Steve Yeh 6/6/13

Ms. Finneran Body Paragraph of Final Review DBQ

World War II was the reason why there is the “greatest generation”, but also the cause of countless lives lost in battle and during war atrocities. First, there were many causes that moved the U.S.’s status during WWII from “neutral” to declaring war on the Axis Powers. The most direct cause was the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941. The Japanese were enraged after the United States imposed an embargo on selling metal and oil to Japan, which was vital for them to continue their Pacific campaign. The surprise attack killed about 2,400 Americans; mostly sailors stationed at the U.S. Naval Base at Pearly Harbor, destroyed almost 200 planes and sunk or severely damaged 19 ships. Before the Pearl Harbor attack, the U.S. already “sort of” chose sides. The U.S. aided the Allies by using the cash-and-carry plan in which the U.S. sold arms to the Allies and the Allies had to carry the arms away in their own ships. In March 1941, Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act which sold or loaned war materials to “any country whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States.” Also, the American public was alarmed when France fell into the hands of Nazi Germany. Only Britain remained in the way of the German war machine. The American public believed that if Britain fell to Hitler, Hitler then may control the Atlantic Ocean as well. Britain’s heroic stance against the Nazi war machine in the Battle of Britain inspired and influenced many Americans, but they wondered how much longer they should stay out of the war. Then, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and even the isolationists gave into war fever. Congress declared war on Japan, and in turn, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. World War II affected Americans greatly. For example, over 15 million men served in the United States Military. The War Production Board helped factories shift from making consumer goods to war goods, hence the term “guns, not butter”. Rationing was enforced to save supplies for soldiers fighting. Such supplies saved included oil, rubber, and food. Citizens planted victory gardens to combat food shortages and to help the effort in saving food for the soldiers fighting overseas. Also, propaganda was used heavily, encouraging patriotism by buying Liberty Bonds, turning in scrap metal and carpooling, “or you ride with Hitler”, to save gasoline for the tanks other machines used to fight in WWII (Doc. 2). In addition, women now took the spots of men in factories working since most of the men had gone to war. Rosie the Riveter became the symbol for the female worker’s role in the war effort, creating most of the war materials for use by American soldiers. African Americans took advantage of this “united” circumstance to voice their problem. They vouched for the “Double V” campaign, victory in war and at home against discrimination. However, Japanese-Americans were unrightfully forced to move to relocation camps, most of them leaving behind their jobs, houses and businesses. The Japanese-Americans were relocated as a “matter of national security”, not for their own safety against discrimination, as said in the Supreme Court case *Korematsu v. United States*. In 1988, Congress compensated for the actions of relocating the Japanese-Americans and awarded the Japanese-Americans with $20,000. Mexican Americans who came to the United States as part of the bracero program were also discriminated against, and in some cases beaten. No matter the circumstances, though, Mexican Americans along with Japanese-Americans still served in the United States military and honored for their bravery and courage. WWII cost 30 to 60 million lives. Most of Europe was destroyed as the result of use of bombers. Houses along with factories and farms were leveled. The revelations of the Holocaust or the mass killing of Jews, Poles, Slavs and Gypsies and the Bataan Death March shocked the United States. The Nazi officials responsible were convicted during the Nuremberg Trials. When the U.S. soldiers came home back to America, the “GI Bill” was passed to help soldiers assimilate back to civilian life by assisting the payments of new houses and college tuitions. In addition, the Baby Boom starts the birthrate per 1,000 almost at 27. Inflation also occurs, but as a result of the government relieving itself of the controlling of the prices of goods during WWII. The economy booms; factory productivity increases. New technology was discovered such as the computer. Many American families move out to live in suburbs. Cars are a big part of American life now and interstate highways are built to accommodate the growing number of cars. After WWII, though the United States was immediately thrown into the Cold War, and intense rivalry of power between the United States and other democratic nations such as Britain against the Soviet Union and the other communist countries like China. After the dropping of the atom bomb on Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki which forced Japan to surrender, in 1949, the Soviet Union also developed the and tested the atom bomb leading for more tense moments over nuclear weapons and regulations. The world comes closest to full-scale during the Cuban Missiles Crisis. In a final analysis, WWII changed America from being an isolationistic nation, to a nation at war with factories churning at full speed, to becoming a global superpower.