

## SOME HISTORY ABOUT PEARL HARBOR

*Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.* – George Orwell, 1984

For most of us, our concepts of history usually consist of a collection of buzz words and catch phrases driven into our minds by a process of repetition, repetition, repetition during our primary education and through our TV programming. But it is OK – and not unpatriotic – to look at how wars are made and how we are persuaded to accept them as historical inevitabilities. It is OK to think about new facts and question whose interests are really served by wars. Our standard concept of the history of Pearl Harbor is taken from FDR's "Day of Infamy" speech on December 8, 1941. **But there is much more to the story; for example –**

**Sept. 1937:** A meeting of the various branches of the **Royal Institute for International Affairs** was held in Sidney, Australia, where the upcoming world war and its aftermath was discussed, including "a conflict between Japan and the United States."

**Oct. 7, 1940:** The "**McCollum Memo**" (declassified 1997) recommended an eight-step plan to provoke Japan into a war with the U.S. FDR implemented each recommendation over the next year.

9 *...the following course of action is suggested:*

- A. Make an arrangement with Britain for the use of British bases in the Pacific, particularly Singapore.*
- B. Make an arrangement with Holland for the use of base facilities and acquisition of supplies in the Dutch East Indies.*
- C. Give all possible aid to the Chinese government of Chiang-Kai-Shek.*
- D. Send a division of long range heavy cruisers to the Orient, Philippines, or Singapore.*
- E. Send two divisions of submarines to the Orient.*
- F. Keep the main strength of the U.S. fleet now in the Pacific in the vicinity of the Hawaiian Islands.*
- G. Insist that the Dutch refuse to grant Japanese demands for undue economic concessions, particularly oil.*
- H. Completely embargo all U.S. trade with Japan, in collaboration with a similar embargo imposed by the British Empire.*

10. *If by these means Japan could be led to commit an overt act of war, so much the better...*

**Nov. 25, 1941:** Referring to a conversation he had had with FDR, **Sec. of War Henry Stimson's diary** reads: *"The question was how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without too much danger to ourselves... It was desirable to make sure the Japanese be the ones to do this so that there should remain no doubt in anyone's mind as to who were the aggressors."*

**Nov. 26, 1941:** FDR and Winston Churchill discussed by telephone the location of a large Japanese fleet with six aircraft carriers:

**Churchill:** *"I can assure you that their goal is the (cuts out) fleet in Hawaii, at Pearl Harbor."*

**Roosevelt:** *"The obvious implication is that the Japs are going to do a Port Arthur on us at Pearl Harbor. Do you concur? ... [Churchill wordily agrees] A Japanese attack on us, which would result in war...would certainly fulfill two of the most important requirements of our policy."*

**Two newspaper headlines** from the week before the Pearl Harbor attack show that it wasn't a total surprise to everyone. On Nov. 30, the Honolulu Advertiser read JAPANESE MAY STRIKE OVER WEEKEND. Likewise, the Hilo Herald Tribune read JAPAN MAY STRIKE OVER WEEKEND.

*History will be kind to me for I intend to write it.* –Winston Churchill

*"Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick them-selves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened."* –Winston Churchill