OMNI PEARL HARBOR DAY, WORLD WAR II IN THE PACIFIC NEWSLETTER #4, DECEMBER 7, 2012. Compiled by Dick Bennett. Another in OMNI’s NATIONAL DAYS series for a Culture of Peace.

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Quick Facts
National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day remembers those who died or were injured when Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii, was attacked in 1941.

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Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 2012
Friday, December 7, 2012

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 2013
Saturday, December 7, 2013
List of dates for other years

National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, which is annually on December 7, commemorates the attack on Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii, during World War II. Many American service men and women lost their lives or were injured on December 7, 1941. National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is also referred to as Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day or Pearl Harbor Day.
What do people do?

On the direction of the President, the flag of the United States of America should be displayed on the homes of Americans, the White House and all United States government buildings. The flag should be flown at half-mast to honor those who died in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Many associations, especially those linked with Pearl Harbor survivors or those who died from the attack, participate in special services to commemorate the event. Memorial services are held at venues such as the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor. Other activities include: wreath-laying ceremonies; keynote speeches by those associated with the event; luncheons; media stories on survivors’ recollections of the Pearl Harbor attack; and school activities to educate students about the attack on Pearl Harbor in relation to World War II history.

Public life

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is not a federal holiday. Government offices, schools, businesses and other organizations do not close. Public transit systems run on their regular schedules. Some organizations may hold special events in memory of those killed or injured in Pearl Harbor.

Background

On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, the American Army and Navy base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii was attacked by the Imperial Japanese Navy. The attack came as a surprise to the American Army and Navy and lead to great losses of life and equipment. More than 2000 American citizens were killed and more than 1000 were injured. The Americans also lost a large proportion of their battle ships and nearly 200 aircraft that were stationed in the Pacific region. More than 60 Japanese servicemen were killed, injured or captured. The Japanese Navy also lost five midget submarines and 29 aircraft.

The Japanese military had hoped that the attack on Pearl Harbor would prevent the United States of America from increasing her influence in the Pacific. However, the events in Pearl Harbor actually led to the escalation of World War II. The day after the attack, the United States declared war on Japan and so entered World War II. President Franklin Roosevelt in a speech to Congress stated that the bombing of Pearl Harbor was “a date which will live in infamy”. Shortly afterwards, Germany also declared war on the United States. In the months that followed the attack, the slogan “Remember Pearl Harbor” swept the United States and radio stations repeatedly played a song of the same name.

In 1991, which marked the 50th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States Congress established the Pearl Harbor Commemorative Medal. This is also known as the Pearl Harbor Survivor's Medal and can be awarded to any veteran of the United States military who were present in or around Pearl Harbor during the attack by the Japanese military. The medal can be awarded to civilians, who were killed or injured in the attack.

Symbols

Memorials have been built to remember or to symbolize the day. For example, the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor is a marble memorial built over the sunken USS Arizona, which was dedicated in 1962. The memorial remembers all military personnel who were killed in the Pearl Harbor attack. The memorial was designed by architect Alfred Preis, an Austrian-born resident who lived in Honolulu and was placed at a detention camp after the Pearl Harbor attack as part of the internment policy of Japanese and German
Americans at the time. Another memorial that commemorates Pearl Harbor Day is the USS *Utah*, a battleship that was attacked and sunk in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. A memorial to honor the crew of the USS *Utah* was dedicated on the northwest shore of Ford Island, near the ship's wreck, in 1972. The ship was added to the National Register of Historic Places and declared a National Historic Landmark in 1989. It is also Utah's official state ship. Memorabilia, books, and movies about the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 have also been made available to the public over the years.

**DICK'S LETTER TO ADG 12-2-11, 221 words, pub. 12-11-11**

Dear Editor:

In your newspaper November 22, Mr. Richard Dixon reminded us of the importance of Pearl Harbor. One of his claims deserves reconsideration: “Never in the history of military warfare had there been such an instance of unprovoked war upon a U.S. naval base.” I was nine years old when the attack on Pearl occurred, Dec. 7, 1941, and for most of my life I believed the attack was unprovoked. But in recent years, many historians have concluded that the attack on Pearl was the inevitable outcome of colonial competition over resources (oil, rubber) between the U.S. and European nations—Netherlands, France, England—and Japan, and the Dec. 7 bombing specifically motivated by the U.S. and allied embargo of Japan. The Japanese attack on the U.S. should have surprised nobody. The U.S. and other western nations were not going to share their empires with the Japanese without a fight. The Pacific was sometimes called “the American Lake,” and the Europeans depended upon the resources of their colonies. Likewise the Japanese were not going to abandon their urgent imperial expansion for resources. Their economic desperation, militarism, and underestimation of U.S. power and determination led them to attack. The imperial arrangement of nations at the time made the war almost inevitable. Read the book *No Choice But War* by Roland Worth, Jr. for a careful analysis of this history.

