

## PEARL HARBOUR: A last ditch effort

This essay will attempt to explain the implications of Pearl Harbour from a Japanese and American point of view. Issues will include; Japan's economic state, The Tanaka Memorial, an over view of what Japan had to gain from the destruction of the only remaining naval force in the Pacific, and the American political implication of Pearl Harbour.

## PEARL HARBOR

Attempts will be made to explain the implications of Pearl Harbor from a Japanese and American point of view. Focus will be spent on the strategic aims importance of Pearl Harbor with special emphasis on the U.S. The strategical importance will involve looking at Japan's economic state, The Tanaka Memorial, as well as an over view of what Japan had to gain from the destruction of the only remaining naval force in the Pacific. For the American point of view Pearl Harbor had no economic implications. I will argue that Pearl Harbor was a last ditch effort for the United States to pull itself into a fully mobilized state of war. Pearl Harbor was not a strategical move but in fact a political excuse to join World War II.

The Tanaka Memorial, written in 1927, is the single most important document leading to Pearl Harbor because it forecasts the path of Japanese aggression. This document was broken into four phases, which were essential for creating the Co-Prosperty Sphere or The New Order in the East. Phase 1 called for the annexation of Manchuria for raw materials, Phase 2 called for the invasion of China for man power, Phase 3 called for a march south into India and The East Indies and complete control of ALL BASES in the Pacific, Phase 4 was clear; conquer the United States. Japan's first concerns were raw materials of which it lacked enormously. Japan stockpiled and accumulated raw materials for the initial years of the war with China. The materials were enough to last until Japan acquired conquered lands that would provide her with the raw materials needed.

Manchuria was to be Japan's first attempt at acquiring raw materials because it was rich in iron and coal, essential for making steel. Japan needed steel because it was building a modern mechanized army along with a powerful naval force. The

Manchurian incident began a war for Manchuria in 1931, which led to an easy victory by 1932. Manchuria was occupied and its name was changed to Manchukuo. Thus the first phase of the Tanaka Memorial was complete which launched Japan in 1937 into phase two, an all out war against China. Japan's advantage was found in its unity of which China had none at the time. China on the other hand was like a jig saw puzzle and separated into tiny provinces each with its own rulers and each with its own army. Therefore, Japan carved out pieces of China thus avoiding Chinese unification and allowing it to conquer China pieces at a time. However Sun Yat-Sen did succeed in reuniting China and his leadership was forced to give up land in exchange for precious time. Time was needed to develop the technology to build the weapons to fight Japan. Although Japan did acquire Manchuria and five northern provinces its leading partners, British Colonies, Australia, Netherlands East Indies, and The U.S., were still providing it with its raw materials especially pig iron and oil. But Japan's main partners were starting to cut back on their trading because they were condemning Japan under the League of Nations and had branded Japan as an aggressor.

The stiffest sanctions came from the U.S. when Japan began to blockade the U.S. in an attempt to cut off China from outside materials. Japan also sought to control every port in China particularly Indochina. Therefore, the U.S. drastically cut back its supplies of pig iron and oil in 1938 and imposed a full trade sanction against Japan in July 1940. Japan then made request to the East Indies for oil but the East Indies offers fell short by half of what Japan requested. These two causes and Japan's inability to further their campaign in the Pacific because of U.S. owned naval bases led Japan to abandon Phase 2 of the Tanaka Memorial and to go on to Phase 3, the drive south and control of all bases in the Pacific.

Japan's strength in arms as compared to other nations in the Pacific was due to two main factors. Japan's stock piling efforts made it look as if it had an abundance of raw materials of which it did not. Secondly, Japan as early as February 1, 1940 Japan was spending half of its total assets on war production and had been doing so since 1937. Therefore, Japan out spent and out produced every country or island in the Pacific. Meanwhile these same countries were busy spending money on building roads, and getting people back to work after a dreadful Great Depression. Another factor which made Japan's navy and army look so big was that at a time when other nations were not even building but actually destroying the little amount of arms they had left under treaties such as the London Naval Treaty. So essentially the gap between Japan's armaments and other nations in the Pacific grew at enormous speed. Japan had a navy that was large enough to attack Pearl Harbor on the 7, December, 1941 and the Philippines, Malaysia, Wake island, Hong Kong, and Shanghai simultaneously on the 8, December, 1941. In sum Japan failed to conquer China because of trade sanctions and decided to move onto Phase 3 of the Tanaka Memorial which was the control of the Pacific bases.

