

You will also have to answer questions that compare the causes of both wars. Try planning out the following:

Compare and contrast the reasons for Germany's involvement in both world wars.

For this question, review Chapters 2 and 3. Consider the ambitions of Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany and compare and contrast these aims with those of Hitler's Germany. Refer to the first essay plan above on Fischer's ideas on this topic.

Essay question

To what extent should Germany be held responsible for causing both the First and the Second World Wars?

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This is similar to the question above, except that you also have to look at alternative arguments for both wars, e.g. collective responsibility in World War I and the role of appeasement in World War II.

Historiography

This chapter has covered different perspectives on the reasons why war broke out in Europe in 1939. Review the key arguments presented in this chapter, and research the views of the historians listed in the grid below. Then list each historian's key ideas and evidence in the second column of the grid. (Draw out the grid separately if there is not enough room here.)

CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORIANS' VIEWPOINTS	
Contemporary / Historian	Summary of Key Ideas / Evidence
Winston Churchill	
A.J.P. Taylor	
Stephen Lee	
James Sheehan	
Richard Overy	
Fritz Fischer	
Patrick Buchanan	

Examiner's hint

It is good to show knowledge of historical debate in your essay and to bring in direct reference to historians.

However, these techniques alone will not get you a high grade! Avoid making your essay just a discussion about historians' views and avoid using historians' comments randomly. Historians' views or quotes should be used to support the evidence and arguments that you present as part of the argument in your essay.

THE CAUSES OF WORLD WAR II IN THE PACIFIC

On 7 December 1941, Japan attacked an American naval base, Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii. In response, the USA declared war on Japan:

Yesterday, December 7th 1941 – a date that will live in infamy – the United States of America was attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan. The United States was at peace with that nation... No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

Roosevelt's address to the nation, 8 December 1941



As you read through this chapter, consider the following essay question:

To what extent was Japan responsible for the Pacific War?

Japan's responsibility for war in the Pacific: the historical debate

World War II ended up being two wars: the war in Europe and the war in Asia. In the previous chapter, we discussed Hitler's responsibility for causing the war in Europe and we will now consider Japan's role in causing the war in the Pacific.

Some historians, such as David Bergamini (*Japan's Imperial Conspiracy*, 1971), have argued that Japan had planned a war from the early 1930s, and the Emperor had been very much involved. Indeed, he argues that although Japan appeared willing to negotiate for peace, this was cynically part of its plan to keep the enemy off-guard. Many historians, therefore, suggest Japan planned the war and that it was a clear aggressor whose aim was to conquer Asia.

Other historians, however, suggest that Japan was pursuing a more traditional European-style imperialist policy in Asia, while others emphasize the 'co-prosperity sphere' and Japan's attempts to achieve their aims through diplomacy. This latter view suggests that Japan's actions led to war, not because it had planned for conflict, but as a result of taking too many risks. Initially, gambles paid off, so Japan continued to take them. There is a clear similarity here to the view that Hitler was a gambler who just could not stop. In this view, Japan had attempted to avoid a war with both Britain and the USA, but when negotiations broke down Japan 'stumbled' into war.

The counter-argument to Japanese responsibility can be seen in the Japanese declaration of war, which stated that the USA was to blame for the war in the Pacific. Some historians support a line of argument that suggests that Japan's aim was to 'liberate' Asia from Western domination. Some even compare Japan's actions to creating a sphere of influence not dissimilar to the USA's dominance of South America. Both argue that Japan had been continually provoked and mistreated by the West, and in particular the USA. Thus, Japan ultimately fought a *defensive* war that was triggered by American embargoes; Japan had to act when it did or it would be too late.

Unlike Hitler's Germany, the lack of a clear leader/leadership perhaps makes it more difficult for historians and students to decide on whether or not Japan had intended to cause the Pacific War. Although the head of state was Emperor Hirohito, he was not held



▲ Flag of Imperial Japan.

responsible by the Allies in 1945 for causing the war. We will discuss his role at the end of this chapter.

