

The Portsmouth Peace Treaty : Theodore Roosevelt's Double-Edged Diplomacy during the Russo-Japanese War

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Individual Website

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1. How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?

I have always seen East-Asia as an area of conflict, with Japan always fighting for dominance over the region. There have been many wars in the past, like the first Sino-Japanese War, but I mainly focused on the Russo-Japanese War since it involved diplomacy that prevented the conflict from escalating. Additionally, I always admired President Theodore Roosevelt for his diplomatic and communication skills, and I felt that learning more about how diplomacy and negotiations happen in the real world is important. This led me to create a project that would let me research more about President Roosevelt's diplomatic skills and analyze the factors that led to the end of the Russo-Japanese War.

2. How did you conduct your research?

Before starting to conduct my research, I made sure to conduct preliminary research in order to get a better overview of my topic. Afterwards, I made sure to gather a variety of sources, including primary sources like books (*The Treaty of Portsmouth: An adventure in American Diplomacy* by Eugene P. Trani), and newspapers. Additionally, I supplemented them with web articles when there were gaps in the information. After organizing the new information garnered from these sources, I organized them into the topics that would eventually become my website subpages, and started working.

3. How did you create your project?

The three crucial factors that make a quality website are organized content, a presentable design, and interactive elements. After planning my website, I made sure that I broke up the main topic into six subpages on the website, with relevant information on each page. For the design element,

I implemented a complementary color scheme and made sure that layouts varied from page to page. Finally, for the Interactive elements, I made sure to include easy navigation, and several clips to keep the viewer engaged. All of these combined together made my newly-created website interesting.

4. What is your historical argument?

President Roosevelt, in brokering the Portsmouth Peace Treaty, peacefully ended the Russo-Japanese War and strengthened America's diplomatic power in the global arena. However, he also validated Japanese Imperialism by awarding the Japanese numerous territorial concessions from the Russians. This emboldened the Japanese leaders, who sought to further expand the Japanese Empire by seizing control of nearby lands. Japan's expansion threatened America's supremacy, and in response to American opposition, Japan joined WWII, and bombed Pearl Harbor.

5. In what ways is your topic significant in history?

President Roosevelt's efforts to broker the Portsmouth Peace Treaty had many significant effects that have changed history. By ending this bloody war through diplomacy, Roosevelt was able to curtail the number of casualties with a peaceful end to the war and strengthen America's power in International affairs. However, this act of double-edged diplomacy led to the validation of Japanese Imperialism through territorial gains, resulting in Japan eventually joining WWII and bombing Pearl Harbor.