December 6, 2011

**Tomgram: Michael Klare, A New Cold War in Asia?**

Last Friday, the U.S. military formally handed over its largest base in Iraq, the ill-named “Camp Victory,” to the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. The next morning, *Washington Post* columnist David Ignatius officially declared counterinsurgency wars in the Middle East dead in -- if you don’t mind an inapt word -- the water. (He is personally in mourning.) He quoted one unnamed official describing Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta’s planning for the new Pentagon budget in this fashion: “It’s not going to be likely that we will deploy 150,000 troops to an area the way we did in Afghanistan and Iraq.”

No indeed. As a result, in the inter-service scramble for the biggest slice of the Defense Department’s
budgetary pie, the winners, Ignatius tells us, are going to be the Air Force and the Navy. Translated geopolitically, this means that the focus of future military planning will switch to the Pacific -- with this country’s largest foreign creditor, China (not al-Qaeda), as the new enemy.

In the what’s-old-is-new category, this is priceless. In the spring of 2001, the Bush administration was focused on a strategic review of global military policy, led by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, which “concluded that the Pacific Ocean should now become the most important focus of U.S. military deployments, with China now perceived as the principal threat to American global dominance” and its number one enemy. In response, the Chinese were already issuing their own threats. (Terrorism, the Bush administration then felt, was for wusses and Democrats, which is why they paid next to no attention to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, despite warnings from officials of the outgoing Clinton administration, the CIA, and others.)

September 11, 2001, of course, sent them in quite another direction that -- we can only assume -- left China’s leaders thanking their lucky stars, while the U.S. military bogged itself down in two disastrous wars in the Greater Middle East. A decade later, the U.S. is economically weaker, a battered former “sole superpower” still in need of an enemy, still thinking about global energy supplies, and, if anything, more reliant than ever on a military-first policy in the world. As always, TomDispatch regular Michael Klare, author of Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet, is ahead of the curve in grasping just what’s at stake and why we should be worried as the Obama administration pivots, readying itself for its return to the pre-9/11 Bush moment. Sigh. (To catch Timothy MacBain’s latest Tomcast audio interview in which Klare discusses the American military build-up in the Pacific, click here or download it to your iPod here.) Tom

Playing With Fire
Obama’s Risky Oil Threat to China
By Michael T. Klare

When it comes to China policy, is the Obama administration leaping from the frying pan directly into the fire? In an attempt to turn the page on two disastrous wars in the Greater Middle East, it may have just launched a new Cold War in Asia -- once again, viewing oil as the key to global supremacy.

The new policy was signaled by President Obama himself on November 17th in an address to the Australian Parliament in which he laid out an audacious -- and extremely dangerous -- geopolitical vision. Instead of focusing on the Greater Middle East, as has been the case for the last decade, the United States will now concentrate its power in Asia and the Pacific. “My guidance is clear,” he declared in Canberra. “As we plan and budget for the future, we will allocate the resources necessary to maintain our strong military presence in this region.”

While administration officials insist that this new policy is not aimed specifically at China, the implication is clear enough: from now on, the primary focus of American military strategy will not be counterterrorism, but the containment of that economically booming land -- at whatever risk or cost.

The Planet’s New Center of Gravity

The new emphasis on Asia and the containment of China is necessary, top officials insist, because the Asia-Pacific region now constitutes the “center of gravity” of world economic activity. While the United States was bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan, the argument goes, China had the leeway to expand its influence in the region. For the first time since the end of World War II, Washington is no longer the dominant economic actor there. If the United States is to retain its title as the world’s paramount power, it must, this thinking goes,
restore its primacy in the region and roll back Chinese influence. In the coming decades, no foreign policy task will, it is claimed, be more important than this. 

Click here to read more of this dispatch.

BOOKS OF THE TIMES

“The Queasy Side of Theodore Roosevelt’s Diplomatic Voyage “ By JANET MASLIN
New York Times, : November 18, 2009

James Bradley’s incendiary new book about Theodore Roosevelt is not really packed with secrets. Much of the material it discusses has long been hidden in plain sight. But Roosevelt biographers often subscribe to certain orthodoxies, and one of them is this: When Roosevelt made noxiously racist and ethnocentric remarks about Anglo-Saxon greatness, so what? He was just voicing the tenets of his time.

Skip to next paragraph

James Bradley

THE IMPERIAL CRUISE

A Secret History of Empire and War

By James Bradley

THEODORE ROOSEVELT’S RACIST IMPERIALISM


Related

Excerpt: ‘The Imperial Cruise’ (November 19, 2009)

Times Topics: Theodore Roosevelt
“Nationalistic boasting was in fashion,” shrugs Douglas Brinkley’s nearly 1,000-page “Wilderness Warrior,” published this year.

Mr. Bradley, the author of “Flags of Our Fathers,” does not simply cite Roosevelt’s egregious talk. He presents this much-ignored aspect of Roosevelt’s thinking with sharp specificity (“I am so angry with that infernal little Cuban republic that I would like to wipe its people off the face of the earth,” Roosevelt wrote in 1906) and then goes on to make a much more damaging point, angrily and persuasively connecting Roosevelt’s race-based foreign policy miscalculations in Asia. His thesis in “The Imperial Cruise” is startling enough to reshape conventional wisdom about Roosevelt’s presidency.

