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World War II and its effect on America later

On the summer of 1939, Adolf Hitler asked the Republic of Poland to hand over the Danzig and the Polish Corridor to him. Poland, Britain and France adamantly turned down his request. And the crisis began. Hitler and his Nazi attacked Poland. By blitzkrieg, he captured Norway and Denmark. Belgium, Holland, and Luxemburg then surrendered. Secretly allied with Hitler, Russia assaulted and conquered Baltic states. Knowing that the Nazi could not be stopped, Britain and France declared war against Germany. And on 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. America, the United States, regarded it as an infamous attack and declared war against Japan shortly. As axis members, Germany and Italy declared war against the American to help Japan. And the World War II reached its peak.

United States is considered as a deciding factor in World War II. No country could have changed the course of the war than the United States. This paper attempts to answer the following questions regarding the World War II's effect on the United States:

1. Is World War II relevant to the study of United State's history? Or is it given too much credence?
2. Did the issue or event have a positive or negative impact on American history?

3. Does it concern us in 2005 or was it a product of one's own time period in American history?
4. Conclusion based on research.
5. What did we learn about American history based on this research?

Before we attempt to answer the following, let us first look back on how the United States was implicated in the war.

World War II and the United States

Years before the World War II erupted, the United States had followed the policy of neutrality. When the war started on 1939, the congress passed and affirmed a series of laws about impartiality to avoid the involvement of the country in the Europe's conflict. But when the German Nazis carried out a succession of rapid and easy occupation of Europe, the United States suddenly helped out and did anything to help Europe's democratic countries and allies. After the occurrence in Dunkirk, the United States immediately supplied Britain the necessary arms and ammunition for its defense against the coming German assault (Fuller 37). The congress hastily passed the law that stated a Lend-Lease Act on March 1941 because it believed that the continuation of Britain in Europe is vital for the democratic struggle. By this law, United States furnished war weapons and ammunition to all countries that were fighting against the onslaught of the Axis. On January 6, 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt showed the sympathy of America to all Allied countries by stating the "Four Freedoms" in his speech at the

congress. At that time, its relationship with Japan, an Axis in Asia, was losing ground because of its continuous attack on China and French Indochina (R.D. 1971). In return, the United States congress ordered the stop of all the exportation activities of its country to Japan, and at the same time freezing all its assets in the United States. Japanese Premier Hideki Tojo sent his country representative, Saburo Kurusu, to Washington to help the Japanese ambassador Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura for a diplomatic talk to ease the tension with the United States. History itself proved the deceit of Tojo that while the talks was going, Japan was preparing for a war against the United States. On December 8, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, an American military base in Hawaii. The Pacific Fleet of the United States, surprised by the attack, was heavily damaged by the Japanese plane bombers. 2,403 died and 1,178 others are injured. President Roosevelt called it a “day of infamy” and immediately declared war against Japan (Allen). Germany and Italy declared war against the United States to help Japan. And the war on Europe reached the pacific and became a World War II.

Recuperating from the loss in Pearl Harbor, the Americans moved backwards against the onslaught of Japanese forces in the Philippines. Imperial army attacked American bases in Asia with a blitzkrieg type of assault. Bataan and Corregidor bases in the Philippines, the last fortress of democracy in Asia, finally surrendered after a long battle(Craig 49). Burma and Singapore followed. General Douglas Mac Arthur, the U.S. commander in Asia-Pacific moved back to Australia to gather forces. Few months later, the United States launched offensive counter-strikes against the Japanese forces and and gradually regained control by defeating Japanese in key bases like in Battle of the Coral Sea and in the Battle of Midway. They recaptured Solomon, Port Moresby and other bases. In the

west, General Dwight Eisenhower took over the Northern Africa. Mussolini and Italy fell on the hands of the Allied Forces.

