

DBQ The Blame Game for the Loss at Pearl Harbor
American History High School or Advanced Middle School
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The following question is based on documents (A-D). Some of these documents have been edited for this exercise. This question is designed to test your ability to work with historic documents. As you analyze these documents and answer the questions, take into account the sources of the document and the author's point of view.

Assignment:

- Analyze documents
- Answer questions for each document
- Outline to organize your essay
- Write a well-organized essay (introduction, supporting paragraphs and a conclusion).
- Use evidence from the documents and your knowledge of American History to answer the essay question with citations
- Answer every part of the essay question

Depression swept through Europe after World War I aiding to the rise of dictatorships seeking world domination such as Hitler, Mussolini, and Japanese Warlords. Many U.S. citizens and congressional members wanted to prevent trade involving arms negotiations that led to the U.S. involvement in World War I. Many Americans struggled with their belief in reaming isolationists or protecting America through defending democracy else where in the world. This struggle increased as Hitler gained control of Europe. Roosevelt convinced Congress to repeal the Arms embargo of 1939 and enacted polices such as Lend Lease Act and Atlantic Charter that ended any impression of American neutrality towards the War. Japanese Aggression in Indo China had peaked leading Roosevelt to freeze all Japanese assets and enact an embargo on all trade with Japan. Both sides refused to compromise on their position leading to the break down of negotiations. Washington's "the magic" cracked the secret code of the Japanese and learned that the Japanese were about to attack. Messages about the attack were sent to Pacific commanders. The messages did not mention Pearl Harbor but did report large scale ship movements heading towards South East Asia.

Question: Why were America's defenses surprised and unprepared for the attack on Pearl Harbor? Describe the arguments over why America was left vulnerable.

Document A

[Navy Department to Pacific Commanders, November 24,1941]

Chances of favorable outcome of negotiations with Japan very doubtful. This situation, coupled with statements of Japanese Government and movements their naval and military forces, indicates in our opinion that a surprise aggressive movement in any direction, indicating attack on Philippines or Guam, is a possibility Chief of Staff has seen this dispatch; concurs and requests action [by the respective addresses] to inform senior Army officers their areas. Utmost secrecy necessary in order not to complicate an already tense situation or precipitate Japanese action.

[Navy Department to Asiatic and Pacific Fleets, November 27, 1941]

This dispatch is to be considered a war warning. Negotiations with Japan looking toward stabilization of conditions in the Pacific have ceased, and an aggressive move by Japan is expected within the next few days. The number and equipment of Japanese troops, and the organization of naval task forces, indicates an amphibious expedition against either the Philippines, Thai [Siam] or Kra [Malay] peninsula. or possibly Borneo [Dutch East Indies]: . . .

Pearl Harbor Attack: Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack. 79th Congress/ 1st sess.(1946), pt XIV,pp,1405,1406.

1. What broken negotiations do the messages refer to, and what parties are involved?

2. What do the messages warn Pacific Commanders to prepare for? What evidence do they supply to support their predictions?

3. Where do the messages suggest the attack(s) will occur? Is there any information that indicates the U.S. Government is warning the Pacific Commanders that the attack will take place at Pearl Harbor?

Document B

Admiral H. E. Kimmel (1946)

The so-called "war warning" dispatch of November 27 did not warn the Pacific Fleet of an attack in the Hawaiian area. It did not state expressly or by implication that an attack in the Hawaiian area was imminent or probable. It did not repeal or modify the advice previously given me by the Navy Department that no move against Pearl Harbor was imminent or planned by Japan.

The phrase "war warning" cannot be made a catch-all for all the contingencies hindsight may suggest. It is a characterization of the specific information which the dispatch contained. . . .

In brief, on November 27, the Navy Department suggested that I send from the immediate vicinity of Pearl Harbor the carriers of the fleet, which constituted the fleet's main striking defense against an air attack. *

On November 27, the War and Navy Departments suggested that we send from the island of Oahu [site of Pearl Harbor] 50 percent of the Army's resources in pursuit planes.

These proposals came to us on the very same day of the so-called "war warning. " In these circumstances no reasonable man in my position would consider that the "war warning" was intended to suggest the likelihood of an attack in the Hawaiian area.

From November 27 to the time of the attack, all the information which I had from the Navy Department or from any other source, confirmed, and was consistent with, the Japanese movement in southeast Asia described in the dispatch of November 27. . . .

In short, all indications of the movements of Japanese military and naval forces which came to my attention confirmed the information in the dispatch of 27 November-that the Japanese were on the move against Thailand or the Kra [Malay] Peninsula in southeast Asia.

2pearl Harbor Attack, pt. VI, pp. 2518, 2520, 2521.

