

FDR and Pearl Harbour: The Truth Revealed

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour during the Second World War, possibly its turning point, had a great influence in shaping America and its post war society as we know it today. But, it is unlikely that many Americans, or anybody for that matter, know the honest truth about the 7th December 1941, a day famously and ironically described by Roosevelt as the 'day of infamy'. This day was to cost the lives of 2,403 unsuspecting American soldiers and innocent civilians, a day planned through months of lies, secrecy and deception.

For more than sixty years it has been disputed – and for more than sixty years unproved – that President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 'the greatest President America has ever had', knew in advance of the devastating attack on Pearl Harbour, but took minimal action to prevent it or mitigate the after effects of its shockwaves that were to run through American society.

The first question to ask is: why? Why would he, in effect, sanction the deaths of thousands of innocent American people? Well, having searched through and dug up evidence from multiple different sources, the answer presents itself very clearly: he needed a way into the Second World War – the allies were losing to a Nazi Germany and Roosevelt could not have a Nazi Europe.

Through the diaries of various well-known individuals, particularly Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's closest advisor, one learns that Roosevelt always intended to join the Allies against Germany and the Axis powers: 'The President has sent me here to tell you of his determination that we [the United States and England] shall win the war together. At all costs and by all means he will carry you through – there is nothing he will not do so far as he has human power', is what Hopkins, acting as ambassador to the President, told Winston Churchill in January of 1941, almost a year before the attacks. At this point it is clear that Roosevelt lied to America in his presidential campaign and kept his true intentions hidden from the American people, with no intention, as of yet, for the disastrous attack that eventually occurred.

However, there seemed to be no reasonable way for him to join the war, given public opinion was strongly against American intervention at the time, claiming it was a European war. This meant he had to find a way to be given no option but to go to war – he had to get another country to 'fire the first shot' – leading to Pearl Harbour. Beforehand, Roosevelt offered many provocations to Germany: freezing its assets; shipping destroyers to Britain, its enemies; and depth charging its U-boats. But the Germans, knowing how the balance of power in the First World War had shifted with America's entry, did not want a repeat of that situation. So, Roosevelt turned his attention to Japan. By manipulating the Japanese into committing the 'first overt act' against the United States, it was within Roosevelt's Presidential executive powers to declare war on Japan without going to congress. After this, due to Japan's treaties, Germany and Italy consequently announced their hostility towards America, effectively giving Roosevelt a 'back door' into the war and fulfilling what were always his intentions. On October 16, 1941, Henry Stimson, Secretary of War, wrote in his diary: 'We face the delicate question of the diplomatic fencing to be done so as to be sure Japan is put into the wrong and makes the first bad move – overt move'.

So did Japan simply decide to attack the world power that tilted the balance of World War One just to protect their interests in South East Asia? Not quite, says Robert Stinnett, a war veteran, after fourteen years of researching and evidence collating through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Stinnett, through his book *Day of Deceit: The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbour*, shows us that Roosevelt's plan was to manipulate the Japanese into attacking, providing Pearl Harbour as the bait. The evidence comes from a memorandum written by Lieutenant Arthur H. McCollum, head of the Far East desk of the Office of Naval Intelligence. This directive advocated eight actions predicted to lead Japan into attacking the United States. Making use of Japan's undeniable bellicosity at that time, the US government used the memorandum to aggravate the Japanese; first, they froze all her assets in America, preventing vital income and resources from reaching Japan. Then the Panama Canal was blocked to Japanese shipping, depriving Japan of indispensable goods. After that the US progressively halted vital exports to Japan until, eventually, they joined the British in an all-out embargo, finally sending a hostile note to the Japanese embassy threatening military action if their Pacific policy was not changed, and delivering an assumption, as a prerequisite to the resumption of trade, that Japan pull all troops out of China and Indochina and, in effect, abrogate the alliance with Germany and Italy. On 25th November 1941, the day before the ultimatum was sent to the Japanese embassy, Stimson wrote in his diary: 'The question was how we should manoeuvre them [the Japanese] into the position of firing the first shot...'