German forces suffered heavily lost because of the Allied's counter-offensive led by the United States forces. And on June 6, 1944, the largest forces in the history under the command of Gen. Eisenhower arrived at Normandy, France. After weeks of intense battle, the Allied forces defeated the Nazi and went to Germany. On September that year, the Allied Forces freed Belgium, Holland, and Luxemburg. The forces attacked the west of Germany while the Russian forces on the east. Seeing everything in hopelessness, Hitler escaped with his mistress. The Nazi fell completely (Shug, Roger, Weerd 169). The American forces in the pacific continued the offensive and recaptured its bases. Stubborn Japanese fought to defend, but to no avail. On August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima. Three days after, the second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. That ended the World War II (Zaide, Pritchard 27).

Is World War II relevant to the study of United State's history? Or is it given too much credence?

The World War II is relevant to the study of United States history because it played a major role in directing the course of the war for the victory of Allied forces, and by championing the democracy against the totalitarianism of leaders like Adolf Hitler and Mussolini. During the period, the United States suffered heavy loses in terms of its military, financial, and economical capability. The importance of the study on World War

It reinforces the fact that the United States participation on the war was so great. Its involvement on the war emphasizes two things about the interest of the United States:

1. Protection of its colonial territory.
2. Democracy in Europe.

The protection of its colonial territory was an established policy of the United States. The colonial territory of United States, particularly in Asia, was under attacked by the Japanese forces. The Philippines, Guam and Samoa, which was acquired by the United States through the Treaty of Paris on 1898, was occupied by Japan. The interest of the United States was at stake and therefore its involvement is inevitable. The Direct assault of the Japanese forces on Pearl Harbor cannot be disregarded that it affected a number of people, all Americans, into direct confrontation against the Japan. It was a brutal act of aggression that sent all Americans into grieving. President Roosevelt declaration of war against Japan was a thing that cannot be prevented.

Britain was the last frontier of democracy in Europe. France was a hopeless case during the war when it was attacked by the Nazis. The United States was a strong advocate of democracy and was an ally of Britain since the World War II and in this case, felt the need to assist the latter. The United States considered the war of the Axis (Japan, Germany and Italy) as a persecution to the freedom of the world to exercise its democratic rights (Remak 56).

The Pearl Harbor attack was viewed as an intrusion to the sovereignty of the United States, and that consequently supposed to be dealt with a counter-offensive and a

declaration of war. This event qualifies the war, as much as the other involvement of the United States on some previous wars, as being a relevant topic in the study of United State's history. What event can better describe the struggle of a country to rise in power? What event can better recall the attachment of one country to the history of another? It's the World War II.

It was the World War II that brought the name of United States in the map of world history, not just in its own history. Its relevance to the study of United States history cannot be refuted because it affected the direction of human activities, not just its own people, but the people around the world during the war.

It is not given too much credence since World War II was not the only relevant study on the history of the United States. Though it was linked to the world history, there were still a lot of occurrences that can be considered as more relevant to the study of United States history, and that includes the Civil War which is truly at the heart of the American history.

**Did the issue or event have a positive or negative
impact on American history?**

The impact of World War II took a huge toll in human lives. The economic impact was also tremendous. The United States spent the most money on the war, \$341 billion, plus money distributed to other countries. Germany spent \$272 billion, and Japan spent \$56 billion. The USSR lost 30% of its national wealth. Besides money, other losses included military personnel and civilians. The U.S. lost a total of 407,318 military personnel,

Japan lost 1,700,000 military personnel and 380,000 civilians, and Germany lost 3,500,000 military personnel and 3,800,000 civilians (Yolen 40).

Because Germany was defeated in World War I and II, the country lost a large area of land, and many ethnic Germans fled to what remained of Germany. Also, Britain, France, Germany, and Japan were no longer great military powers. However, the military power of the U.S. and Soviet Union rose to new highs.

The World War II cost the United States around 1.2 million victims and almost 450,000 deaths. In both domestic and foreign relationships, its outcome were extensive. It put an end to the Depression, caused millions of married women and minors into the labor force, initiated all-encompassing changes in the lives of the nation's marginal groups, and considerable increased the presence of the government in American life.