1. What is Admiral Kimmel's complaint about the "war warning"?

2. According to the Admiral why did they lack equipment, and supplies to fight the attack?

3. Based on Document B and A is his argument valid? What evidence supports this view?

Document C
Secretary Stimson (1946)

Many of the discussions on this subject indicated a failure to grasp the fundamental difference between the duties of an outpost command and those of the commander in chief of an army or nation and his military advisers.

The outpost commander is like a sentinel on duty in the face of the enemy. His fundamental duties are clear and precise. He must assume that the enemy will attack at his particular post; and that the enemy will attack at the time and in the way which it will be most difficult to defeat him. It is not the duty of the outpost commander to speculate or rely on the possibilities of the enemy attacking at some other outpost instead of his own. It is his duty to meet him at his post at any time and to make the best possible fight that can be made against him with the weapon with which he has been supplied.

On the other hand, the Commander in Chief of the Nation (and his advisers) has much more difficult and complex duties to fulfill. Unlike the outpost commander, he must constantly watch, study, and estimate where the principal or most dangerous attack is most likely to come, in order that he may most effectively distribute his insufficient forces and munitions to meet it. He knows that his outposts are no: all equally supplied or fortified, and that they are not all equally capable of defense. He knows also that from time to time they are of greatly varying importance to the grand strategy of the war. . . .

General Short had been told the two essential facts: (1) A war with Japan is threatening. (2) Hostile action by Japan is possible at any moment. Given those two facts, both of which were stated without equivocation in the message of November 27, the outpost commander should be on the alert to make his fight.

Even without any such message, the outpost commander should have been on the alert. If he did not know that the relations between Japan and the United States were strained and might be broken at any time, he must have been almost the only man in Hawaii who did not know it, for the radio and the newspapers were blazoning out those facts daily, and he had a chief of staff and an intelligence officer to tell him so....

Under these circumstances, which were of general knowledge and which he must have known, to cluster his airplanes in such groups and positions that in an emergency they could not take to the air for several hours, and to keep his anti-aircraft ammunition and immediately available, and to use his best reconnaissance system, the radar, only for a very small fraction of the day and night, in my opinion betrayed a misconception of his real duty which was almost beyond belief.

3Pearl Harbor Attack, pt. XI, pp. 5428-5429

1. According to Stimson, what is admiral Kimmel's responsibility as an outpost commander?

2. According to Stimson, why was the information Admiral Kimmel had sufficient to be able to defend Pearl Harbor from Attack?

3. What other criticism does Stimson give about Kimmel's lack of action to respond to the attack? Are they valid and what evidence supports your view?

Document D

Commander Schultz and Mr. Richard

Commander Schultz. The President read the papers, which took perhaps ten minutes. Then he handed them to [long-time Roosevelt adviser] Mr. [Harry] Hopkins. . . . Mr. Hopkins then read the papers and handed them back to the President. The President then turned toward Mr. Hopkins and said in substance. . . "This means war." Mr. Hopkins agreed, and they discussed then, for perhaps five minutes, the situation of the Japanese forces, that is, their deployment and.....

Mr. Richardson [committee counsel] Can you recall what either of them said?

Commander Schultz. In substance I can. . . . Mr. Hopkins. . . expressed a view that since war was undoubtedly going to come at the convenience of the Japanese, it was too bad that we could not strike the first blow and prevent any sort of surprise. The President nodded and then said in effect, "No, we can't do that. We are a democracy and a peaceful people." Then he raised his voice, and this much I remember definitely. He said, "But we have a good record."

The impression that I got was that we would have to stand on that record; we could not make the first overt move. We would have to wait until it came.

During this discussion there was no mention of Pearl Harbor. The only geographic name I recall was Indochina. The time at which war might begin was not discussed, but from the manner of the discussion there was no indication that tomorrow was necessarily the day.

Pearl Harbor Attack, pt X, pp. 46624663.

1. According to Schultz what were the President and Advisory discussing?

2. What impression did Schultz get from the conversation?

3. In your opinion, does the document imply any evidence President Roosevelt contributed to the lack of America's defense at Pearl Harbor?

Question: Why were America's defenses surprised and unprepared for the attack on Pearl Harbor? Describe the arguments over why America was left vulnerable.

Directions: The following question is based on documents (A-F). Some of these documents have been edited for this exercise. This question is designed to test your ability to work with historic documents. As you analyze these documents and answer the questions; take into account the sources of the document and the author's point of view.

