**Aim:**

**Topic: Japanese-American relations/Attacks on Pearl Harbor**

**PART A**

**Task: Your group is part of a team of advisors to President Roosevelt. President Roosevelt asked you to look over this timeline and these documents about America’s relations with Japan. The President needs a recommendation on what action he should take in regards with Japan.**

**As a group, read all of the documents and make a choice as to what you would advise FDR regarding Japan. Explain your choice in one paragraph (5-7 sentences), with at least 3 specific details.**

The escalating aggression of the Japanese provided some clues the U.S. about their eventual attack on Pearl Harbor. Japan’s attack was not a question of ‘if’ but ‘when’ Japan would escalate it’s aggression to violence.

**Document #1: Timeline of Japanese Aggression**

**1931:** Japan invades Manchuria, China- Japan begins takeover of Manchuria, which is later named Manchukuo.

**1932: The Stimson Doctrine-** “Based on the current situation in China, the American government believes that its duty is to tell both the government of Japan and the government of China that the U.S. will not admit that the current situation in China is legal, now will we admit that any new entreaties that limit America’s rights in China (such as the Open Door Policy) or that take away the independence of the people of China are legal.”

**1933:** Japan leaves the League of Nations.

**1934-35:** Japan broke pledge with U.S. and began rapid naval buildup.

**1937:** Japan invades China and cancels Open Door Policy (policy that allows all countries to trade and have economic control in China).

**1937:** **The Rape of Nanjing:** The systematic rape, torture, and murder of more than 300,000 Chinese civilians by Japanese soldiers.

“Any person who ran because of fear or excitement was likely to be killed on the spot as was anyone caught by roving patrols in streets or alleys after dark. Many slayings were witnessed by foreigners.

The Japanese looting amounted almost to the plundering of the entire city. Nearly every building was entered by Japanese soldiers, often under the eyes of their officers, and the men took whatever they wanted. The Japanese soldiers often impressed Chinese to carry their loot…. The Japanese appear to want the horrors to remain as long as possible, to impress on the Chinese the terrible results of resisting Japan.”

-New York Times, 1937

**The Panay Incident: --** “Today Japanese airplanes in China bombed an American gunboat on the Yangtze River. Three people are reported dead and 30 wounded. The Japanese government has issued a formal apology.”

“In these circumstances, the Government of the United States requests and excepts of the Japanese Government a formally recorded expression of regret, and undertaking to make complete and comprehensive indemnifications, and an assurance that definite and specific steps have been taken which will ensure that hereafter American nationals, interests and property in China will not be subjected to attack by Japanese armed forces or unlawful interference by any Japanese authorities or forces whatsoever.”

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1937

**1938:** **Japanese New World Order:** Japanese newspaper excerpt: *“The Japanese government has issued a warning to the world that there will be a “New Order” in Asia and that the Open Door Policy (policy which allowed Western nations in China) will no longer be followed…Japan is confident that other powers will on their part correctly appreciate her aims and policy and adapt their attitude to the new conditions prevailing in East Asia.”*

**1939:** Nazi Germany invades Poland, World War II begins in Europe (Germany and Italy (Axis Powers) vs. England and France (Allied Powers)

**1940:** **Signing of the Tripartite Act:**

* In September Japan joined Germany and Italy in signing the Tripartite Pact – often referred to as the Axis Pact – in which each signatory promised assistance in case any of the three found itself at war with any country “not involved in the European war or in the Chinese-Japanese conflict”; which, in practice, meant primarily the United States.
* Japan then invades French Indochina.
* United States puts a trade embargo on Japan for oil meaning that they could no longer purchase oil for the US.

**Document #5: Attack on Pearl Harbor**

In July 1941, in response to Japan’s aggressions, the United States freezes all Japanese assets (money in U.S. banks) in the U.S. and places an embargo on shipments of gas, oil, iron and steel to Japan. This was devastating to Japan, who lacked their own resources and needed to continue to expand for their resources to maintain their empire.

The Japanese generals who controlled the Japanese government decided that if Japan was to create an Asian Empire, it would have to defeat America to do it. At the same time as peace negotiations were occurring, the generals and admirals were planning a surprise attack on America to try to destroy its fleet (navy) to quickly defeat them (they used the same strategy to great success against Russia in 1905). On the morning of December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, where many American battleships were docked, doing great damage to America’s navy and killing thousands of Americans. However, the Admiral in charge of the attack, Admiral Yamamoto stated, “I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant.”

1. **Why did the Japanese attack America? If you were the Japanese, would you have made this same decision?**
2. **What do you think Admiral Yamamoto meant by “I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant?”**
3. **What should President Roosevelt do in response to the attack on Pearl Harbor?**

**4) What do you think the American public will want Roosevelt to do?**

**Task: You are president Roosevelt. Based on today’s lesson and documents, write a one-two paragraph speech asking Congress for a Declaration of War. When you are done, turn the page over and compare your speech to FDR’s Declaration of War and answer the questions that follow.**

**Document #6: FDR’s Declaration of War, December 8, 1941**

***“****Yesterday, December 7, 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 toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing…the Japanese ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to the secretary of state a formal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.*

*It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from 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. Very many American lives have been lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Spain.*

*…Japan has therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implication 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. Always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us. I am now asking congress for a declaration of war against the Empire of Japan.”*

**1) What are the main points of FDR’s speech?**

**2) How is it similar/dissimilar to yours?**

**3) Do you think the speech is convincing? Why/why not?**

**4) What would you add/subtract/change from the speech if anything? Why/why not?**