

'Day of Infamy' Speech Franklin D. Roosevelt or "FDR" delivered this speech to a Joint Session of Congress on December 8, 1941, a day after the attack.

Mr. Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives: Yesterday, December 7th, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan. The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its government and its emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American island of Oahu, the Japanese ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack. It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time, the Japanese government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace. The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu. Yesterday, the Japanese government also launched an attack against Malaya. Last night, Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong. Last night, Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands. Last night, the Japanese attacked Wake Island. And this morning, the Japanese attacked Midway Island. Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation. As Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense. But always will our whole nation remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost, but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us. Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger. With confidence in our armed forces, with the determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph — so help us God. I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7th, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese empire.

'Day of Infamy' Speech by President Franklin D. Roosevelt is in the public domain.

FDR's "Four freedoms", Roosevelt's address to Congress January 6th 1941

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression -- everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way -- everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want -- which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants -- everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear -- which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour-- anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.

To that new order we oppose the greater conception -- the moral order. A good society is able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions alike without fear.(...)

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Questions about Pearl Harbor...

It is not every day that one receives a report in the mail from the supersecret National Security Agency. NSA is the U.S. intelligence agency responsible for the collection and analysis of foreign communications and foreign signals intelligence. And when the report investigates the history of one of the long-disputed contentions about the worst war of the twentieth century, it deserves special attention. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, continues to inspire suspicion in some quarters that the U.S. knew it was coming. Some revisionist and conspiracy writers, historians, and critics of the Roosevelt administration contend that the U.S. intercepted a Japanese message that was a clear warning of the impending attack on the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor. Some further contend that this so-called "Winds Message" had been revealed to senior American military and civilian leaders. The implication is that the attack might therefore have been prevented. The story long ago acquired near-mythic status in some circles and has never quite gone away. This group of believers may even have grown in recent years due to the proliferation of Web sites on the Internet with entries about the Winds message.

Skeptical Inquirer Volume 33.2, March / April 2009

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HIROSHIMA, Japan –

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For the first time, a representative of the United States, Ambassador John V. Roos, participated in the annual ceremony, raising hopes here of a visit soon by a more prominent guest, President Obama, who is scheduled to be in Japan in November.

Until Friday, American officials had always skipped the annual ceremony, fearing their presence would renew the debate over whether the United States should apologize for the World War II bombings, which together killed more than 200,000 people in explosions so intense that many victims were vaporized, leaving only ghostly shadows on walls, while others died in agony from burns and radiation sickness.

Such a debate would probably be politically divisive in the United States and could even drive a wedge between America and Japan, one of Washington's closest allies. American officials have long defended the bombings as having shortened the war and avoided an invasion, which they say would have cost untold thousands of American and Japanese lives. But many Japanese see the attacks as the epitome of the indiscriminate slaughter of modern warfare, and a principal reason for Japan's postwar pacifism.

"Japan and the United States are not so far apart," said Kazumi Mizumoto, a professor at Hiroshima City University. "Maybe they should offer a joint apology of all the terrible things that happened in that war."

By Martin Fackler, published: August 6, 2010 in The New York Times

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War is still a painful event to remember...

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The Greatest Generation: what made it so great?

“Scholars define the members of the greatest generation as Americans born between 1900 and 1924. They experienced the highs of the “roaring 20s,” the lows of the Great Depression that began in 1929, and the ravages of World War II. They also experienced the economic prosperity of the 1950s. (...)

Japan’s vicious attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, signaled our entry into World War II. (...) Members of the Greatest Generation responded. Of those who served in the military, approximately 419,000 did not return.

This generation had a strong sense of purpose — the war effort at every level. There was no alternative but total and complete victory. (...) The country as a whole banded together as never before to defeat those who would alter the American way of life. This generation made sacrifices of the highest order. (...)

After 50 years or so of reflection, history has recognized the enormous contributions and sacrifices of the Greatest Generation. Tom Hanks’ and Steven Spielberg’s 1998 movie, “Saving Private Ryan,” attempts to recreate the enormous struggles and sacrifices of this generation in war. Another such movie is Pearl Harbor, produced in 2001.”

Robert Holt 2011. From tidewaternews.com.

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