



Crisis Background Guide: The Attack on Pearl Harbor

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Dais Introductions

Howdy! I'm Ella, and I'm excited to be one of your crisis chairs. I'm a senior at M-A (go bears!) and have been doing Model UN since my freshman year. I'm a fan of James Joyce, Wes Anderson movies (*Rushmore* introduced me to MUN), JoAnn's fabrics, slightly undercooked pasta, boygenius, and the LA Dodgers.

Hello! I'm Nate, and I can't wait to chair this committee. I'm a junior at Nueva, and I've been doing MUN since 7th grade. I've directed crisis committees several times before, but this will be my first time chairing. Outside of MUN, I spend my time playing cards (mostly hold'em, blackjack, and hearts), watching football, playing chess, sailing, debating, and reading sci-fi (shoutout Snow Crash) and economic theory.

Committee Background

Crisis committees are fast-paced, active simulations responding to an event occurring in real time. Crisis committees allow delegates to take a more active role in advancing their personal agenda, offering the use of crisis notes that delegates can wield privately in addition to the more normal committee-wide resolutions.

This committee will represent Franklin Roosevelt and his top military and domestic advisors in the hours and days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. This committee won't be representing a specific body like the president's cabinet or the Senate; instead, it will be a disparate group of characters that each represent unique perspectives on the conflict. Several of the characters here will represent perspectives that probably wouldn't have had access to federal decision makers in the aftermath of the war, and they'll provide an opportunity to move this committee past the mistakes that were made by the American government after Pearl Harbor.

Current Situation

In April of 1940, president Franklin Roosevelt ordered the entirety of the US Pacific Naval Fleet to move from San Pedro, California, to the Hawaiian island of Oahu. This was part of a series of escalations from the president against the Axis powers, both in Europe and the Pacific, including embargoes levied against Japanese goods. By late 1941, the Japanese invasion of northern China was coming to a stall, and the government set its eyes on something new: European colonies, scattered throughout the South Pacific and East Indian Ocean and ripe in the resources necessary for war. But attacking those islands would risk US intervention in the war, so the Japanese military, seeking to destabilize the US military, planned their attack. On Sunday, December 7, 1941, Japanese aircrafts launched from six carriers that had secretly traversed the

Pacific Ocean and attacked Pearl Harbor, killing some 2,400 American servicemen and destroying 19 US warships. This committee will focus on the aftermath of the attack.

Further Research Starting Points

1. **Historical Background:** Research the events leading up to the Pearl Harbor attack including the escalating tensions between the United States and Japan, the embargoes levied against Japanese goods, and the geopolitical situation in the Pacific and East Indian Ocean at that time.
2. **Franklin Roosevelt's Response:** Explore President Franklin Roosevelt's immediate response to the attack, including his address to Congress and the nation, as well as the measures taken by the administration in the aftermath of the attack.
3. **Military and Domestic Advisors:** Study the roles and perspectives of Franklin Roosevelt's top military and domestic advisors in the hours and days after the attack. This can provide insights into the decision-making process and the various considerations that influenced the response to the crisis.
4. **Japanese Perspective:** Gain an understanding of the Japanese military's motivations and strategic objectives in planning and executing the attack on Pearl Harbor. This can involve delving into Japanese military strategy, political dynamics, and the broader context of World War II in the Pacific.
5. **Impact on the American Government:** Investigate the immediate and long-term impact of the Pearl Harbor attack on the American government, including changes in policies,

military strategies, and public perception. This can also involve examining the role of Congress, the media, and public opinion in shaping the response to the attack.

These research starting points aim to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the historical context and multifaceted dimensions of the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attack.

Please remember that these are starting points– your research will need to go far beyond the prompts stated.

Questions to Consider

1. How did the historical events and escalating tensions between the United States and Japan contribute to the eventual attack on Pearl Harbor?
2. What were the key elements of President Franklin Roosevelt's immediate response to the attack, and how did they shape the course of action taken by the administration?
3. What were the perspectives and recommendations of Franklin Roosevelt's top military and domestic advisors in the aftermath of the attack, and how did these influence decision-making?
4. What were the motivations and strategic objectives of the Japanese military in planning and executing the attack on Pearl Harbor, and how did this fit into their broader objectives in World War II?
5. How did the Pearl Harbor attack impact the American government in terms of policies, military strategies, and public perception, both immediately and in the long term?

Characters List

1. **General George C. Marshall** - Chief of Staff of the United States Army, a trusted advisor to President Roosevelt, known for his strategic thinking and strong leadership abilities.
2. **Admiral Husband E. Kimmel** - Commander-in-Chief of the United States Pacific Fleet at the time of the attack, held responsible for the unpreparedness of the fleet, but believed in a strong military response.
3. **Cordell Hull** - Secretary of State, a proponent of diplomatic solutions, emphasized the importance of international alliances and peaceful negotiations.
4. **Harry Hopkins** - Close advisor to President Roosevelt, known for his influence on domestic and foreign policy, supported swift and decisive action in response to the attack.
5. **Harold R. Stark** - Chief of Naval Operations, advocated for increased naval presence and defensive measures in the Pacific, focused on rebuilding naval strength after the attack.
6. **Ernest J. King** - Commander in Chief, United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations, known for his aggressive stance on naval warfare and advocated for a swift and decisive response to the attack.
7. **Frances Perkins** - Secretary of Labor, a strong advocate for social welfare and labor rights, emphasized the need to mobilize the workforce and ensure support for war efforts.
8. **Henry Morgenthau Jr.** - Secretary of the Treasury, focused on economic aspects of the war effort and advocated for measures to strengthen the national economy in the wake of the attack.

9. **Sidney Hillman** - Labor advisor to President Roosevelt, known for his influence in labor relations and industrial mobilization, emphasized the need for unity and cooperation in the war effort.
10. **William J. Donovan** - Coordinator of Information (predecessor to the CIA), advocated for intelligence gathering and covert operations to counter enemy threats and gather strategic information.
11. **General Douglas MacArthur** - Supreme Commander of Allied forces in the Pacific during World War II. He was a prominent military leader who served as an advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt on matters concerning the Philippines and the Far East.
12. **General Henry Harley "Hap" Arnold** - Commanding General of the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II. He was a driving force behind the development and implementation of strategic bombing campaigns and played a pivotal role in shaping the modern United States Air Force.
13. **General Alexander Archer Vandegrift** - Commanding General of the 1st Marine Division and later Commandant of the Marine Corps during World War II. He was a distinguished leader who led successful invasions in the Solomon Islands during World War II.
14. **Russell Randolph Waesche** - Commandant of the United States Coast Guard during World War II. His leadership and strategic direction were vital in ensuring the Coast Guard's effectiveness in safeguarding the nation's coastal waters and supporting military operations.
15. **Joseph Grew** - US Ambassador to Japan at the time of Pearl Harbor. He wanted to avoid war and would go on to help with Japan's 1945 soft surrender to the US.

16. **Edward Wood, 1st Earl of Halifax** - British Ambassador to the US from 1940 to 1946. He was a key advisor to Neville Chamberlain and an architect of England's failed appeasement strategy.
17. **Franklin Delano Roosevelt** - President of the United States at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor.
18. **Joseph Poindexter** - Governor of Hawaii in 1941. Poindexter placed the territory under martial law after the attack.

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