Seagraves destroy the myth that America reformed Japan after the war revealing the shocking story of the MacArthur occupation and it's alliance with Japanese Fascists and

Gangsters along with Japan's ruthless imperial family and their huge corporate backers like Mitsui, Mitsubushi, Kawasaki and Sumitomo. They used this loot to finance Japan's Postwar recovery and meteoric rise. Companies that have since become household names made their fortunes through looting Asia and employing slave labor including American POWS. When the survivors tried to sue for reparations State department officials like Tom Foley with corrupt ties to these Japanese corporations compared the victims to terrorists. Foley's wife worked for Sumitomo and Foley later became a lobbyist for Mitsubishi.

Okhoru Pavilion in Geoncheongjeon, Gyeongbokgung where the Empress (Queen Min) was killed. (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

The Seagraves begin their book with the brutal assassination of the Korean Queen Min on October 7 1895 by the Japanese. She was murdered along with two of her ladies in waiting and then her body was doused in gasoline and burned. To carry it out the Japanese used a so called "Patriotic Society" which were part secret society, part fascist paramilitary, part gangsters and were the favored tool by which the Japanese empire carried out destabilization, assassinations, provocations, and other standard tactics of what would later come to be called psychological warfare. The two main patriotic societies were the Black Dragon (who were obsessed with halting Russian expansion and conquering China) and the Black Ocean which was focused on conquering Korea.

In Japan like in America big business, organized crime, and intelligence were strongly inter-related. The Japanese like all empires were cynical liars and claimed that Queen Min had been murdered by Koreans. With the Strong willed Queen Min out of the way her weak husband King Kojong quickly became a Japanese Puppet and soon Korea was a Japanese Colony while Korea's ally China suffered a humiliating defeat at Japans hands when it tried to intervene. Japan seized Taiwan and a piece of Manchuria from China. The Korean language was outlawed, Koreans were even forced to adopt Japanese names.

The entire Korean peninsula became Japanese property and they began to loot the accumulated wealth of centuries including gold silver and their prized celadon porcelains

worth a fortune to collectors. Japan employed an army of antiquarians to seize and catalog hundreds of ancient Korean manuscripts sending them to Japan or burning them to destroy Korea's cultural heritage. The Japanese even resorted to grave robbery on a massive scale of Korean Imperial tombs. Korean rice was shipped off to Japan while the locals had to eat millet. Koreans were sent to Japan as slave laborers. initially Ito Hirobumi was appointed viceroy who ironically was head of the clique that opposed the more aggressive militarists of the Yamagata clique but his enemies made sure his staff included the head of the Black Dragon patriotic society Uchida Ryohei. Ryohei's thugs killed 18,000 Koreans and when Ito resigned in disgust he was assassinated and his death was blamed on Koreans and used as an excuse to annex Korea. False flag terror (Or provocations as they were called at the time) were a favorite Japanese tactic. Six million Korean men were forced into slave labor one million were sent to Japan. Hundreds of thousands of Korean women were forced into prostitution as Comfort Women for the Japanese army a practice that would be adopted by the Americans when they Occupied Korea (and other Asian countries) in the decades that followed.

