

CONFLICT IN THE PACIFIC 1937-1951

by Ken Webb

Here it is: the factual detail, historiography, revision exercises and advice on how to construct written responses on CONFLICT IN THE PACIFIC 1937-1951



eBook

*"Everything you wanted to know about CONFLICT IN THE PACIFIC 1937-1951
but were afraid to ask."*

CONFLICT IN THE PACIFIC 1937-1951

by Ken Webb M.A. (Oxon), C.Ed

*“Everything you wanted to know about
‘Conflict in the Pacific 1937-1951’,
but were afraid to ask.”*

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1st Edition

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About the author

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Author's note

The purpose of this book – as with all titles in the “*Everything you wanted to know about... but were afraid to ask*” series – is to make life easy for students and teachers working their way through the ‘Peace and Conflict’ topic: *Conflict in the Pacific 1937-1941*. It is not intended to be the final word on *Conflict in the Pacific 1937-1951*; nothing beats wide-reading and going back to the primary sources!

However, neither teachers nor students always have the time for such luxuries. Teachers have several other classes to worry about, not to mention a growing multitude of administrative and bureaucratic tasks to fulfill! Students have other subjects to study, and may also be burdened with a series of major works. Thus, “*Everything you want to know...*” steps in to make life easy.

The principal aims of this book are to:

- provide the essential factual detail needed to understand the topic;
- provide references to written and visual sources;
- provide an introduction to the essence of historiographical debate;
- provide ideas for approaching the types of questions that might appear when examined on Conflict in the Pacific 1937-1951.

Rationale for the structure of this book

“*Conflict in the Pacific 1937-1951*” is one of six topics in the ‘Peace and Conflict’ section of the Modern History syllabus.

The syllabus divides the topic as follows:

- Survey: Growth of Pacific tensions
- Focus of study:
 - The outbreak and course of the Pacific War
 - Civilians at war
 - End of the conflict

These broad headings have been used to structure the book and have been broken down into sections closely based on the layout of the syllabus to make the topic more accessible to students. The first topic in “The outbreak and course of the Pacific War” section has been divided into “Strategic reasons for the bombing of Pearl Harbour” (Chapter 4) and “The US response” (Chapter 5). The last topic in the “Civilians at War” section, has been divided into “The Home Front in Japan” (Chapter 11) and “The Home Front in Australia” (Chapter 12). Additional sections have been included on approaching the types of questions that could be set on this topic in the HSC examination.

Think as historians

Key problems historians have in studying *Conflict in the Pacific 1937-1941* – or indeed any major historical issue – are that we know what happened. Hindsight allows us to look back and isolate those developments which we can now see, from our current perspective, as the key issues. We can isolate the mistakes, criticise the leaders of the time and ask in incredulous tones:

- How could Japan possibly believe it could defeat the United States?
- Why did Japan behave the way it did in areas that it occupied during the war?
- Why were allied governments willing to treat Japan so leniently after the war?

However, when one is living in the middle of events there is no hindsight.