Though many Americans shouldered the burden of the war, the World War II in general had a positive effect on the history of United States. It awakened the country from being an isolationist to uphold the freedom and democracy around the world. The big amount of money that the United States provided to the Allied countries, the big troops it sent, and the weapons it furnished provided the moral justification of its positive impact on its history. It further strengthened its motto of fighting for the democracy and freedom which the United States is known throughout the history.

**Does it concern us in 2005 or was it a product of one's own time period
in American history?**

The World War two concerns us in 2005 simply because the outcome of it definitely molded the way of our lives we have today. During those period, America was battling the totalitarianism, which is opposed to democracy. The commitment of the United States to advocate people's right have changed the outlook of many countries today. The idea of democracy is closely linked to the national identity of the United States. Even during the most isolationist periods in its early history, the relatively young country was seen as a shining beacon to individuals and families seeking personal freedoms. Since the United States that time was the only country capable of launching big military offensive, its presence in the war created a big difference in the path of war and therefore it dictated history in a way that is favorable to its policy---the democracy. The United States is vigorously engaged in all corners of the globe, acting as a force for peace and prosperity. Expanding the global community of democracies is a key objective of U.S. foreign policy.

Had Hitler and his Nazis won the war, what could be our lives today? This question imposes an answer in history that makes us very concerned about. The Axis wanted to dominate the world to eliminate democracy, communism, capitalism, and the Jews. It concerns us that the past, specially the World War II, shape our present and therefore, assure the continuation of our future that is, majority of us, will favor.

Conclusion

The World War II has such a great impact on the history of America since it was the war that has put her on the pedestal of being the world superpower and the champion of

democracy The strong policy of imperialism of America, championed by then state secretary William Seward 1897 (Walter 16), has proven so vital to the expansion program of the country that helped her attained the strategic place for its economic, political, and military policy. The fact that it became one of the causes why America got involved in the war cannot be disproved. Hitler and his Nazis posed a great threat not only on the Europe, but on the national security of America as well. Wars have been major pieces of history. From the wars, the Empire of Rome created history. From wars, the English and Spanish supremacy over the world made most of its significances in their history. The World War II might be considered a second relevant event in the history of United States. It changed lives, directed courses, and shaped the future of the world history.

What did we learn about American history based on this research?

American history is a history of democratic struggle. We can be very well informed that the foundation of American history, as well as other countries and empires before, was instituted on democracy in belief of attaining the rights of people to govern themselves. Nevertheless, when democracy is in the middle of different self-interest, the necessity of a war is inevitable. There was the war that liberated America from the colonialization of British empire. There was the war that united Americans (the Civil War). And then the World Wars. War was used in ending democracy. But war was also used in defending it. Furthermore, the United States has been the most organized country in the world. Their government is blessed with great leaders that sustain its self-interest together with its commitment to the world. The likes of William Seward and John Green was a forerunner

of the interest of the United States. They helped America to establish a link that will put America on the history of every nations.

America is truly the lone superpower in the world today. It can be recalled that in 1929 the United States suffered from the Great Depression when its stock market plunged to historical lows. However, the United States bounced back from the plummet and regain the control over its economy in a few years, and even lend money to other Allied countries.

History proved true on the power of imperialism that was long ago copied by the American to its conqueror Britain and through the history of Rome. It proved vital to the defensive and offensive strategy of its military and the strengthening of balance of power in Europe and in Asia-Pacific. The balance of power, even today, lies on the hands of a one powerful country like the United States. The World War II clearly demonstrated the power and influence of the United States by winning the battles and defeating the Germany, Italy, and Japan. The thing is if the United States isolated herself from the war, democracy on Europe and in Asia will be obliterated. In the history, the America has been the role model of freedom to the different countries. The study of American history, particularly what took place on the World War II, is a relevant discussion among scholars in determining the struggle that democracy has faced throughout the years. ***

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