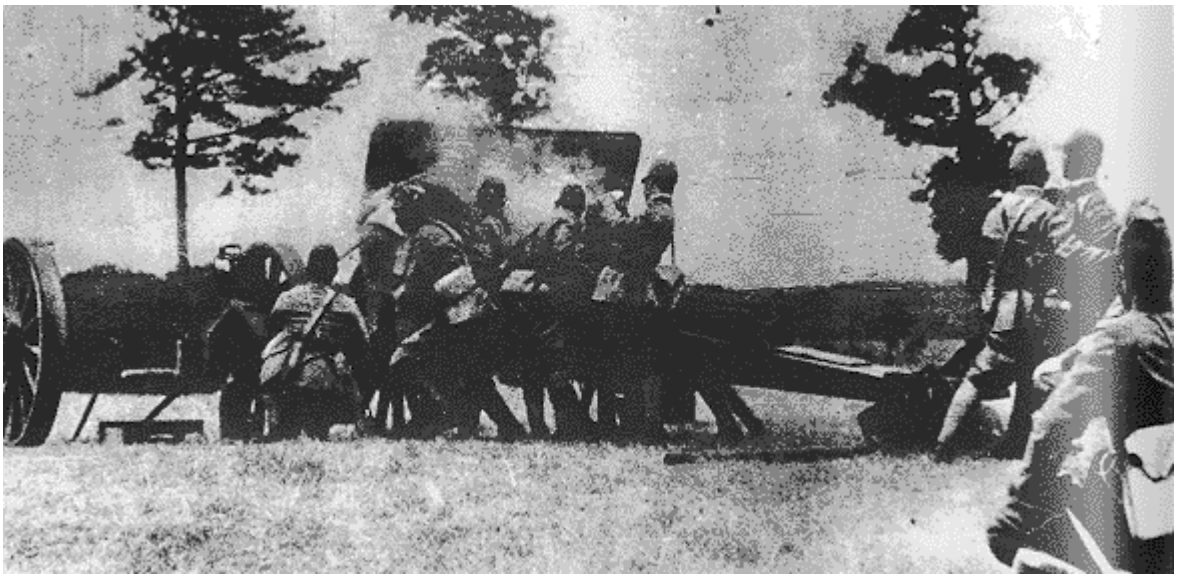
At the same time Japan targeted Formosa what is today known as Taiwan colonizing the island and setting up massive heroin laboratories Taiwan would for decades become a center of the global drug trade. Japan launched a sneak attack on the Russian empire at Vladivostok in 1904 then smashed the Baltic fleet the Tsar sent in revenge. Russia was forced to sign a humiliating peace deal giving Japan control of it's possessions in northern China Manchuria like the South Manchurian Railway it had built.

Unlike Korea Manchuria was mostly a wilderness it's wealth was in timber and minerals. To turn a quick profit Japan later in alliance with the nationalist chinese set up a massive opium growing operation allying with the green gang. They bribed warlords and began buying up chinese industries and land. The Chinese KMT and their triad allies the Green Gang were similar to the Japanese in that they were fascist gangsters who used secret societies to carry out their dirty work. Of course the Japanese with their greed and ruthlessness often terrorized the chinese to get their hands on their wealth. Manchuria became the center of what the Japanese called the Tairiku Ronin or in the authors words "carpetbaggers, spies, secret policemen, financial conspirators, fanatical gangsters, drug dealers and eccentric army officers." Japan set up a puppet state called Manchuko with former chinese emperor Pu Yi as a figurehead.

The true rulers were the so called Manchuria Quartet Colonel Doihara, his sidekick Major Tanaka, Future minister of war Colonel Itagaki Seishiro, finally there was future war time Prime Minister Colonel Tojo Hideki. It was Doihara of Military intelligence who recruited the fascist gangster Yoshio Kodama who was in prison back in Japan for a series of attempted assassinations of government officials (Japanese fascists murdered anyone who became an obstacle to their schemes) Kodama who was on friendly terms with many in the imperial family would go on to manipulate Japanese politics for decades as the CIA's most valuable agent.

Manchuria was the base of the Kwangtung Army which generated so much wealth through various criminal schemes that it was practically independent of Tokyo anyone back in Japan who opposed it was in danger of assassination while it bought the loyalty of others with a cut of the profits from the looting and heroin trade. Behind the scenes the emperor Hirohito and the Mitsui and Mitsubushi Corporations ran everything making a fortune from their cut of the illegal drug trade. China was flooded with cheap heroin and to hook the populace the Japanese laced patent medicines with heroin, gave out free heroin laced cigarettes under

the brand name Golden Bat, and also deluged the chinese with heroin tablets. The Japanese planned to turn Manchuria into an industrial powerhouse but the process was so expensive that in hopes of turning a profit they began to look towards conquering the rest of China.