A photo taken after Japanese bombing of Shanghai, 1937.



Timeline of events prior to the Pacific War – 1853–1941

- 1853** Commodore Perry first visits Japan
- 1902** Anglo-Japanese Alliance
- 1904** Russo-Japanese War breaks out
- 1915** The 'Twenty-One Demands' made on China
- 1919** Versailles Treaty confirms Japan's war gains
- 1921** Japan participates in the Washington Conference
- 1926** Hirohito becomes Emperor
- 1931** Kwantung Army invades Manchuria
- 1932** Proclamation of 'independent' Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo in Manchuria. Japanese and Chinese troops skirmish near Shanghai
- 1933** Tangku Truce establishes ceasefire line in north China. Japan withdraws from the League of Nations
- 1934** Japan abrogates the Washington Naval Treaty
- 1936** Japan rejects even the principle of nine-power consultation on China issues. Japanese government decides on fundamental objectives: maintenance of Japan's position on the Asian continent; resistance to Soviet ambitions; expansion into the South Seas. Japan enters into Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany
- 1937** **Jun** Konoé Fumimaro becomes Prime Minister
Jul Marco Polo bridge incident near Beijing. Beijing conquered by Japan in July
Aug Japan captures Shanghai. Japanese drive Chinese nationalist troops from north China
- 1937** **Sep** Konoé calls for 'spiritual mobilization' for a long war against China
Dec Japanese conquest of Nanjing results in perhaps 200,000 dead (the 'rape of Nanjing')
- 1939** **Jun** Japanese Army blockades the British concession in Tientsin. USA notifies Japan that it will cancel the 1911 Treaty of Commerce and Navigation
- 1940** **Mar** Japan sets up a puppet government in Nanjing. Japan demands that Britain and France stop providing aid to China.
Jul–Sep Burma Road closed
Sep Tripartite German–Italian–Japanese Axis alliance signed in Berlin; in response, Churchill reopens the Burma Road. France occupies northern Indochina. USA embargoes export of scrap iron
- 1941** **Mar** Japan signs non-aggression treaty with Soviet Union
Jun Hitler attacks the Soviet Union
Jul Japan occupies southern Indochina. USA freezes Japanese assets
Dec Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, and the south-western Asia/Pacific region

As with Germany in Europe in the 1930s, Japanese aggression has been seen by many historians as the main cause of war in the Pacific. To analyze this line of argument, we need to look at the development and actions of Japanese foreign policy in the longer term.

Japan and the long-term causes of World War II in the Pacific

Background: Japanese relations with the West

From the mid 17th century Japan had been isolated from the outside world, a deliberate policy of Japan's rulers – the Shoguns – in response to the threat to their civilization posed by Christianity. The only exception was Dutch traders, but their activities were also severely restricted. For 200 years, the Japanese remained separate. Politically, economically and socially, Japan functioned as a **feudal** state until the arrival of the American, Commodore Matthew Perry, in 1853. He arrived from America determined to negotiate with the Japanese to open up to American requests for trade and refuelling stops.

Due to their isolationist mindset, the Japanese were duly awed by the impressive might of Perry's American gunboats. The government tried to buy time, and Perry agreed to return in one year – with more gunboats. Japan responded realistically; they could not take on the technologically advanced West, and attempting to do so would be suicide. Their much bigger neighbour, China, had attempted to resist Britain in the Opium Wars in the 19th century and had suffered a series of humiliating and unequal treaties. The Treaty of Kanagawa (1854), therefore, gave the USA what it had wanted, but more significantly it 'opened up' Japan to the outside world.

The ruling Shoguns could not recover from their inability to resist American force, and in 1867 power was officially handed back to the Japanese Emperor. From 1868 he became known as the Meiji or 'enlightened' Emperor, and his government set about modernizing Japan. In the ensuing period of reform, Japan became a limited democracy and stripped away its feudal system, including the rights of the ancient samurai classes. Japan rapidly industrialized and sent its young off to be educated abroad. A key reform was of its military, which was a priority for the new government. A new, modernized army was developed with the introduction of conscription in 1872 and the adoption of German military principles and methods. The Japanese followed the British in their construction of a new navy.