This, as McCollum predicted, enraged the Japanese, to such an extent that all that was needed was one final step – to provide the perfect target: Pearl Harbour. In 1940, Roosevelt had the Pacific fleet permanently moved from its standard position on the East Coast to Pearl Harbour in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, lacking in defences and susceptible to an attack by air or sea. The foolishness of this decision was realised by Admiral J.O. Richardson, who saw how the harbour couldn't effectively be rigged with nets to prevent against torpedoes and how it lacked adequate fuel supplies among other things. He protested so strongly as to be forced to resign from his post. Coming out of an argument with the President he said, 'I came away with the impression that the President was fully determined to put the United States into the war'. His replacements, Admiral Walter Short and Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, were falsely told that they would be given all information regarding threats or attack on their fleets in Hawaii but were, in reality, sealed off from any information.

Regarding this matter, it is common belief among conspiracy theorists that the Americans had cracked Japanese naval codes, knowing that the diplomatic codes had already been obtained. Through the Freedom of Information Act, Stinnett uncovers that the Japanese, on their way to Pearl Harbour, did not hold radio silence, something that they were meant to do in case the Americans did know their codes. This leads one to believe that the attack on Pearl Harbour was known about prior to the onslaught and no information was given to the Admiral.

All of this evidence seems to suggest that Roosevelt encouraged the attack on Pearl Harbour. Even if this is not the case, there is clear evidence to suggest that he knew about it in the days and months prior to the actual event. Early in 1941, Congressman Martin Dies came into possession of a strategic map, which clearly showed the Japanese intentions with regard to Pearl Harbour. Having notified the President, he was told not to release it to any press services with the supposed consideration that it would be a threat to national defence if it was released.

Then, we see, in the summer, Dusko Popov, a British spy, come to the FBI saying that the Nazis had ordered him to make a detailed study of Pearl Harbour and its nearby airfields. He deduced that the mission betokened a surprise attack by the Japanese. Finally, Kilsoo Haan, a Korean spy, received definite word of a Japanese attack from the

Korean underground. He convinced Senator Guy Gillette of his claim, who, having talked to the President, was dismissed with the belief that it would be 'looked into'.

It seems implausible that the American Government and FDR himself were so incompetent as to ignore blatant warning signs of mass bloodshed. This further leads me to believe that Roosevelt wanted the attacks to take place. However, it is hard to believe that he didn't do anything to try and mitigate not only the devastating effects on a major naval fleet, but also the sheer number of human lives that would be lost.

From Japanese spy photos and reports, it is clear that the fleet's four main aircraft carriers were not present at the time of the bombings. Despite the fact that they would only become really instrumental later on in the war, this raises the question of whether the Admirals at Pearl Harbour knew of the attack. The theory is backed up by the presence of many old warships, not of great use to the navy, at the time of the bombings, maybe showing that the Americans were trying to save as much of their fleet as possible whilst still making the Japanese think that most of it was destroyed. On the other hand, many of the Pacific Fleet's major, modern battleships were also stationed there during the attacks, and destroyed, contradicting the belief that either the Admirals were told by the Government or that they managed to find out somehow on their own. From Admiral Short's diary, he explicitly states that the navy were denied a coding machine, making that latter option unlikely. This all leads one to believe that the Admiral didn't know about the Japanese offensive and it was just their luck that some of their ships, which were to become very important later in the war, were saved; this also helps to prove that Roosevelt did little to prevent the loss of billions of dollars worth of naval equipment.

Moreover, not only did Roosevelt facilitate the Japanese assault, he made it easy for them, to make it clear who fired the first shot. On November 25th, approximately one hour after the Japanese attack force left for Hawaii, he issued an order forbidding U.S. and Allied shipping to travel via the North Pacific, the planned route of attack. This could be interpreted in two ways: first, it could be said that Roosevelt did not want any supplies or shipping personnel to be destroyed by the oncoming Japanese fleet. Otherwise, and more likely, is that he did not want any commercial ship that might stumble upon the Japanese to alert Pearl Harbour. And, in addition to this, Roosevelt and his advisors gave Admirals Short and Kimmel incorrect directives, suggesting that they should focus their radar scanning on the Southwest, claiming that this was the most likely direction that any offensive would come from. In truth, he knew that any searching was futile as Pearl Harbour, surrounded by vast expanses of water, was susceptible from an attack on all sides.

So finally, whilst understanding the 'agonising dilemma that Roosevelt was faced with' – having to try and persuade a post World War One, isolationist America, into joining the fight for freedom – it appears clear that more could have been done to save human life. The reasons and motives behind provoking the Japanese are clear, but whether enough was done to try and alleviate the damage that this attack would have on America as a whole – not just on the 2,403 men that were effectively sent to their deaths and the 407,000 men that died as a result of the United States going to war – is greyer and perhaps, in my opinion, too little.