Japanese forces bombarding Wanping, 1937 (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Through a series of provocations involving the patriotic societies and Japanese intelligence Japan was whipped into a war frenzy and more Chinese land was stolen. Finally after the 1937 Marco Polo bridge incident full scale war began. Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek offered little resistance mounting a long retreat with his own massive hoard of stolen treasure. The KMT had cut a secret deal with the Japanese years before to share profits from the heroin trade. The KMT had even been re-selling American lend lease supplies to the Japanese. Nanking was left defenseless and Emperor Hirohito sent his Uncle Prince Asaka a brutal fascist drunk to oversee the infamous rape of Nanking to terrorize China into surrender. In a couple months 300,000 people were killed shot beheaded, or used for bayonet practice. The Japanese claimed all Chinese civilians whether men women or children were “plainclothes soldiers” and between 20,000-80,000 women were raped. However this was more then just a war crime at the same time as Japan invaded China emperor Hirohito ordered the creation of the Golden Lily to insure that China’s loot remained under the control of the imperial family. The eccentric Prince Chichibu was put in charge of Golden Lily and Prince Takeda would also play a key role in this operation. For centuries China’s emperors had claimed a monopoly on trade meaning that the merchant class operated a huge black market that they concealed by bribing local officials. For centuries these merchants had wisely mistrusted banks hiding their fortunes in gems and gold. The chinese had also been collecting art and valuable manuscripts for over 3,000 years.

While the massacres at Nanking were raging the golden Lily were terrorizing these wealthy merchants through kidnapping, torture, and threatening to kill their families to seize these massive fortunes which were completely off the books. Their other strategy was to trade heroin for gold to chinese gangsters to get them to do much of the dirty work. Yoshio Kodama was the Japanese liaison to the Chinese underworld making deals with the Ku brothers in Shanghai one of which headed the Green Gang while the other was a KMT General. The Golden Lily operation was fantastically successfully 6,000 tons of gold were stolen in Nanking alone. Japan unleashed an army of experts to steal as much art and priceless manuscripts as they could.

However Japan was soon bogged down in a long war against China's communist Guerrillas and the American backed nationalist KMT. With the typical logic of empires when bogged down in one disaster they launch an attack some place else. First they attacked the Soviet Union but were badly beaten by General Zhukov so they turned their attention to their American rivals who were cutting off their flow of supplies because America hoped to rule China through the KMT after the war. In any case Japan launched a sneak attack on Pearl Harbor and in a matter of months had seized all of south-east asia from the British, French, Americans and Dutch. French Indochina, Indonesia, Malaya, Thailand, and the Philippines were soon theirs. They looted these areas by seizing the banks and going through the records to track down the wealthy colonists. The locals were only too happy to revenge themselves on the colonists by tipping off the Japanese to their hidden loot. The Japanese used a massive currency scheme in all their holdings printing scrip and outlawing the local currency. Above all they terrorized the Chinese merchants across asia engaging in what were called the Sook Ching massacres of overseas chinese. Tens of thousands of Chinese were brutally killed in these massacres. In China itself the Japanese would kill 23 million people.

Around the same time Japan had been conquering Korea America had conquered the Philippines while claiming they wanted to liberate it from Spain. With it's usual cynical hypocrisy once Spain surrendered America crushed the Filipino independence movement with the brutal tactics it would later employ in Greece, Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan, Iraq and a long list of other countries. Of course it had been America itself which had forced Japan to end it's long isolation setting into motion the chain of events that had lead to Japan's rapid modernization and imperialist adventures in the first place. General Douglas MacArthur's father had been one of the invaders and occupiers of the Philippines. Japan hoped it could make a deal to keep the Philippines after the war which it had been preparing to seize for decades. Hirohito had bought the friendship of Pope Pius XII (who had also been instrumental in the rise of fascists to power in Italy, Spain, Germany, Croatia, and other countries see Karlheinz Deschner's classic God and the Fascists) with a huge deposit in the Vatican bank just one of the scandalous chapters in the banks history. He hoped Pius XII would be able to broker a peace deal with the Americans that would allow Japan to keep some of it's conquests after the war a scheme that never bore fruit. In any case Japan managed to seize the Philippines from MacArthur forcing him into a humiliating retreat. When the war began to go very badly by 1943 Japan was no longer able to ship it's loot back to Japan and so began to hide it all over the Philippines and Indonesia. Prisoners of war and the local Filipinos were forced to dig massive tunnels.

These slave laborers were often massacred or buried alive to keep the tunnels secret. The Japanese often buried their loot near historical landmarks and hospitals because they were less likely to be bombed. They smuggled gold into the Philippines on phony hospital ships since they would be less likely to be sunk by American submarines. They hid some of the Gold by loading ships full of treasure and then sinking them for later recovery. They managed to hide a mind blowing amount of loot. Huge underground chambers were filled with thousands of tons of gold. The Japanese were masters at camouflaging the entrances to these chambers and in creating coded treasure maps. The Americans managed to discover this gold was being hidden during the war thanks to one of their spies.