Japan proved the effectiveness of its modernization programme in victory over China in 1894–95. The results of their victory had far-reaching consequences. Japan became the first non-European nation to be considered by the West as a world power. It was also now an empire, dominating Korea. Imperial growth fostered the idea that an expansionist foreign policy could be successful if it was supported by a strong military. Only generals and admirals could be ministers for the army and navy from 1900, and this meant that the government had a military influence right from the beginning of the 20th century.

Japan's second victory was over Russia, which competed with Japanese interests in Manchuria. By the late 1890s, it was clear to Japan that Russia also intended to take over Korea. The Japanese needed a European ally to counter the Russian threat to their own foreign policy ambitions. As the British were at this time coming out of their own isolation, they were willing to consider an alliance with Japan, as this would suit their own policy of containing Russia. Britain also had already been heavily involved in the development of the Japanese Navy. In January 1902, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed – it agreed that if either power was attacked by two other states, the other signatory would come to their ally's assistance; if only one power attacked a signatory, the other would remain neutral.

i Sino-Japanese War (1894–95)

With a newly modernized army modelled on the Prussian military, and a new navy modelled on the British Royal Navy, Japan went to war with China in 1894. The Chinese were defeated, and forced to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. China had to recognize that Korea was an independent kingdom and cede Taiwan, the Pescadores and Liao-tung peninsula. However, the Russians, with the support of France and Germany, advised the Japanese to withdraw from Liao-tung, as the Russians wanted the ice-free harbour of Port Arthur. The main results of this war were the emergence of Japan as the key Asian power, the further collapse of China under the influence of the West and the frustration of Japan at having to relinquish territory to a Western power.

The alliance gave Japan a much stronger position in its rivalry with Russia. Russia was unimpressed with Japan's recent victory in China, and with her new alliance; in February 1904 both Russian and Japanese forces entered Korea. Admiral Togo Heichiro destroyed the Russian fleet in the Tsushima Strait on 27 May 1905, and only 6,000 of 18,000 Russian sailors survived for just 116 Japanese sailors killed. The Russians were also convincingly defeated on the land, and they surrendered in March 1905.

The results of the war were far-reaching, as they encouraged Japanese nationalism and expansionism and triggered a revolution in Russia. The Russians were forced by the Treaty of Portsmouth to recognize Japan's 'paramount' political, military and economic interests in Korea. The indemnity demanded by the Japanese was refused by the Russians. The Russians simply refused to pay the Japanese for the cost of the war, even though this was a usual component of a treaty concluding a war. The Japanese had no way of enforcing payment from the Russians. In 1910, Japan made further gains by formally annexing Korea. In its actions, Japan had inspired the respect of the West, and the admiration of other Asian nations.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Review question

What characteristics did the new state of Japan show by 1905?

Japan and World War I

During the early 20th century, we can see a consistency in Japan's attempts to expand its influence and make territorial gains in the region, and this ambition would increasingly bring Japan into conflict with the Western powers. World War I gave Japan new opportunities to expand. Japan saw the potential benefit of joining the war on the entente side, and demanded German colonial possessions in China. This condition, they argued, was necessary to keep the peace in Asia. When the Germans ignored their demands, Japan declared war on them. In addition, while the Europeans were caught up in total war in Europe, Japan seized the initiative by making further gains in China. The government issued China with 'Twenty-One Demands' in January 1915. These demands would have given Japan the most influential political and economic position in China. International reaction to the demands was hostile. The USA was the most critical, and warned Japan that it would not tolerate any agreement that threatened US interests in the area. US–Japanese relations turned very sour.

After the USA joined the war in 1917, the Americans were determined that the Japanese would not gain more influence in China. The Japanese agreed to the Lansing–Ishii Agreement, which meant the gains they had made up to 1917 were recognized by the Americans, and assurances were given that no further expansion would be pursued at this time. The Chinese felt betrayed by America, which had been overtly sympathetic to their plight.