Chapter One

Economic and political issues in the Pacific by 1937

The Pacific-East Asia region before 1937

Overview

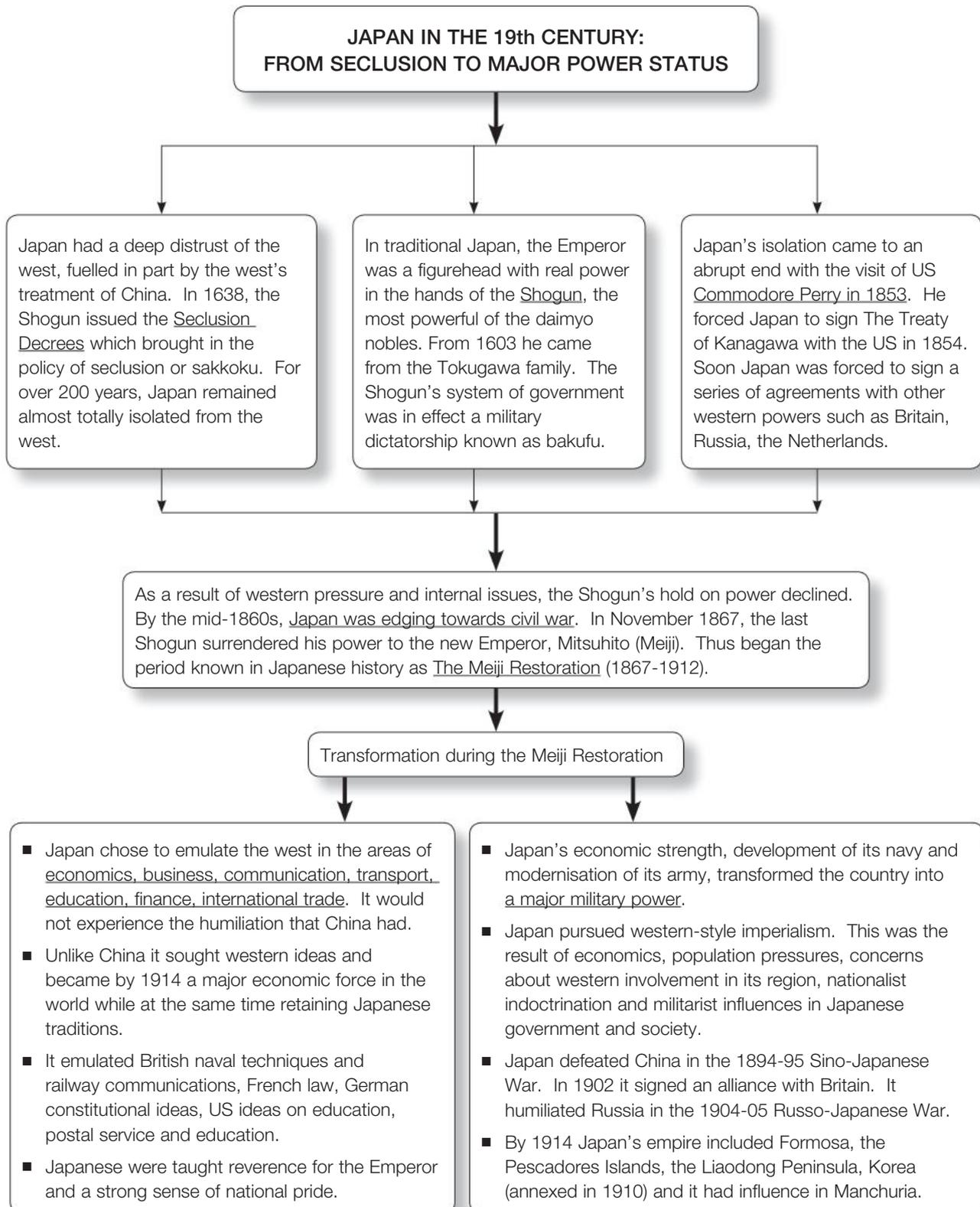
The Pacific and East Asia region of the early 1930s would have been totally incomprehensible to an observer from a century before. In the course of a century, the region had undergone a total transformation.

- Throughout the 19th century, China had been a weak nation, easily pressured by outside powers to do their bidding:
 - it was ruled by the corrupt, inefficient and backward Ch'ing dynasty;
 - by the 1930s, despite divisions between nationalist and communists, and pressure from Japan, it was stronger and more united than it had been for many years.
- Japan had evolved into a major world power:
 - in the early 19th century it was isolated and shunned western contact;
 - the arrival of US Commodore Perry in 1853 led to a series of fundamental changes in Japanese economic, social and political life;
 - by the early 1930s, the country had been transformed into a major economic, military and imperial power.
- The United States had become a significant presence in the region:
 - throughout most of the 19th century, the US was more concerned with the development of its continental land mass and in the 1860s had been torn apart by its bloody civil war;
 - by the early 1930s, the US was the world's number one economic power, with a formidable navy and a major presence in the region.
- Russia/ Soviet Union had undergone enormous upheavals in the previous hundred years but was again becoming a significant presence in the region:
 - defeat in two major wars, revolution and civil war had greatly weakened the nation that the revolutionary Bolsheviks now controlled;
 - Stalin's modernisation program had strengthened the Soviet Union and it was now beginning to eye the Far East as it had under the tsars.
- Though still a great imperial power, Britain's position was changing:
 - By the end of the 19th century Britain's empire covered almost a quarter of the globe and "Britannia ruled the waves";
 - By the mid-1930s, Britain had become a second-rate power, only slowly moving out of depression and far too extended with imperial commitments.
- Other European powers were still clinging to their imperial possession:
 - these powers included France (Indochina), the Netherlands (the East Indies) and Portugal (Macau).

Japan: The background to the 1930s

The nation which had changed most in the East Asia-Pacific region was Japan. In a very short time, it had been transformed from an isolated backwater to one of the world's leading powers. Figure 1.1 summarises this development.

Figure 1.1 The transformation of Japan



Japan and World War I

Japan emerged from World War I far stronger than it had entered it. Japan entered the war on the allied side against Germany on 23 August 1914.¹

- Japan promptly occupied the German concessions on the Chinese mainland.
- It also took possession of Germany's colonies in the north Pacific Ocean. These included the Marianas, the Caroline and Marshall Islands.

In 1915, Japanese Prime Minister Okuma Shigenobu presented China with a series of "Twenty-One Demands". China had little choice but to accept these humiliating demands. They gave Japan great leverage over China.

