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After the bombing of Pearl Harbor the United States switched from a peacetime to a wartime economy. Government and private industry cooperated to increase production, and union leaders agreed not to strike during the war.

(2)

In 1940, government arsenals employed about 22,000 workers who produced ammunition, cannon shells, and rifles. Three years later some 486,000 workers were working in the arsenals. By war's end the United States had built some 300,000 aircraft. Car production was suspended for the duration of the war. Between 1940 and 1945, American factories produced huge numbers of planes, tanks, jeeps, and guns. American shipyards built 88,000 landing craft, 215 submarines, 147 aircraft carriers, 952 other warships, and 5,200 merchant ships.

This massive increase in production created an economic boom that ended the Great Depression. Unemployment dropped from 14.6 percent in 1940 to 1.2 percent in 1944. Earnings nearly doubled between 1939 and 1945. People who had stood in breadlines a decade earlier now brought home fat paychecks. The lure of high-paying jobs in war industries led to vast population shifts. More than 4 million workers left their homes to find work in factories in other states.

Sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and others struggling to make a living on farms flocked to the centers of wartime production. Many went to shipyards on the Gulf and Pacific coasts and to factories in the Midwest and West. The West experienced particularly strong growth during the war.

American farms also became marvels of productivity. During the war years, farmers produced enough food to supply both the American people and many of the Allied Powers overseas. Although many agricultural workers went off to fight in the war or to work in wartime factories, farm production increased. As part of its lend-lease aid, the United States exported 10 percent of the food it produced, mostly to Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

(3)

Mobilizing for war required a greatly expanded federal government. Between 1940 and 1945 the number of federal employees nearly tripled. To fight the Axis Powers, the United States needed to channel all of its resources into producing the maximum amount of military goods. In January 1942 President Roosevelt created the **War Production Board** (WPB) to increase military production. The WPB directed the conversion of existing factories to wartime production and

PRIMARY SOURCE

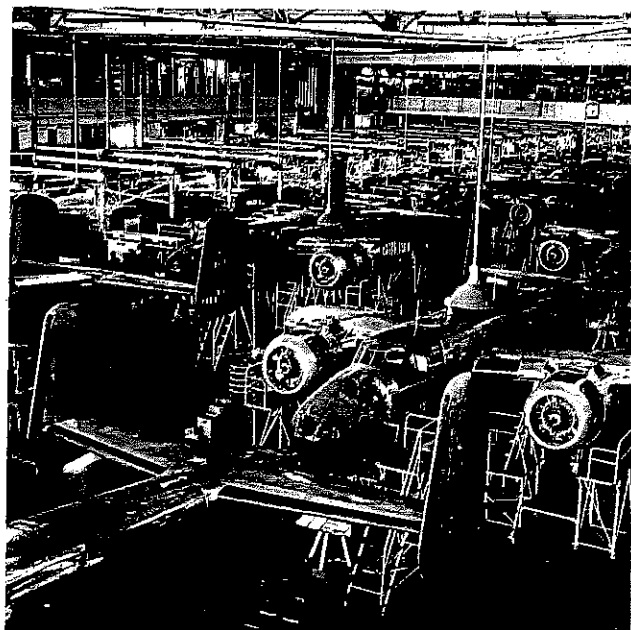
Japanese View of World War II

The day after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Emperor Hirohito made a speech that provided Japan's reasons for declaring war on the United States and Great Britain. **How does Emperor Hirohito attempt to justify the attack on Pearl Harbor?**