Japan again saw an opportunity to expand when the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in October 1917. The Bolsheviks sued for a separate peace with Germany. Their former allies then launched a foreign invading force to support White forces (counter-revolutionary troops) in the ensuing civil war. It was agreed with the USA that Japan would send 7,500 troops to assist the White forces (which included the USA, Britain and France) in Siberia. However, Japan instead sent 70,000 men. The Bolshevik forces defeated the White generals, but although the USA, France and Britain withdrew their men in 1920, the Japanese stayed on. Nevertheless, they too were ultimately defeated, and had to withdraw in 1922. The Siberian expedition had failed, and was seen as a humiliation at home.

Japan and Versailles: a 'mutilated victory'

During the Versailles meetings, Japan, a victorious power, aimed to increase its gains, and demanded an annexation of the German Pacific territories and the inclusion of a racial equality clause in the Charter of the League of Nations (see Chapter 4). The USA, however, was sympathetic to the Chinese delegates' requests for the reversal of gains made by Japan during World War I. Nevertheless, the German concessions on Shandong remained in Japanese hands, which infuriated the Chinese and led to the demonstrations that became known as the May Fourth Movement.

Even though Japan felt that it had not gained what it deserved from Versailles, it did maintain its position in Shandong and it gained some of Germany's former colonies in the Pacific. Japan had also benefited economically from World War I: the lack of foreign trade resulted in Japan becoming more self-sufficient, and without the competition of the other powers in the region its economy boomed.

Yet Japan's influence over China was still causing concern to both the USA and Britain. In 1921, the Americans initiated the Washington Conference primarily to discuss tensions in China (see Chapter 6). As well as the USA, Britain, China and Japan, there were representatives from France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Portugal. As we have seen, three key agreements were signed: the Four Power Pact ended the alliance between Britain and Japan, and the Five Power Naval Treaty set the following ratios between each power's capital ship tonnage – 5:5:3:1.67:1.67 (USA: Britain: Japan: France: Italy). The final agreement was the Nine Power Pact, in which the signatories agreed to respect China's sovereignty. Both the Four Power and the Five Power agreements actually supported Japanese expansion in the region, the first by giving Japan security from Western attack, and the second by limiting US expansion – Japan could not afford to expand any more than the treaty allowed for, while the US could have expanded, but was prevented from doing so.

The tension between the USA and Japan was eased a little by the Washington agreements. In the 1920s, relations were relatively cordial, but this was due to the more 'peaceful' outlook of the liberal government in Japan, a situation that was to be short-lived.

The liberal 1920s: a peaceful Japan?

World War I had made Japan the industrial centre of the East. However, the profits from the war were not invested well, and much was spent on funding various Chinese warlords who did not pay back their debts. Japan's foreign debt therefore remained high. The crisis that hit the banking system led to the printing of extra money, which then led to a steep rise in the cost of living. In 1918, there were riots over rice availability in many cities. The riches from war production had stayed in the hands of the wealthy.

In the 1920s, Japan openly embraced Western culture; architecture, music, fashion and sport all reflected an enthusiasm for Western style. Hirohito became Emperor in 1926. His title was *Showa* ('Bright Peace'), and there was some degree of stability, with the government of Prime Minister Hara lasting from 1918 to 1921. This government introduced social and economic reforms, and the military was contained mainly due to a strong feeling of anti-militarism in the early 1920s. The army was also divided over foreign policy, but the military showed its continued power when it sent more troops to Siberia after the USA pulled out. Japan's government seemed to show its 'peaceful' intentions when Hara ensured that Japanese forces withdrew by 1922. Indeed, Hara's government led Japan into the League of Nations, and its membership of the Council meant that it was accepted as a leading power. But the regime fell into economic difficulties as the wartime boom ended in 1920. Fear of an increasingly strong left-wing movement grew when the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) was founded in 1920. The communists attempted to exert control

over the trade unions, and in response the government clamped down on all 'communist suspects'.

