**Why Pearl Harbor Is a Turning Point in WW2**

In the 1930s, most Americans believed that the nation's interests were better served by steering clear of foreign disputes and concentrating on issues affecting the country, such as the annihilating effects of the Great Depression. During this period, congress passed a set of Neutrality Acts to prevent future involvement in external wars by prohibiting American citizens from trading with warring nations, traveling using their ships, or loaning them money (Simms & Laderman, 2021). However, the neutrality sentiments of Americans changed when Japan conducted a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, leaving over 2,400 Americans dead. After the attack, U.S. Congress declared war on Japan (Blakemore, 2021). In response, Italy and Germany, Japan's allies, extended their support to Japan by declaring war on America. In light of this, the attack on Pearl Harbor was a turning point in WW2 because it was the main event that prompted the United States to join the World War, changing the dynamics of the war.

**Main Arguments**

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor ended the debate over America's involvement in foreign wars. Before the attack, Americans were earnestly divided over the role of the U.S. in foreign conflicts. There was no clear agreement on how the U.S. was supposed to respond, even as the World War consumed large parts of Asia and Europe towards the end of the 1930s (Simms & Laderman, 2021). The isolationism sentiment held by the American political landscape influenced thousands of Americans to believe that getting involved in foreign wars was a misplaced priority, citing the need to focus more on problems at home. Neither the rise of Japanese expansionism nor the rise of Adolf Hitler to power did much to shift America's isolationist mood in the late 1930s. However, the deteriorating global tension became impossible to ignore in 1940 as Nazi Germany annexed Czechoslovakia and Austria and conquered Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Poland (Blakemore, 2021). The situation's urgency escalated the debate among Americans over whether the U.S. needed to get involved in the war. Isolationist's believed that the 2nd World War was a dispute among foreign nations; thus, the U.S. had no business getting involved, while interventionists believed that the U.S. had a good reason to get involved, especially in Europe. This debate ended after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, forcing the U.S. out of isolation after declaring war against Japan.

The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor did not only impact the United States but the whole world. One day after the attack, the U.S congress declared war against Japan, marking its official entry into the hostilities. Although the U.S. only declared war on Japan, Adolf Hitler acclaimed the attack on Pearl Harbor and declared war against the U.S. in support of Japan. Historians term Hitler's war declaration against the U.S. his greatest error in judgment as American ground troops waged war against German forces in less than a year (Simms & Laderman, 2021). Additionally, American materiel support of the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany's primary enemy, immediately proceeded at full speed. A global conflict that destroyed most parts of Europe and Japan, leading to the deaths of over 15 million soldiers and 45 million civilians.

Furthermore, the Pearl Harbor attack had a significant impact on the Holocaust. The schedule for the Wansee Conference, which aimed at coordinating the organizations responsible for executing the final solution in WW2, was originally set for December 8, 1941 (Blakemore, 2021). However, the attack forced the organizers to reschedule the conference for January 20, 1942.

In addition, the attack on Pearl Harbor was a turning point in WW2 because it led to the rise of anti-Japanese sentiment, xenophobia, and racism in America. Before the attack, Japan had gained substantial support from right-wing military leaders such as Germany, creating a larger Japanese empire in the Pacific (Tierney, (2022). As a result, Japan became the most powerful in Asia, and the quest to gain more power in the pacific led to their attack on Pearl Harbor. However, the attack was a turning point as the United States joined WW2 by declaring war against Japan. According to Asmaradhani (2019), one of the main consequences of the attack was the anti-Japanese sentiment that made Americans overly pessimistic about Japanese, Japanese-Americans, and Asians with similar physical appearance, thereby weakening Japan's military power.

The attack on Pearl Harbor was a turning point in WW2 because it led the United States to join the World War, changing the dynamics of the war. The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor shocked and devastated the U.S., forcing it to join a war it had managed to steer clear of for years. Besides, the attack ended the national debate over whether the United States needed to get involved in foreign wars, as most Americans realized it was inevitable. Furthermore, the attack on Pearl Harbor was a turning point for WW2 as the U.S.'s involvement changed the dynamics of the war because American materiel support of the Soviet Union weakened Japan and Nazi Germany.

**References**

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