- Japan's actions aroused opposition around the world, especially in the United States as this threatened the US "Open Door" policy.²
- When the US entered the war in April 1917, US-Japanese relations improved with the Lansing-Ishii Agreement.
 - The "Open Door" policy was reaffirmed and "equal opportunity for commerce and industry in China" was to be granted for all nations.

The Bolshevik Party seized power in Russia in November 1917. By mid-1918, Russia was in a state of civil war. Allied powers intervened on the side of the Bolsheviks' enemies, "the Whites". Japan joined this intervention. Japanese troops did not leave Siberia until 1922.

At the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, Japan received Germany's former colonies as 'mandates'.

- The territories were to be under Japanese control as a means of preparing them for future self-rule.
- Japan had no intention of giving up these former German colonies.
- The refusal of western powers to insert a 'racial equality' clause in the peace agreements angered many in Japan who perceived this action as a form of anti-Asian racism.³

Japan emerged from the war not only territorially stronger but economically stronger. Japanese industry experienced great production increases during the war, and Japan was able to supplant western nations supplying Asian markets as those nations were preoccupied fighting the war in Europe.

- Between 1914 and 1918, Japanese textile exports increased 185%.
- Income from its merchant marine increased tenfold.

Japan in the 1920s to 1931

During the 1920s, there was a struggle inside Japan between those who wanted the country to develop western-style liberal political institutions, and those who sought a more right-wing, nationalist style of government:

- moderate leaders like Prime Minister Minseito and Foreign Minister Shidehara were opposed by extreme nationalist/ patriotic/ militarist groups such as the Aikokusha;

1 Some Japanese vessels would provide protection for ANZAC troops that headed to Egypt in late 1914.

2 See below.

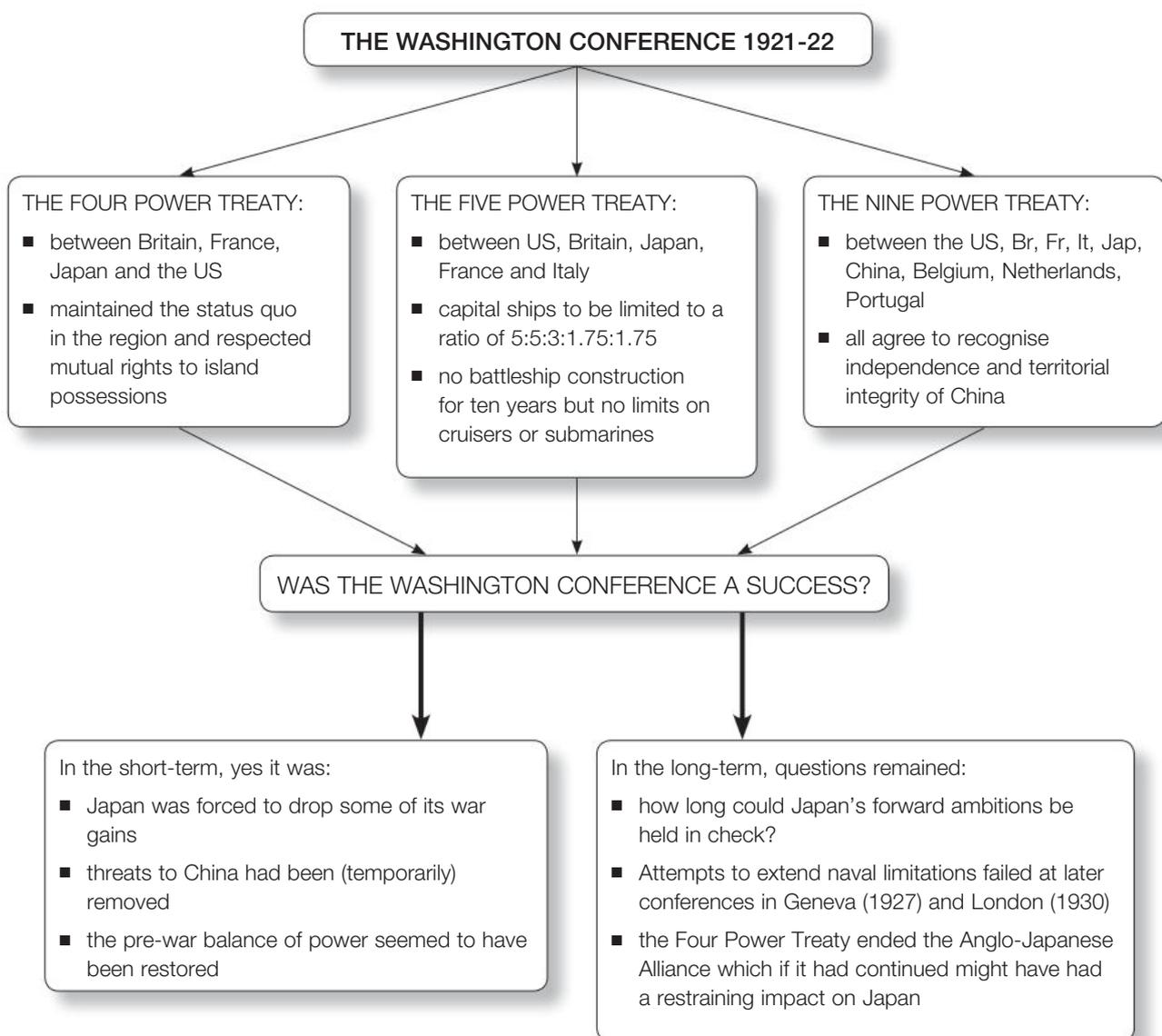
3 Australian Prime Minister, Billy Hughes, was strongly opposed to the measure as he feared it would threaten his country's "White Australia Policy".