Japan's strategical importance to Pearl Harbor was one of control. All Japan had to gain from Pearl Harbor was the destruction of the only remaining enemy force in the Pacific. This would consequently give Japan an open hand to the Pacific Islands. There was no economic attachment to Pearl Harbor other than providing the United States with a humiliating defeat hoping it would lead the U.S. to sue for peace. But Pearl Harbor did nothing more than adding an industrial giant to the war because the most important ships, the carriers were not there at the time of the attack which left the U.S. with something to fight back with while it changed its economy to war production. The Japanese knew of the blunder because Yamamoto said "he feared that it would take none other than six months before the Japanese would be swamped by U.S. production". Although directly after the attack Yamamoto stated that because they attacked fifty-five minutes before their ultimatum he said, "I can't imagine anything that would infuriate the Americans more...I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and to fill him with terrible resolve".

Japan then, worked on fortifying its islands and controlling the Pacific to complicate the American's journey back to Japan. That is to say, by controlling every island in the Pacific the U.S. would have no place to regroup, refuel, nor a place to launch operations from within the vicinity of the fighting. Furthermore the capital ships or aircraft carriers would be vulnerable to not only the Japanese carriers but also to the islands from which Japanese planes could take off from. As we look back at history experience shows that aircraft carriers are at a disadvantage when facing land based planes. In fact the Japanese plan or most important aspect at Pearl harbor was to destroy the carriers which they failed to do.

In sum Pearl Harbor was nothing more than a strategic battle, in terms of slowing down an opponent rather, than an economical one. Thus by attacking Hawaii the Japanese thus eliminated any chance of breaking an iron and oil embargo with the U.S. What the Japanese did do was to turn their potential imports of iron from the U.S. against themselves. This is an important factor because they had not yet the manpower or natural resources to fight the U.S. Pearl Harbor for the Japanese was strategic although economical embargoes lead it to the attack.

Pearl Harbor was, for the United States, the last ditch effort to get fully involved in the war. I believe this to be true because the United States had worked so hard to isolate themselves from European affairs after World War I that it was almost impossible for them to convince the people to go to war even after the fall of France in 1940. The problem was convincing people that Europe's problems were our problems as well. Franklin Roosevelt worked hard with his New Deal and managed to put the economy back on its feet. The economy was fuelled even more by 1939-

1941 by the sale of war related production with warring nations. Therefore, there was no economic need to involve the U.S. into a European war because at this time the American economy was booming. Furthermore the American people were blinded by the Lend Lease Act which allowed them to be involved without actually sending troops. The Lend Lease Act (March 11, 1941), was Roosevelt's desperate attempt to involve the U.S. in the war in some way, shape or form. Even the Lend Lease Act was difficult to pass because several amendments were needed to make Lend Lease effective. At first lend lease was conditional in that warring countries would have to pay for the goods and would have to supply their own ships to carry the goods. Then lend lease was changed to allow monetary loans to countries in need. Then the act was changed again, as Roosevelt was getting desperate to involve the American people, to allow American ships to deliver the goods and so on. All this to say that Roosevelt could not pass a Bill that was too radical so as to alarm the American people but did so anyhow in stages as we saw with Lend Lease. Roosevelt's problem was that the American people had not realized that the amount of time it took an army to cross the Pacific was reduced to days and hours. Neither had they realized that if all of Europe was conquered then the armies and total production of the European countries might someday be turned against them.

In Nov 1936 people were asked: If another war breaks out in Europe should America take part. NO 95%

In Sept 1937 people were asked: In the present fight between Japan and China are your sympathies with either side: China. 43% Japan, 2% undecided 55%

In Dec 1938 people were asked: should the United States increase the strength of the army, navy, and air force. yes 85%

In Sept 1939 people were asked: what country do you consider responsible for causing the war Germany 82%

In October 1939 people were asked: Should we change the neutrality act so we can sell war supplies. 57% yes.

