

## Abstract

American Military Strategy and Foreign Policy toward Japan in 1941: Decision Making Process of American Entry into the War with Japan, November 1940--December 1941

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The U.S. strategy in 1941 was to prevent British Empire from collapsing itself by damping German war efforts through the supply of war materials to Britain and to the Soviet Union, meanwhile preparing a full scale war against Germany in July 1943. In accordance with this military strategy, the United States applied an offensive posture in the Atlantic and a defensive one in the Far East, or, the "Europe first and Far East second" policy.

American military and foreign policy towards Japan was preliminarily to avoid the war with Japan resulting in opening the diplomatic negotiation with Japanese, even though restraining Japan simultaneously by embargo of oil and freezing Japanese assets in the U.S. as well as building up American forces in the Philippines.

Roosevelt learned that Japan determined to resort to the war with the U.S., should Japan fail to settle a peaceful agreement with the U.S. by November that year. Roosevelt dictated a draft of temporary truce, modus vivendi and asked Cordell Hull for its successful arrangement.

However, Churchill did strongly oppose to the plan, and Roosevelt accepted his nay, because of his respect and solidarity with the Anti-Axis coalition.

Real motivation and intention of Roosevelt's acceptance of British opposition was because of "British factor", which played a dominant role in American foreign policy as well as military principles. It presumed that American national security was based on survival of British Empire; therefore preventing Britain's collapse was essential for eventual defeat of Germany. For this purpose, American entry into the European war was indispensable.

Roosevelt planned to enter the European war through avoiding the war with Japan by proposing modus vivendi before the British opposition, but after that he changed to join the European war through the Back door, Japan, by giving a Hull Note, a de facto ultimatum.

“British factor” functioned throughout the whole procedures.

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