Despite the power of the left, the undercurrent of right-wing nationalism remained, and surfaced in November 1921 when Hara was assassinated by a right-wing extremist. Korekiyo Takahashi took over. He failed to redress the economic crisis, and resigned in June 1922. After Korekiyo, until 1924, Japan was led by three ineffective governments. Kato Tomosaburo's government (1924–26) was built on constitutional principles, and Kato extended the **franchise** to all men over 25. Kato's attempts to cut costs meant that he came into conflict with the army as he took 2,000 officers off active duty. But Kato was not tolerant towards the left wing in Japan either. The Peace Preservation Law of 1925 meant that those with leftwing agendas could be imprisoned. Kato pursued a conciliatory policy with China, and did not attempt to take advantage of the internal chaos there, a policy with which the army did not agree.

Kato died in 1926 and was replaced by Wakatsuki Reijiro. He too had supported the Foreign Minister's 'Shidehura's policy' of cooperative relations with China. His attempts to address another economic crisis failed, and he was forced to resign a year later. Wakatsuki was replaced by General Tanaka Giichi and, under pressure from the army, a new more aggressive policy towards China was adopted. The Chinese nationalists under Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) had been quite successful in their campaign to unify China by defeating the warlords. This worried the Japanese, as there might be a threat to their interests in Manchuria. The Kwantung Army attempted to interfere in Chinese politics by assassinating their former Chinese ally in the area. They had acted without permission from the government. Tanaka attempted to get the General Staff to punish the offending members of the Kwantung Army, but they refused. It was clear that the army could ignore the government. Liberal parliamentary democracy was in decline, and the military was on the rise.

Osachi Hamaguchi became the new Prime Minister in 1929, but soon was caught up in the global economic disaster of the Great Depression. The demand for silk collapsed – this was Japan's key export. Millions became unemployed. The Prime Minister attempted to cut spending by limiting naval expansion, and cutting military salaries by 10 per cent. The military severely criticized the government, and in November 1930 another right-winger shot Hamaguchi, who died from his injuries in April 1931. Hamaguchi's death heralded Japan's descent into the 'dark valley' of the 1930s.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Review activity

What impact did the following have on political developments in Japan?

- Economic downturns
- Fear of communism
- Strength of the Japanese Army.

Japan and the short-term causes of the Pacific War: 'the dark valley'

As we have discussed in this chapter, Japan had a history of strong nationalism, which had reaped rewards during the Meiji period. The more liberal era during the 1920s was short-lived, as the army reasserted itself in the 1930s. As the military gained more and more influence, so Japan became increasingly aggressive. The increasing power of the military led Japan down the road to war. The attack on Manchuria in 1931 resulted from a plot devised by the Kwantung Army, not the Japanese government. Such unilateral action by the

military alarmed the West, particularly the USA. Within Japan itself, the move was popular. The creation of Manchukuo had not been part of government policy, but it was accepted after the military success there. The army did not stop in Manchuria, but went on to Jehol. (Jehol was located to the north of the Great Wall, west of Manchuria and east of Mongolia.) Although the Western response to Japan's attack on Manchuria was cautious, relations between Japan and the Western democracies deteriorated in the 1930s for the following main reasons:

- The West was alarmed by the bombing of Shanghai in 1932
- In 1933, Japan left the League of Nations after the Council accepted the Lytton Report
- In 1934, Japan, unhappy at having to have an inferior navy to that of the USA, pulled out of the Washington Naval Treaty and refused to attend another conference.

Sino-Japanese War: no retreat

In May 1933, Japan signed a truce with Chinese nationalists, which led to relative peace until 1937. The military, however, were pressuring for expansion in northern China, and in 1936 a failed attempt at a coup in Tokyo nevertheless led indirectly to an increase in the power of the military. The failed military coup suggested that the government was not in control of its military and that maybe the military needed more involvement in national security.