The polls above show that although Americans had definite ideas about who was responsible for the war, people were willing to respond or help as long as it did not involve them in a war. Even after Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria were occupied, Americans were still unwilling to get involved. In fact after the fall of France, statistics show that the U.S. was totally unprepared for war. The U.S. had a total force of 330,000 including Marines, Aircrew and an army of 136,000 smaller than that of a tiny state such as Rumania (200,000). The Selective Service act was only passed in Sept 1940, during which the Battle of Britain was raging, when the U.S. had only begun to train an army. Further more in May of 1940, the U.S. literally had no equipment with which to fight. The U.S. had 488 machine guns, 288 pieces of

artillery, and 18 medium tanks for the entire continent. Stovepipes were being used as guns and bags of flour were used for bombs. The Two-Ocean Navy Expansion Act was passed only on July 19 1940 after West Europe has fallen under Hitler's domination.

Thus I believe that the only way that the path of isolation could be broken is if the United States were attacked directly. I also believe that Pearl Harbor was a deliberate attempt to sacrifice the last naval fleet left in the Pacific. It's like putting a worm on a line and being totally surprised when a fish bites on it. The evidence and logic only points in this direction.

The location of Pearl Harbor is strategically illogical. How do you justify locating 90% of your fleet on an island 2400 miles west from your home land in the Pacific when you don't have enough plains (180 B17's) in all of the United states to probe in case of an anticipated Japanese attack.

If you were to compare this logic with the Japanese, their five bases were located close to main land and surrounded by Japanese controlled islands where planes could easily take off from to attack any hostile action threatening the bases. The Japanese bases were located at Formosa, Hainan, Hiroshima, and the Caroline Islands. These bases are all located near land and no where near enemy fire. The sole exception were the Caroline Islands of which, were surrounded by neighbouring islands in Japanese control. Therefore I believe that it is completely illogical for an entire navy to be situated on an island which does not have enough plains to probe let alone defend its ships. This is further supported by the fact that Pearl Harbor is located on the furthest tip of American islands off the coast of America. Even the Admirals were worried about Pearl Harbor as they openly remarked amongst one and other about what they felt about Pearl Harbor.

The Admirals did not think much of Pearl harbor and openly discussed that the move from San Diego, where the base was located, was a bad one. They unanimously thought that their main base should have stayed in San Diego where it belonged. Admiral Husband E Kimmel, Commander In Chief had this to say "Pearl Harbor is a mouse trap, sink one good size ship in the channel and the entire fleet is bottled up". General Walter C. Scott worried about sabotage because there were 130,000 Japanese on the island, "Our planes parked on the edge of the field makes them easy targets for sabotage". Then on the other hand if you parked the planes in the middle of the field one bomb during an air raid could destroy them all. General Scott put it nicely and said " A one eyed monkey hanging from a 10 cent balloon could scuttle them all to hell with just one hand grenade". His solution was sending

all of the planes to a neighbouring island for safety precautions. The common theory was that Pearl Harbor was too shallow to be attacked from the air, which made it an ideal location. Also that a divebomber needs 75 feet or more in a plunge before it levels off and Pearl is only 40 feet deep. Admiral Kimmel was worried because under similar conditions the raid at Taranto, although it was shallow too, crippled the Italian fleet with the loss of only one plain to the English. Kimmel was afraid that the same could happen at Pearl Harbor.

Code Breakers played a very important role in World War Two both for the British struggle against the German U-boats and for the American struggle against the Japanese in the Pacific. William Friedman and Frank Rowlett invented what has come to be known as "Cryptography" or the decoding of cipher. This break through occurred and was first used successfully in 1921 at the Washington Disarmament Congress. Through the decoding of messages sent between Japanese officials, the U.S. officials knew that the Japanese were going to take a tough stance against having a navy half the size of the U.S.'s and would back down if the U.S. persisted. Therefore the U.S., knowing the Japanese intentions, won their demands and naval fleets were reduced. However the Japanese secretly began to build up their naval strength shortly after. These codes continued to be deciphered until 1938 when the Japanese changed their system to what we now call "The Purple messages". These messages then began to be deciphered under the code name "Magic". However by August of 1940, the Purple ciphers had been broken and the U.S. could once more read what the Japanese were planning through their intercepts. By this time the Americans also knew that the Japanese had another ciphered message called JN 25's. The Purple messages consisted of political intentions and the JN 25's consisted of the navy's military planning and objectives. 10, 000 of the JN 25's were sent between August of 1940 to December 7, 1941 and of these the War Department states that only 1200 to 1300 were noted as important and were deciphered.

