

Part Eight: America Attacked

German Soldier: [Speaking German]

Narrator: The Germans opened unrestricted submarine warfare.

Henry L. Stimson: If today our Navy should make secure the seas for the delivery of our munitions to Great Britain, it will render as great a service to our country and to the preservation of American freedom as it has ever rendered in all its glorious history.

Wendell Willkie: We want those cargos protected.

Narrator: An aroused Congress repealed the entire Neutrality Act.

Text: Neutrality Act Repealed. We deliver arms to those fighting aggression.

Narrator: We armed our merchants. And for the first time they steamed into combat zones to deliver lend-lease. While this was going on in the Atlantic, the Japs, by a so called-agreement with the puppet government of defeated France, moved in on Indochina. There were now only two threats to their plan for conquest of Greater East Asia. First was their northern neighbor Russia, the only military power within striking distance of Japan. The Nazis were taking care of Russia. The second threat to Japanese conquest was us. Japanese southward expansion was too dangerous to attempt with our bases still standing in the Philippines and our supply lines open to Wake, to Midway, and to Hawaii. We were in their way. We had to be removed, but in the Japanese way.

Off to Washington went Special Ambassador Kurusu on what the Japs said was a mission of peace. But carefully synchronized with his departure from Tokyo was the departure of a Jap taskforce under sealed orders, not on a mission of peace. On November 14, Mr. Kurusu arrived in San Francisco, smiling his toothy smile as he sang the old song of Japanese friendship. The Japanese were a peace-loving people. Their whole policy was devoted to the establishment of permanent peace in Asia. Our aid to China was delaying the establishment of that peace. Our refusal to sell them oil and scrap was interfering with the establishment of that peace. Our objections to their taking over the East Indies, Greater East Asia, was an interruption in the establishment of that peace. All they wanted was peace. On November 17, Mr. Kurusu and Japanese Ambassador Nomura were received by the President in the presence of the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull. It very quickly became clear that the Japanese had brought no new proposals and that the Japanese intended to continue their campaign to conquer China and all East Asia. However, on November 26, our Secretary of State presented the Japanese with the basis for peaceful agreement between the two nations. The proposal was forwarded to Tokyo. The Japs had to stall for time, but only a short time. The task force was nearing its goal.

Sunday, December 7, 1941.

Japanese Soldiers: [Speaking Japanese]

Narrator: 1 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The Japanese emissaries are expected at the State Department to keep a one o'clock appointment they had requested in order to present their answers to our proposals.

1:05 p.m. The Japanese planes are approaching Hawaii.

1:10 p.m. The Japanese emissaries telephone to postpone their appointment until 1:45.

1:20 p.m.

2 p.m. The Japanese envoys, smiling and correct, arrive at the State Department.

2:20 p.m. Japanese planes had been sowing death and destruction for an hour on American outposts in the Pacific when the Japanese envoys presented a memorandum to Mr. Hull.

Cordell Hull: Here is the memorandum presented to me. As you can see, it is quite a lengthy document. I read it hurriedly, discovering that it contained a recital of monstrous accusations against the United States, charging it among other things with, quote, "Scheming for the extension of the war; preparing to attack Germany and Italy, two powers striving to establish a new order in Europe; and ignoring Japan's sacrifices in the four years of the China affair, menacing the empire's existence itself and disparaging its honor and prestige." After reading the note, I said to the Japanese emissaries, "I have never seen a document that was more crowded with infamous falsehoods and distortions on a scale so huge that I never imagined that any government on this planet was capable of uttering them."

President Franklin Roosevelt: I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

Chorus: [Singing]

Long may our land be bright,
With freedom's holy light,

Text: *"...victory of the democracies can only be complete with the utter defeat of the war machines of Germany and Japan."* – G.C. Marshall, Chief of Staff.

Chorus: [Singing]

Protect us by Thy might,
Great God our King.