- Analyze documents
- Answer questions for each document
- Write a well-organized essay (introduction, supporting paragraphs and a Conclusion).
- Use evidence from the documents and your knowledge of American History to answer the essay question
- Answer every part of the essay question

Rubric

- A. A comprehensive, well-organized essay focused on the question. Well-developed thesis. Confronts conflicting nature of the evidence. Provides In depth analysis of documents and substantial relevant outside information. Generally error free.
- B. Well-developed essay which addresses the question. Clear thesis. Analyzes documents and includes considerable outside information. May contain minor errors.
- C. Addresses question generally. Limited thesis supported by evidence. More descriptive than analytical, use of some relevant outside Information. May contain errors, usually not major documents.
- D. Essay is a partial restatement of question. Unsupported thesis. Paraphrases documents with little or no analysis. Little or no outside Information. May contain serious errors.
- F. Essay is poorly developed, reflects inadequate understanding of the question. May have no thesis. Incomplete listing of documents. Erroneous and/or Irrelevant outside Information.

STUDENT NAME: _____

DBQ ESSAY RUBRIC GRADE SHEET

AP ESSAY RAW SCORE: (0-9)	AP GRADE: (1-5)	CLASS GRADE: (% of 100)
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<p>Superior Essay "5": AP Score of 8-9</p> <p>____ Superior thesis</p> <p>____ Excellent use of documents (at least two more than half)</p> <p>____ Excellent use of outside information</p> <p>____ Excellent analysis of key issues</p> <p>____ Excellent use of concrete facts</p> <p>____ Extremely well-organized essay</p> <p>____ Addresses <u>all</u> areas of the prompt</p> <p>____ Extremely well-written essay</p>	<p>Strong Essay "4": AP Score of 6-7</p> <p>____ Strong thesis (contains general analysis)</p> <p>____ Good use of documents (at least 1 more than half)</p> <p>____ Good use of outside info. (needs more)</p> <p>____ Good analysis of key issues (needs more)</p> <p>____ Well-organized essay</p> <p>____ Addresses <u>all</u> areas of the prompt; may lack some balance between major areas</p> <p>____ Well-written essay</p>
<p>Adequate Essay "3": AP Score of 5</p> <p>____ Clear thesis – needs general analysis</p> <p>____ Adequate use of documents</p> <p>____ Fairly well-organized essay</p> <p>____ Addresses all areas of the prompt but essay may lack balance.</p> <p>____ Includes some outside information (but clearly needs more)</p> <p>____ Needs more analysis of key issues</p> <p>____ Contains some evidence; more needed</p> <p>____ May contain some historical errors</p> <p>____ Contains facts irrelevant to the time period</p>	<p>"2" Essay: AP Score of 2-4</p> <p>____ Undeveloped thesis (simple thesis)</p> <p>____ Thesis does not fully address question</p> <p>____ Poor use of documents</p> <p>____ Documents <i>control</i> the essay</p> <p>____ Weak organization</p> <p>____ Lacks outside information</p> <p>____ Essay does not address one or more aspects of the question: _____</p> <p>____ Lacks analysis of key issues</p> <p>____ Lacks evidence to support main ideas.</p> <p>____ Contains major historical errors</p> <p>____ Much irrelevant information to time period</p>
<p>"1" Essay: AP Score of 1</p> <p>____ No documents used ____ No thesis</p> <p>____ Facts not specific, accurate & relevant.</p> <p>____ Poor or no analysis of key issues</p>	<p>"0" Essay: Did not do the question</p>

General Comments:

Thesis/intro: complex-split ___; complex-simple ___; split-simple ___; simple ___; too much info ___

____ Contains vague statements or generalizations not supported by facts.

____ - Cite all documents ____ Use more documents ____ Document quotes are too long ____

Document(s)misused: # _____ ____ Laundry list ____ Don't explain documents

____ Strong conclusion ____ Weak conclusion ____ No conclusion

____ Strong topic sentences ____ Weak topic sentences ____ Strong linking sentences

____ Don't use "I," "you," "our," "us," "we" ____ Don't connect issues to "today" (unless asked)

____ Poor spelling and grammar ____ Poor penmanship: essay difficult to read

References

Kimmel Admiral H.E.:2pearl Harbor Attack Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, 79th Congress. 1st sess. (1946),: pt. VI, pp. 2518, 2520, 2521.

Kennedy, David M., Bailey, Thomas, A, *The American Spirit*, 11th Ed., Vol II, since 1865, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY, 2006, pg.(214-221).

Navy Department: *Pearl Harbor Attack: Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, 79th Congress. 1st sess. (1946), pt. XIV, pp. 1405, 1406.*

Schultz Commander.*Pearl Harbor Attack: Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, 79th Congress. 1st sess. (1946), pt X, pp. 4662-4663.*

Stimson Secretary:*3Pearl Harbor Attack Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, 79th Congress. 1st sess. (1946),: pt. XI, pp. 5428-5429*