Yamashita (second from right) at his trial in Manila, November 1945 (Source: US National Archives and Records Administration)

Once America recaptured the Philippines they captured General Yamashita who had been sent to the Philippines late in the war to oversee the defense of the island and to help oversee the Golden Lily operation to hide the gold. This is where two later infamous characters entered the the story Filipino spy Severino Garcia Diaz Santa Romana was ordered to torture Yamashita's driver major Kojima to get him to reveal the locations of the Gold. Ed Lansdale who had been a lowly OSS propaganda writer got the lucky break of a lifetime when he was sent out to the Philippines to supervise Santa Romana and got major Kojima to talk by promising him a cut of the loot. There were at least 176 treasure sites in the Philippines but recovering a dozen was enough to launch Edward Lansdale and Santa Romana's careers for decades. Lansdale would have a long career stretching from the Philippines to Vietnam, to the secret war on Cuba. According to the authors he was also instrumental in the creation of the "Enterprise" of ex-CIA men that would be exposed during the Iran-Contra scandal. Santa Romana would for decades serve as a front man for hundreds of billions of CIA black money. His huge personal fortune worth 55 Billions would later be stolen by Ed Lansdale and John Reed of Citibank in the 1970's when Santa Romana outlived his usefulness. Ed Lansdale flew to Japan to tell General MacArthur of his discovery and then

to Washington to inform Truman. They had found so much gold that if it became publicly known it would have destroyed the Bretton woods system which relied on gold being valued at 35 dollars an ounce. The Bretton Woods system was itself backed with the huge sums in Nazi gold the US had managed to seize and hide the authors suggest.

Back in Washington there was already a group dedicated to stealing and hiding Nazi gold the Black Eagle Trust run by Secretary of War Stimson, John J. McCloy, Robert B. Anderson and Robert Lovett who would all have long careers in foreign affairs and banking. With their massive off the books money they would bribe politicians, finance coups, covert operations and psychological warfare. Soon the Golden Lily loot was being managed by the same people. It was being moved across the world being used to prop up banks around the world UBS in Switzerland, HSBC in Hong Kong, The Bank of England, Chase Manhattan. It was hidden in 42 countries between 1945-47. The gold was used to make huge loans to Britain, Egypt, and the KMT in China.

Politicians around the world were bribed with gold certificates. The intersection between wall street and intelligence involved vast sums completely unknown to the public. The notion that the CIA could ever be held in check once it had control of this vast fortune was a joke leading to events like the assassination of JFK and the nearly 60 years of cover up which have ensued not surprising when one remembers that the entire mainstream american media was controlled by former OSS men (See the Science of Coercion by Christopher Simpson) While the CIA and OPC controlled the Media worldwide as part of Frank Wisner's infamous "Mighty Wurlitzer" churning out cold war propaganda nonstop.

Back in Japan the emperor and his friends who controlled the big Zaibatsu corporations Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Sumitomo plus of course his gangster friends like Yoshio Kodama and Ryoichi Sasakawa had managed to survive the war with their fortunes intact. Kodama made a deal with MacArthurs aide General Willoughby "the lovable fascist" to turn over $100 million to the CIA for his immunity (worth 1 billion dollars today) which they put into the M-Fund. He had managed to save 13 billion dollars during the war stored in the emperors private vaults in the form of gold, platinum, diamonds and other loot. America had not bombed Japanese industries instead targeting the workers homes doubtless because American corporations were heavily invested in Japan just as they were in Nazi Germany where American owned factories supplying the German war machine were spared during the war.