“Here was the match that lit the fuse, and yet for decades we paid attention only to the dynamite,” Mr. Bradley writes. The flame to which he refers is Roosevelt’s secret diplomacy with Japan and his encouragement of Japanese imperialism. (“I should like to see Japan have Korea,” he once declared.) In a far-reaching book that also addresses Roosevelt’s misconceptions about Korea, Hawaii, China and the Philippines, Mr. Bradley places critical emphasis on the dangerous American-Japanese relationship that, he says, Roosevelt helped create.

“Knowing a lot about race theory but less about international diplomacy and almost nothing about Asia,” he writes, “Roosevelt in 1905 careened U.S.-Japanese relations on the dark side road leading to 1941.”

This assertion is certainly debatable. And neither “The Imperial Cruise” nor Mr. Bradley, whose earlier “Flyboys” offered a gruesome account of the deaths of American World War II pilots on the Japanese-held island of Chichi Jima, is beyond reproach. Mr. Bradley favors broad strokes and may at times be overly eager to connect historical dots, but he also produces graphic, shocking evidence of the attitudes that his book describes.

If racism is nothing new, Mr. Bradley’s readers may still be surprised at the xenophobic ugliness of the photos, letters, cartoons, lyrics and political speeches cited here. And if, for instance, American use of waterboarding against turn-of-the-century Filipino prisoners is not unknown (it was the subject of a New Yorker article last year), neither is it common knowledge. Nor, perhaps, are the lyrics to “The Water Cure,” a vintage United States Army marching song: “Shove in the nozzle deep and let him taste of liberty/Shouting the battle cry of freedom.” The toughest parts of this book re-reveal things we should already know.

Mr. Bradley builds “The Imperial Cruise” around the public relations event that its title describes: a 1905 voyage of the liner Manchuria during which the first daughter, Alice Roosevelt, and the future President William Howard Taft, then Roosevelt’s secretary of war, docked in the countries that this book describes.
Mixing very familiar elements (i.e., any of Alice Roosevelt’s antics) with other, more startling material, Mr. Bradley first cites some of the academic and philosophical influences on the Harvard-educated Roosevelt’s early thinking. His were common ideas for his time.

“One after another, White Christian males in America’s finest universities ‘discovered’ that the Aryan was God’s highest creation, that the Negro was designed for servitude and that the Indian was doomed to extinction,” Mr. Bradley writes.

Mr. Bradley describes with particular venom the misinformation given to the American public about the cost, duration and intensity of the Philippine struggle, which began when the Filipino revolutionary leader Emilio Aguinaldo allowed American soldiers ashore to fight the Spanish-American War and made the terrible mistake of presuming that the United States Constitution made no provision for taking colonies.

Quoting Gen. Arthur MacArthur, he pointedly describes a too familiar situation. “General MacArthur described a depressing quagmire where the U.S. Army controlled only 117 miles out of a total of 116,000 square miles, a hostile country where Americans could not venture out alone and a shell-shocked populace whose hatred for their oppressors grew each day,” he writes. “The Imperial Cruise” is all too persuasive in its visions of history repeating itself.

Another chapter describes the means by which the idea of exporting suffrage and democracy to primitive societies needed to be adjusted for Hawaii, with its existing native monarch and vastly outnumbered white population. Here and in its discussion of China, the book particularly emphasizes the way American assumptions of white superiority made the patriotism of other populations hard to understand. Roosevelt’s “inability to recognize third-world nationalism” is cited again and again, not simply as a prejudice but as an obstacle to effective policy.

Even worse, according to Mr. Bradley, was Roosevelt’s frequent presumption that he did understand other cultures. This book argues that Roosevelt’s designation of the Japanese as born leaders and veritable Americans, worthy of imposing their own Monroe Doctrine on weaker nations like Korea, was a cataclysmic mistake.

In 1905 his miscalculations had expanded to include Russia too. Even while brokering the Portsmouth Treaty that ended the Russo-Japanese War and won him the Nobel Peace Prize, “Roosevelt imagined the Japanese as eternal opponents of the Slav, not entertaining the possibility that Russia and Japan would kiss and make up after the war,” Mr. Bradley writes cruelly. “And since Roosevelt kept his analysis secret from everyone except his Japanese allies and yes-men like Taft, there was no one to grab the reins before Roosevelt drove America’s future in Asia into a ditch.”

At times like this, Mr. Bradley risks sounding dangerously hot-headed. But if he brings a
reckless passion to “The Imperial Cruise,” there is at least one extenuating fact behind his thinking. In “Flags of Our Fathers” he wrote about how his father helped plant the American flag on the island of Iwo Jima during World War II. In “The Imperial Cruise” he asks why American servicemen like his father had to be fighting in the Pacific at all.

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3. Pearl Harbor (200)

END PEARL HARBOR 2012

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