

History of the united states of america



Topic 4 The attack on Pearl Harbor was one of the seminal historical occurrences in American history. In addition to signaling the beginning of American military involvement in World War II, it represented the only time during the 20th century that the United States suffered an attack on its own grounds. While a great amount of research has been written on the various political events surrounding the attack, there are a few notable features that are recurrent among research texts. This essay considers findings from a number of these texts, reporting on elements that are thematic throughout them. One of the primary aspects of the attack on Pearl Harbor was the surprise nature of the attack. While historically there was great precedent for unannounced military action, the attack came as a great surprise to the naval base and indeed the nation as a whole. It has been speculated why the United States didn't foresee the attacks in advance, however it's argued that they came as such a shock since the Japanese and Americans had been in tight negotiations for some time regarding aspects that had strained relations between the nations. Previously the United States had adopted a policy of isolationism in regards to the World War, yet had continued to supply the allied forces with weaponry and financial support; after the attack on Pearl Harbor the United States fully entered the war. The predominant strategic goals behind the attack on Pearl Harbor were to swiftly neutralize the American naval forces thereby protecting Japanese advances into Malaya. In addition to these tensions, the United States had placed restrictions and embargos on imports into Japan following the invasion. Most prominent of these were oil restrictions, of which greatly effected Japanese logistical efforts, leading to the increased potential for military strike. The aftermath of the attack was near but not complete devastation of the

American forces. In all 188 United States aircraft were destroyed and 2, 402 men were killed and nearly that many wounded. In addition, tremendous structural damages were recorded, as well as loss of submarines and general equipment. In addition to the United States declaring war on Japan, the bombing on Pearl Harbor had the consequences of American forces entering into conflict with Germany and Italy. In the aftermath of the attack then President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared the attacks, “ a day which will live in infamy” (Lord, pg. ix). This view soon permeated the United States, with general reaction to the attacks resulting in a nationwide distrust of Japanese Americans. Indeed, internment camps were established and many Japanese were forcefully removed from their homes and required to reside in these camps until the conclusion of the war. Ultimately, the attack proved unsuccessful and unnecessary as it failed to destroy United States aircraft carriers, and the strategic intentions it held were counter to that which the United States had previously decided to pursue. In conclusion, it’s clear that the attack on Pearl Harbor was a pivotal aspect of American history. Taking the country completely by surprise, the attack resulted in American involvement in World War II. In the aftermath of the attacks the United States grew increasingly suspicious of Japanese in America and developed internment camps. Finally, it was demonstrated that the attack was unnecessary as its strategic purpose wasn’t in-line with United States’ forces.

References Lord, Walter. (1957) Day of Infamy. New York: Henry Holt. Takeo, Iguchi. (2010) Demystifying Pearl Harbor: A New Perspective From Japan, I-House Press. Wohlstetter, Roberta. (1962) Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision, California: Stanford University Press.