Code Breakers enabled the U.S. military strategists to decipher and counter the moves of The Battle of the Coral Sea and Mid Way, which turned the war around. Why were they not able to detect the attack on Pearl Harbor just months before? I believe that this is one of two substantial arguments that lead me to believe that the U.S. knew about Pearl Harbor months in advance. The other substantial evidence was the absence of the carriers as well as a series of events that occurred just before the attack.

On December 2, 1941 A code is transmitted to the fleet sailing for Hawaii "Climb Mount Niitaka" which gave the Japanese fleet it's O.K. to proceed with the attack. Where was the decoding system then? Why was there not any suspicion, when the U.S. intelligence had lost track of a force of six carriers, two battleships, two heavy

cruisers and an entire armada of destroyers and other vessels, as to where they were? On November 30, 1941 British intelligence reports situated at Borneo reported that a large force of Japanese ships are on the move and still nothing is done by U.S. intelligence or is presumed to be intercepted. On December 6, 1941 a long message in 14 parts is intercepted which, is interpreted as an act of war by Roosevelt yet nothing is done nor is anyone advised and no red alert at Pearl Harbor is sounded. In fact everybody was on vacation at this time. Furthermore at 06:30 December 7, 1941 a Japanese submarine is sighted trying to sneak into the Harbor behind a destroyer, although the ship was destroyed, nothing was done nor was anyone contacted about the sighting. I often wonder why, if the message in 14 parts is interpreted by Roosevelt as war, are the planes still parked in the middle of the field wing to wing? Why two thirds of the staff is on vacation? Why planes are unarmed, munition boxes locked with no keys to open them, and why were there not one single plane in the air probing on the look out for any Japanese ships especially after the sighting in the channel entrance?

The other big question about Pearl Harbor is where were the aircraft carriers when the attack occurred. The common answer in all the books that I checked was that they were out on patrol. The aircraft carriers could not have been patrolling anywhere near American Pacific islands because the islands were attacked the next day. Also if the carriers were patrolling why did they not participate in some way, shape, or form in defending these islands?

The carriers could not have been anywhere near to the East of Hawaii because on the 18, December, 1941 a force of 11 Japanese submarines were sent out ahead of the force to intercept any ship in forward positions off Hawaii. Maybe the submarines would have missed the American aircraft carriers but the Japanese planes and armada on its way to Pearl Harbor would not. If the carriers, for whatever reason, were in the rear of Pearl Harbor between Hawaii and the West Coast, they must have been far enough so that they were unable to respond to the Japanese attack. The American carriers had to have been at least 1,500 miles away from Japanese planes to be unable to play a defensive role considering that the U.S. planes could not fly any faster than 350 miles per hour. The aircraft carriers are nowhere to be found at the time of the attack nor does anybody seem to have an answer as to where they were. Half an hour before the Japanese planes arrived on the scene they are sighted by radar and the soldiers on duty don't radio in. Why? Eye witnesses state that they thought they had spotted a new batch of B17 from the assembly line. If they are new how could these planes have been arriving from the East rather than the West?

In conclusion I believe that all these facts are too coincidental at a time when the President is convinced a day before that the state of war is inevitable. Furthermore Americans knew of The Corel Sea and Mid Way before hand and were able to check the attacks but they did not know about Pearl Harbor? My thesis is that the Americans new that they had to be attacked first to be dragged into the war and tried to find the best way as to provoke such an occasion for the enemy without self inflicting too much damage. Therefore, Pearl Harbor was perfect! Pearl Harbor was staffed to the minimum so as to avoid a large amount of casualties. The US Carriers were out of sight so as to avoid losing the only weapon that could buy enough time to build the necessary war materials to fight back. Plains were conveniently parked wingtip to wing tip in the middle of the field. Make it look like a surprise attack so as to infuriate the American people even more to speed up mobilization and war support. Finally being attacked first will make you look innocent in the actions that the country may take later such as the Atom Bomb. There are too many coincidences to convince me that Pearl Harbor was an event made to look like a surprise attack and was used to draw the American people into World War II.

by Pierre Hobson