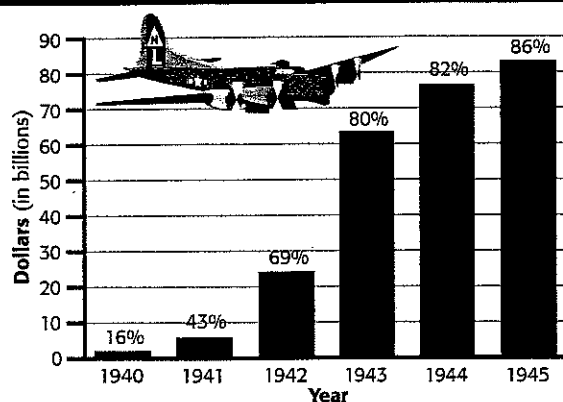
"Both America and Britain . . . have aggravated the disturbances in East Asia. . . . These two powers, inducing other countries to follow suit, increased military preparations on all sides of Our Empire. . . . They have obstructed by every means Our peaceful commerce, and finally resorted to a direct severance [cutting off] of economic relations. . . . Patiently have We waited and long have We endured, in hope that Our Government might retrieve the situation in peace. But Our adversaries [enemies], showing not the least spirit of conciliation [peacemaking], have unduly [excessively] delayed a settlement. . . . Our Empire for its existence and self defense has no other recourse [choice] but to appeal to arms and to crush every obstacle in its path."

INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

Preparing for war. This assembly line at North American Aviation's Inglewood, California, plant turned out B-25 bombers. **How does this image point to a U.S. advantage in the war?**



Defense Expenditures, 1940–1945



Note: Percentages represent the portion of the total federal budget spent on defense.

Source: Historical Statistics of the United States

Interpreting Graphs The United States prepared itself for war by boosting the defense budget, increasing technological research, and organizing industry. By the end of the war, more than 80 percent of all government spending went toward defense.

Skills Assessment How much did the U.S. government spend on national defense from 1942 to 1945?

supervised the building of new plants. It assigned raw materials to industry, including scrap iron from factories and recyclable aluminum, paper, tin, and other items from homes. Created on May 27, 1943, the **Office of War Mobilization** (OWM) coordinated all government agencies involved in the war effort. OWM director James F. Byrnes wielded such power that he was often called the assistant president.

The OWM coordinated the production and distribution of consumer goods. For example, it diverted nylon to use for making parachutes and even regulated clothing styles to save fabric. Cuffs on men's trousers and pleats in women's skirts were canceled. Martha Wood of Raleigh, North Carolina, remembers that "rationing was hard to live with, particularly silk stockings. . . . If you had a run in your stocking, you took a needle and thread and worked it back up, because there was no chance of getting any [more]."

(4)

The government also expanded its control over the economy. In order to pay for the war, the government increased by about nine times the number of Americans who had to pay income tax. The new taxes affected most middle- and lower-income

groups. The rest of the money came from borrowing, mainly through war bonds.

The sale of war bonds also helped the government deal with another major concern—keeping inflation down. When incomes remain high but few consumer items are available for people to buy, prices go up and inflation results. Selling war bonds offered a way to channel excess income, thus keeping inflation down.

As a further anti-inflation measure, the government established the Office of Price Administration (OPA), which set maximum prices on consumer goods. The OPA also began rationing scarce items in December 1941. Rationed items included gasoline, tires, coffee, sugar, meat, butter, and canned goods. At its peak the OPA oversaw 13 rationing programs. The government also tried to keep wages and prices down by freezing wages. After the cost of living rose, the government allowed wages to rise by 15 percent.

(5)

Mobilizing for a war also meant recruiting soldiers. In the summer of 1940, the United States called the National Guard to active duty and passed the **Selective Training and Service Act**. This act provided for the first peacetime draft in U.S. history. The law required all men ages 21 to 35 (later 18 to 45) to register. Local draft boards determined fitness and deferred men for family, religious, or health reasons. At the time of the draft there were just 269,023 soldiers in the U.S. Army, 160,997 in the Navy, and 28,345 in the Marines. They made up less than 5 percent of the 12 million trained soldiers the military needed to fight the war.

About two thirds of the Americans who served during World War II were draftees and the rest volunteers, including more than 300,000 women. Women enrolled in the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), Women Airforce Service

Registration certificates like this one proved that a man had made himself available to be drafted.