In Germany Denazification was a complete scam and so it was in Japan. Trials targeting Japanese war criminals were fixed to prevent the emperor's role from being known. The US set up a special fund to bribe the witnesses. Kodama was put on the CIA payroll and behind the scenes he created the misnamed Liberal Democratic Party headed by corrupt politicians like Kishi Nobosuke, Yoshida Shigeru, and Tanaka Kakuei that would rule Japan for the next 70 years looting the economy through a massive system of bribery and kickbacks. MacArthur oversaw the creation of massive funds financed with a portion of the war loot although the Emperor and his cronies were allowed to hold onto the bulk of their loot. The Yatsuya fund was used to control the Japanese underworld. The Keenan fund named after Joseph Keenan the chief war crimes prosecutor was used to bribe witnesses to protect the emperor and his cronies. In a darkly comedic touch his right hand man was the same General Tanaka who was General Doihara's right hand man in Manchuria and a major war criminal in his own right. It was Tanaka who escorted Keenan around to bars and brothels and made sure he made it home when he was drunk.

The M-Fund was named after General William Frederic Marquat who was in charge of restructuring the Japanese economy. Marquat was also supposed to disband Japan's infamous Unit 731 that ran biowarfare research using prisoners as guinea pigs during the war. Instead of disbanding the unit they were recruited by the pentagon and I believe used to wage germ warfare on China and North Korea. The M-Fund was used to bribe politicians and evolved into one of the most scandalous financial scams in history. The Showa fund was used to hide the emperors loot. Soon the M-Fund would corrupt American politicians as well and Nixon turned over the M-Fund which had been run by MacArthurs cronies like General Marquat, along with the CIA and the corrupt Liberal Democratic Party over to the full control of Japan in exchange for illegal kickbacks funneled into the 1960 presidential Campaign which he lost to Kennedy. Part of the deal was for Nixon to return Okinawa which he later did once he finally got elected. MacArthur was a key figure in the American far right as were his cronies Bonner Fellers and General Willoughby. Golden Lily loot was funneled back to far right movements in the US and would help finance McCarthy's witch hunts. Another source of wealth was the global drug trade which the CIA would run along with KMT and Japanese and Korean Gangsters.

Together these sources of wealth would be used to fund WACL a global network of fascists drug dealers and terrorists much loved by Ronald Reagan. In the final chapter of their book the authors provide a brilliant summary of the Politics of Heroin relying heavily on Doug Valentine's classic "The Strength of the Wolf." In Japan McCarthyism took a much bloodier course with a massive assassination program combined with a cointelpro style war on anyone who dared to dissent. The assassinations were carried out by the Cannon agency run by Jack Cannon (who always acted like a movie gangster) and funded with profits from the Japanese underworld including Ted Lewin's infamous Mandarin club. Even American and British officials could be targeted for assassination if they threatened to expose MacArthurs alliance with war criminals and gangsters. For assassinations that were even more sensitive KOTOH was employed an acronym formed from the name of 5 Japanese army officers who performed surgical assassinations.

At the same time Ed Lansdale was traveling all over Asia with a Filipino hit team run by Napoleon Valeriano carrying out gangland style assassinations of the CIA's enemies in a dozen countries. He was working for Allen Dulles and for Frank Wisner's OPC which had recruited the infamous OSS "China Cowboys" who were deeply connected with the global KMT drug trade and who set up shop in Taiwan, Korea and Japan after Mao liberated china. Men like Desmond Fitzgerald who would mentor Ted Shackley of Iran/Contra fame.

Much of the book describes the hunt for treasure in the Philippines. The Japanese were the masters of this quietly returning for decades to recover their loot. Future president Ferdinand Marcos learned of the gold befriending Santa Romana and making deals with the Japanese to recover gold. It tells many tales that could be turned into movies. (so many tales of treachery and paranoia remind one of the classic Humphrey Bogart film "Treasure of the Sierra Madre") For example there was Filipino peasant Ben Valmores who became a servant to the lonely Japanese Prince Tanaka who was a key Golden Lily member. Ben lived his whole life poor despite knowing the secrets of where much of the treasure was buried and having 176 coded treasure maps showing their locations. The one time he successfully found some gold including a priceless miniature gold cathedral Marcos had it confiscated and Ben was lucky to survive.

