Entrance of the United States into World War II was Imminent, Regardless of Pearl Harbor

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General Background

- Kellogg-Briand Pact signed on August 27, 1928
  - Outlawed war as an instrument of national policy
  - Signatories of the pact settled disputes peacefully

- Mudken Incident 1931
  - Dispute near the city of Mudken (Shenyang)
  - Events lead to the Japanese conquest of Mancuria

- President Franklin Roosevelt began his presidential term in 1933.

- German occupation of Poland (1939), Denmark (1940), Norway (1940), Belgium (1940), The Netherlands (1940), and France (1940).
United States and Japan

- Commodore Matthew Perry sailed into Tokyo Bay on July 8, 1853 to re-establish trade with Japan after almost 200 years.
- Townsend Harris arrived in 1856 as U.S. consul.
- “Harris Treaty” signed in 1858
  - Japanese decided to openly accept trade rather than be forced to accept it.
- Secretary of State John Hay created the “Open Door” in China, 1899
  - Japanese thought it was in their interest to support this idea.
- Taft-Katsura Agreement, 1905
- Japan establishes more formal control over South Manchuria, 1905
- Japan promises to respect US pacific territory, Open Door, and limitation of immigration
  - US respect Japanese control of Taiwan and Pescadores as well as special interest in Manchuria
- “Twenty-One Demands of China”
- Ishii-Lansing Agreement and Nine-Power Treaty
- Versailles Treaty gave Japanese control of German concessions in Shandong, which caused tension in China
- Mudken Incident, 1931
United States and Japan 2

• Japanese assets frozen on July 25, 1941
  • Great Britain and the Netherlands East Indies followed the same idea which lead to a commercial blockade of Japan

• Roosevelt recognized the possibility of war.

• Addressing a delegation on why oil exports to Japan hadn’t been stopped before
  • “It was very essential, from our own selfish point of view of defense, to prevent a war from starting in the South Pacific. So our foreign policy was to stop a war from breaking out down there... Now, if we cut the oil off, they [the Japanese] probably would have gone down to the Netherlands East Indies a year ago, and we would have had war.”
Foreign Relations

- Senator Gerald Nye (R-ND) claimed that the US entered WWI from pressure of banks and arms manufacturers
- Congress Rejected US membership in the League of Nations
- Stimson Doctrine
  - The United States would not recognize territory taken by aggression and in violation of international agreements.
- Roosevelt invited the King and Queen of England to visit the United States in June of 1939
  - This would be the first time a british monarch had set foot on American soil
- Sent a letter to Winston Churchill letting him know there was always ad ear with the President when he needed it.
  - The continuous stream of letters vary in subject
  - Roosevelt always knew when something happened in Europe during World War II because Churchill would discuss it with him.
The Neutrality Acts

First Neutrality Act

- Passed in 1935
- Prohibited the export of arms, ammunition, and implements of war to foreign nations at war
- Required arms manufacturers in the United states to apply for an export license.
- Americans citizen traveling abroad were advised to do so at their own risk.

Second Neutrality Act

- U.S. citizens were forbidden from travelling on belligerent ships.
- American merchant ships were prevented from transporting arms to belligerent nations, even if they were produced outside of the US.
- Gave President Roosevelt the authority to bar all belligerent ships from US waters.

Third Neutrality Act

- Cash-and-Carry Passed with this Act
- Lifted the arms embargo, and put trade with belligerent nations under the Cash-and-Carry policy.
• **Cash-and-Carry**
  
  - Belligerent nations could obtain any items except for weapons from the United States as long as they immediately paid and carried them on non-American Ships
  - Oil and other raw materials were not considered implements of war

• **Lend-Lease**
  
  - Assets would be leant to those who needed them and would not be pressed for immediate payment.
  - When payments did take place, they could be in kind rather than in actual numerical amounts.

**Other Laws/Acts**

• Section VII of Lend-Lease agreement between British and the U.S. stated that the consideration would be a joint effort for the creation of a liberalized post-war economic order that would exist internationally
• Boston- October 30, 1940
  • “I have said this before, but I will say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars.”

• Brooklyn- November 1, 1940
  • “I am fighting to keep our people out of foreign wars. And I will keep on fighting.”

• Rochester, NY- November 2, 1940
  • “Your national government ... is equally a government of peace– a government that intends to retain peace for the American people.”

• Buffalo, NY- November 2, 1940
  • ‘Your President syas this country is not going to war.”

• Cleveland- November 3, 1940
  • “The first purpose of our foreign policy is to keep our country out of war.”

Roosevelt Had Promised Not To Go To War
Contradictions

Destroyers for Bases

- September 1940
- Traded more than 50 destroyers for 99 year leases for territory in Newfoundland and the Caribbean to be used for air and naval bases

Naval Patrols

- April 1940
- US ships were to report sightings of German Subs in the Atlantic

Shoot On Sight

- September 11, 1941
- American ships were ordered to shoot German subs upon sight of them
American laborers to Northern Ireland
- Sent to build a naval base
- American Expeditionary force close by

Occupation of Iceland
- American troops in Iceland, July 1941
- Far cry from the promise to stay out of war because there shouldn’t be a need to send American troops anywhere
Conclusion

• Roosevelt needed an excuse to enter the war in order for the people to support his decision, Pearl Harbor was that excuse.
• Legally and morally, the United States was in World War II from the moment Destroyers for Bases was signed and executed.