

## **Shinzo Abe to become first Japanese PM to visit Pearl Harbor memorial**

27/12/2016 18:10 by admin

**Washington:** Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrived in Hawaii on Monday to recognize the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor.

### **Japan's PM presents a wreath at the National Memorial Cemetery in Honolulu**

Abe landed at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam for the historic visit.

He will be the first Japanese prime minister to visit the memorial that honors sailors and Marines killed in the 1941 attack.

Japan's former leader Shigeru Yoshida went to Pearl Harbor six years after the country's World War II surrender, but that was before the USS Arizona Memorial was built. Yoshida arrived at Pearl Harbor in 1951, shortly after requesting a courtesy visit to the office of Adm. Arthur W.R. Radford, commander of the U.S. Pacific fleet. The office overlooked Pearl Harbor, offering a direct view of the attack site.

The memorial will be closed to the public Tuesday when Abe visits the historic site, joined by U.S. President Barack Obama, who is vacationing in Hawaii with his family.

The importance of the visit may be mostly symbolic for two countries that, in a remarkable transformation, have grown into close allies in the decades since they faced off in brutal conflict. At the same time, it's significant that it took more than 70 years for U.S.-Japanese relations to get to this point.

Abe won't apologize for Japan's attack when he visits, the government spokesman said earlier this month.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said that "the purpose of the upcoming visit is to pay respects for the war dead and not to offer an apology."

The visit comes six months after Obama became the first sitting American president to visit Hiroshima for victims of the U.S. atomic bombing of that city at the end of the same war.

- AP inputs