

"Remember Pearl Harbor" and Forget All Else

by Pete Doktor

Excerpted from a longer article available at
<http://hawaiiindependent.net/story/remember-pearl-harbor-and-forget-all-else...>

December 7, the date that Imperial Japan targeted threatening U.S. military bases in the colony of Hawaiꞌi in 1941, has been immortalized by many Americans as a singular reason to perpetrate ceaseless militarism.

To be clear, "militarism" does not refer to a reasonable right to self-defense of one's borders against actual hostile invasions. Rather, militarism is the exploitation of war for purposes other than self-defense. The U.S. has a rich history of warring for economic, political and cultural agendas — and has often justified warmongering with political proverbs like the one we're encouraged to recite each anniversary of the "Day of Infamy." This slogan, and others like it, will be used to reinforce historical amnesia and modern myths on the occasion of the anniversary of the attack this year.

As the November 30, 1941, *Hilo Herald Tribune* headline "Japan May Strike Over Weekend" reminds us, the so-called "surprise" attack of what is now commonly known as "Pearl Harbor" near Honolulu was not without some warning or provocation. This is not to say that the murderous, strategic attack by the Imperial Japanese fleet could ever be considered justified. But declassified documents confirm what has been understood for some time: the intention of Imperial Japan to retaliate against overseas U.S. expansion of military forces in the Pacific was known to the FDR administration before the attack occurred...

Lest we forget that fascist Japan may have previously been an ally of the U.S. — sharing in the spoils of WWI — but when the formidable Japanese Empire began to compete with Western empires scrambling for resources and overseas markets, which included the overthrow of aboriginal peoples and sovereign nations, as was the case with the Hawaiian Kingdom, the "Allies of Imperialism" suddenly condemned Imperial Japan's participation in the very same carving-up of the Asia-Pacific hemisphere that Western powers had already been engaged in themselves for more than a century...

"Remember Pearl Harbor!" has come to be unconsciously understood as "Forget Puꞌuloa!" Puꞌuloa is a reference to one of the indigenous names for Pearl Harbor — a name that was lost when the sovereign nation of Hawaiꞌi was illegally overthrown in a conspiracy by American industrialists, backed by U.S. Marines. "Remember Pearl Harbor!" demands that we forget Puꞌuloa — and the roughly 820,725 acres of additional land (a fifth of the total land in Hawaiꞌi) that was stolen at bayonet-point and remains occupied to this day by the American government.

"Remember Pearl Harbor!" means giving license to look the other way when the U.S. government exploits tragic incidents like the attack on the USS Maine, the Gulf of Tonkin incident, 9/11 and more, for military expansion. It means forgiving the manipulation of its citizens into celebrating and — quite literally — paying for, in taxes and blood, the vicious cycle of war. It has emboldened the U.S. empire to create a shrine for the glorification of militarism at the USS Arizona Memorial at Puꞌuloa, where millions come to worship imperialism and martyr the unfortunate Naval enlistees who tragically perished, while minimizing — if not altogether ignoring — the fact that civilians increasingly suffer disproportionately more than military personnel in the wars of today.

Distributed by the New Haven Sunday Vigil on 12 10 2017
<https://newhavensundayvigil.wordpress.com>