Another Filipino treasure hunter Roger Roxas managed to recover a massive 1 ton Golden Buddha which Marcos then confiscated Roxas ended up tortured permanently disfigured and

nearly dead. There was the tale of mining engineer Robert Curtis recruited by Marcos and the John Birch Society (JBS) to unearth the treasure and to re-smelt it. The JBS had learned of the treasure in the 1940's since MacArthurs cronies like Bonner Fellers were top members. Curtis was double crossed by both Marcos and the JBS his business was destroyed and he was nearly murdered. However in the process he obtained copies of the treasure maps and was later recruited by WACL head General John Singlaub and his partner General Robert Schweitzer to recover the gold to fund a massive privatized version of the FBI (Of course such an organization already existed in the 1980's called Western Goals and the American Security Council had once served the same purpose in the 1950's) Amusingly despite Singlaub's decades of experience in covert war and his strong political connections to the new president Aquino and to Reagan back home his plot was foiled at the last minute when after finding the gold using high tech equipment before they could dig it up Filipino army helicopters descended on the site because they had obtained their permit from the wrong government official. This solves the mystery of why John Singlaub was in the Philippines when the Iran/Contra scandal broke in the fall of 1986.

Marcos became one of the richest men in the world through his discoveries. In one surprising episode it was Marcos Gold that paved the way for Nixons visit to China with Marcos agreeing to deposit 72 billion in Gold in China's Bank accounts. Marcos had long been used by the CIA to bribe asian governments into supporting American policy in return they allowed him to get rich selling his gold to saudi princes or trading it for drugs from asian or latin american cartels. The China story might be unbelievable if there were not proof that Marcos widow later tried to access the accounts. Unfortunately for Imelda Marcos once her husband fell the banks stole all his gold for themselves just as happened to Santa Romana's heirs a recurring pattern in the book. The golden Lily loot that lead to his rise also lead to his downfall when he bargained too forcefully with the Reagan White House and the CIA who wanted him to use his fortune to back Reagan's scheme to create Rainbow dollars. Marcos became one of the first victims of a CIA color revolution. As CIA backed NGO's flooded the streets with angry protestors his American sponsors kidnapped him and his wife to Hawaii by helicopter and airlifted his fortune out of the country. He would later choke to death on a Big Mac. This solves the cold war mystery of why the CIA would overthrow a right wing dictator who had served them well for decades.

Gold Warriors is a fantastic book that anyone with an interest in the CIA, drugs, or Fascism should read it offers a window into the shadowy world of offshore banking where one trillion dollars a day is transferred around the world. It names the names of some of the most powerful families in the world the Krupps, Rothschilds, Oppenheimers, Warburgs and Rockefellers that are tied into banking and the Gold Cartel and who's fortunes are incalculable. The Gold and Diamond cartels are still looting the world today with the same greed and brutality as imperial Japan. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone 10 million people have been killed in a brutal war to loot the country of Gold, Diamonds, Uranium, and rare earth elements.

Meanwhile the enormous off the books fortune is still floating around the banks of the world and still being used to fund off the books covert operations. Most of the worlds Gold is today hoarded in secret bunkers in the Swiss alps (designed to survive a nuclear war) and in underground tunnels. The Hunt for Yamashita's gold is still going on the most recent episode was during the summer of 2001 When George W. Bush sent navy seals on a secret mission to recover some gold. His father George H.W. Bush of course was long tied to the gold both through the CIA and through his web of shadowy businesses interests.

The M-Fund lead to the creation of strange financial instruments called 57's Tanaka and his cronies had been looting Japanese Banks and bondholders were forced to trade their bonds for the 57's or face murder. Only those with the right connections could redeem the 57'e the Japanese Government claimed they were counterfeit. Alexander Haig was hired to negotiate for the fascist Paraguayan Government to redeem some 57s they had managed to obtain and thanks to his friend then vice president George H.W. Bush who wrote a letter on his behalf he was able to blackmail Japan into a deal. At the same time Norbert Schlei who had written the civil rights act when he was Assistant attorney general was framed and entrapped by the American when he investigated the 57's and nearly had his career destroyed. After clearing his name he was assassinated another strange chapter in the saga of the Golden Lily. Swiss and American banks are just as crooked behaving like thieves and Conmen. Gold Warriors reveals that from the underworld to the military and intelligence agencies, to the corrupt politicians to the titans of finance we are ruled at every level by gangsters.

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Sources

Gold Warriors: America's Secret Recovery of Yamashita's Gold by Sterling and Peggy Seagrave is a must read. It's packed with information while written in a very exciting and entertaining manner.

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How America adopted the Japanese system of "Comfort Women" in Korea a practice that continues to our own day

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