The trigger for the war between Japan and China in 1937 was a clash between Japanese and Chinese forces at the Marco Polo bridge in Beijing. The Japanese government referred to the fighting as the 'China Incident', and many in the government suggested negotiating. Yet nationalism was running too high on both sides, and the fighting spread.

The war in China was to lead directly to the Pacific War. The Japanese had entered the war with no clear plan of how to end it, and a war on this scale required vast quantities of men and resources. It would be in the quest to acquire raw materials that the conflict with the USA was to intensify.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Research activity



Japanese forces captured Shanghai in November 1937. They then moved up the Yangtze River and lay siege to Nanjing, the Chinese nationalists' capital. The Japanese finally took Nanjing in December, and then perpetrated what has become known as the 'Rape of Nanjing' or the 'Nanjing Massacre'. In pairs or small groups, research what happened in Nanjing.

Marco Polo incident

On the night of 7/8 July 1937, Chinese soldiers, for reasons that remain unclear, fired at Japanese infantry soldiers on manoeuvres near the Marco Polo bridge, west of Beijing. This incident was used by the Japanese as an excuse to broaden their attack on mainland China, and within a few days they had ordered air, land and naval units into action against the Chinese. Their aim was to capture Beijing. Some historians view this incident in 1937 as the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War.

Japanese soldiers prepare civilians for execution during the 'Rape of Nanjing'.

To access worksheet 7.1 on the Rape of Nanjing, please visit www.pearsonbacconline.com and follow the on-screen instructions.

With the tension increasing in Europe, Britain and France did not want to become enmeshed in a conflict in Asia in 1937. America was also unwilling to get involved. Indeed, the USA only verbally condemned Japan's aggression, and even when at the end of 1937 Japanese forces sank the American warship USS *Panay* during their attack on Nanjing, the Americans accepted a Japanese apology and compensation. (So too did the British when HMS *Ladybird* was attacked.) Nevertheless, the USA began to take a harder line in 1938, and in December started to give aid to China. In July 1939, the Americans cancelled the Commerce and Navigation Treaty with Japan.

From 1937, the war with China led to a complete takeover of the Japanese government by the military powers. Prince Konoe Fumimaro, Prime Minister from June 1937 to January 1939, had announced in November 1938 that Japan was aiming to create a 'New Order' in East Asia – 'cooperation' between China, Manchukuo and Japan. This idea developed into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which was based on the 'one state leading a group of states' model created by the Americans in Latin America. W.G. Beasley suggests that at a Japanese conference of ministers and military leaders in July 1940, it was agreed that Japan should 'establish herself' in Indochina, Thailand, Burma, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. (As with the meeting recorded by Hossbach (see p.118), historians argue as to whether this meeting provides evidence of Japanese war planning.)

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Review questions

- 1 To what extent was Japan pursuing nationalist and imperialist goals?
- 2 How far was militarism the driving force in Japan's foreign policy by 1940?

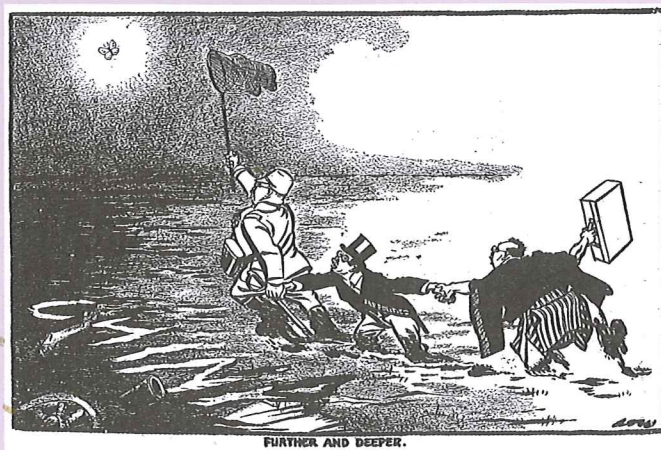
Document analysis

Document A

The army had prepared carefully for war against the Soviet Union, but had done no planning worthy of the name for a general war with China. Army leaders could not conceive of the Chinese putting up a good fight... How could China be brought to its knees? That was the major problem. Unable to get a negotiated settlement on favourable terms or win a final military success, Japanese leaders sought victory by expanding the conflict.

From Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, 1968

Document B



Question

How far does Document A support the views expressed in Document B?

'Further and deeper', a cartoon by David Low in the *Evening Standard*, London, 19 January 1938.

The immediate cause of the war

In June 1940, with Britain undermined by Hitler's swift victory over France, the Japanese forced the closure of the Burma Road, which was an important supply route for the Chinese. The Americans stepped up their attempts to stop Japan's war in China in September 1940, by banning the export of scrap iron to Japan. This measure had a severe impact on an already fragile economy. Economic growth in Japan in 1930 was 0.5 per cent and unemployment by 1934 was 6.8 per cent. Japan had to import the food and raw materials it needed to sustain its occupation of Chinese territories, e.g. oil and steel. It was heavily dependent on its trade with the USA for these goods.

In September, the Japanese signed the Tripartite Pact (see Interesting Facts box). In November, the Americans gave the Chinese nationalist leader, Jiang Jieshi, a massive loan to encourage and strengthen their ability to resist Japan. Within Japan, the Imperial Rule Assistance Association replaced political parties in 1940, and in October 1941 Prime Minister Konoe was replaced by General Hideki Tojo.

Japan's military was now divided over which specific territory should be targeted next – the USSR or the colonial territories of the Western powers in South-East Asia. When Nazi Germany invaded Russia in July 1941, Japan made its decision and attacked south, occupying southern Indochina. The USA, Britain and the Netherlands responded by imposing a total trade embargo. Here was a crisis for Japan – there was the danger that the country would run out of oil, and this would mean it could not continue to fight in China.

At this point the Japanese appeared willing to negotiate, but the American demand for Japan to withdraw from China was unacceptable to them. Japan decided it had to get the resources it needed by force.

Franklin D. Roosevelt immediately 'froze' all Japanese financial assets in the United States and declared a total embargo on trade of any kind with Japan... [Of] absolutely vital consequence was the fact that Japan imported more than 80 percent of its oil from the United States... To secure oil they would either have to accept American terms, which, in view of the sacrifices the Japanese people had borne to conquer China might well provoke revolution, or conquer Indonesian oil, which meant all-out war against the west.

From Robert Goldston, *The Road Between the Wars, 1918–1941*, 1978

On 2 December 1941, a Japanese fleet began its journey to Hawaii. Without warning, just before 8.00am on Sunday 7 December, Japan unleashed a two-hour attack on the key American Pacific naval base at Pearl Harbor. Japanese planes sank or disabled 19 ships, 150 planes were destroyed and 2,400 Americans died. Simultaneous attacks were made on the Philippines, Guam, Midway Island, Hong Kong and the Malay Peninsula. In response, the USA declared war on Japan the following day.

What was the impact of Japan's relationship with Germany?

Japan and Germany had some common interests, particularly in perceiving the USSR as an enemy, which led to the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936. However, the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 pushed Japan into real isolation. In addition, the pact was signed in August 1939, when the Japanese were clashing with Soviet forces near Manchuria.

Motivated by the staggering success of the German campaign in Europe (see next chapter), the Japanese signed the Tripartite Pact in September 1940 with Germany and Italy, which was primarily designed to deter the USA from becoming more involved in the wars in

Tripartite Pact

Also called the Three-Power Pact and the Axis Pact, it was signed by Germany, Italy and Japan in Berlin on 27 September 1940. The pact followed on from the Anti-Comintern Pact, and was intended to re-establish good relations between Japan and Germany following the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939. The signatories agreed to establish a 'new order' and to promote mutual prosperity for the next ten years. They recognized each other's spheres of influence and agreed to come to the assistance of one another if attacked.

To access worksheet 7.2 on the beginning of the Pacific War, please visit www.pearsonbacconline.com and follow the on-screen instructions.