- Japanese politics was corrupt in the 1920s with many politicians having close links to powerful business corporations called Zaibatsu; ⁴
- politics became very violent and several political figures were assassinated such as Prime Minister Hara in November 1921, shot by a 'patriot' for trying to weaken the military administrations in Formosa and Manchuria.

Japanese foreign policy was also to veer between a moderate internationalist style and a more aggressive, nationalist/ militarist approach:

- From November 1921 to February 1922, a major naval conference was held in Washington to discuss arms limitation and Pacific/ Far Eastern issues. Its main results are summarised in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Main results of the Washington Conference



⁴ For example, Shidehara's wife had close links to Mitsubishi.

- Foreign Minister Shidehara attempted to steer Japan along a moderate path. His ‘Shidehara Policy’ sought to show respect for China’s territorial integrity and he refused to intervene in China’s internal conflicts;
- other political figures, such as Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi were prepared to send troops into China, and in 1928 Japanese forces in Manchuria attacked that region’s leader, Chang Tso-Lin.

The 1930s saw the failure of liberalism in Japan and the ascendancy of nationalist militarists that were to take the country through its “Dark Valley” of the 1930s towards World War II. Japanese ‘patriots’ *“believed that the solution for a weak, political system run by corrupt, squabbling politicians was a loyal, militarist regime guided by the high-minded principles of nationalism, obedience and honour.”*⁵

The Japanese invasion of Manchuria: 1931

The growing influence of nationalist and militarist elements in Japanese politics was occurring against the background of the worldwide economic depression that developed following the Wall St Crash of 1929. Japan’s economy was heavily reliant on its export trade. As the depression deepened, silk exports collapsed, workers and particularly farmers suffered enormously.

- As the depression deepened, the European powers prevented Japanese imports entering their colonies in an attempt to protect their own economies back home. This in effect turned their colonial possessions into anti-Japanese trading blocks.
- These actions spurred some Japanese thinkers to develop the idea of “Asia for the Asians”. This would grow into the idea of the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” (see Chapter 2).

As a result of the economic depression and the growth of nationalist thinking at home, Japan’s attention turned to Manchuria. Manchuria had long been eyed by Japan as a source of raw materials, a market and a place to send its surplus population. The Japanese “Kwangtung” army in Manchuria feared an ineffective government at home would not stand up to China.⁶ It decided to take matters into its own hands.

- On 19 September 1931, an explosion was staged on the Manchurian railway. The Japanese authorities in Manchuria blamed Chinese troops for this “act of terrorism” but it had been concocted by the Japanese to justify intervention.
- Soon the city of Mukden was taken by Japanese forces.
- The Wakatsuki government in Tokyo had no choice but to back the army when presented with this *fait accompli*. The actions of the ‘patriotic’ army in Manchuria were viewed favourably at home.

Japanese troops quickly consolidated their position and by November the whole of Manchuria was under Japanese control. By early January 1932, Japanese troops had reached the Great Wall. Shanghai was attacked. In 1933, the province of Jehol was brought under Japanese control.

- During 1932, Manchuria became the independent state of Manchukuo under the leadership of the former Chinese Emperor, Pu Yi.

⁵ Webb, K, *International Relations Between the Wars*, McGraw-Hill, Roseville, 1992, p 56

⁶ Manchuria was nominally part of China.

- 'Independent' Manchukuo was recognised only by Japan and its puppet status was lost on no one.

A wave of patriotism swept across Japan. *“World disapproval, symbolised by the hardening of the attitude of the League of Nations, merely cemented instinctive patriotic feeling.”*⁷ Japanese politics moved to the right as extremist groups gained greater influence. In May 1932, Prime Minister Inukai was assassinated by army officers. They claimed to be acting from patriotic motives and received only light sentences.

The power struggle for domination of the Pacific region was on in earnest. Power politics had now replaced conciliation in international affairs and it was clear that the League of Nations – established after WWI to ensure peace – had totally failed.

Exercise 1.1 Place the following events in the correct chronological order

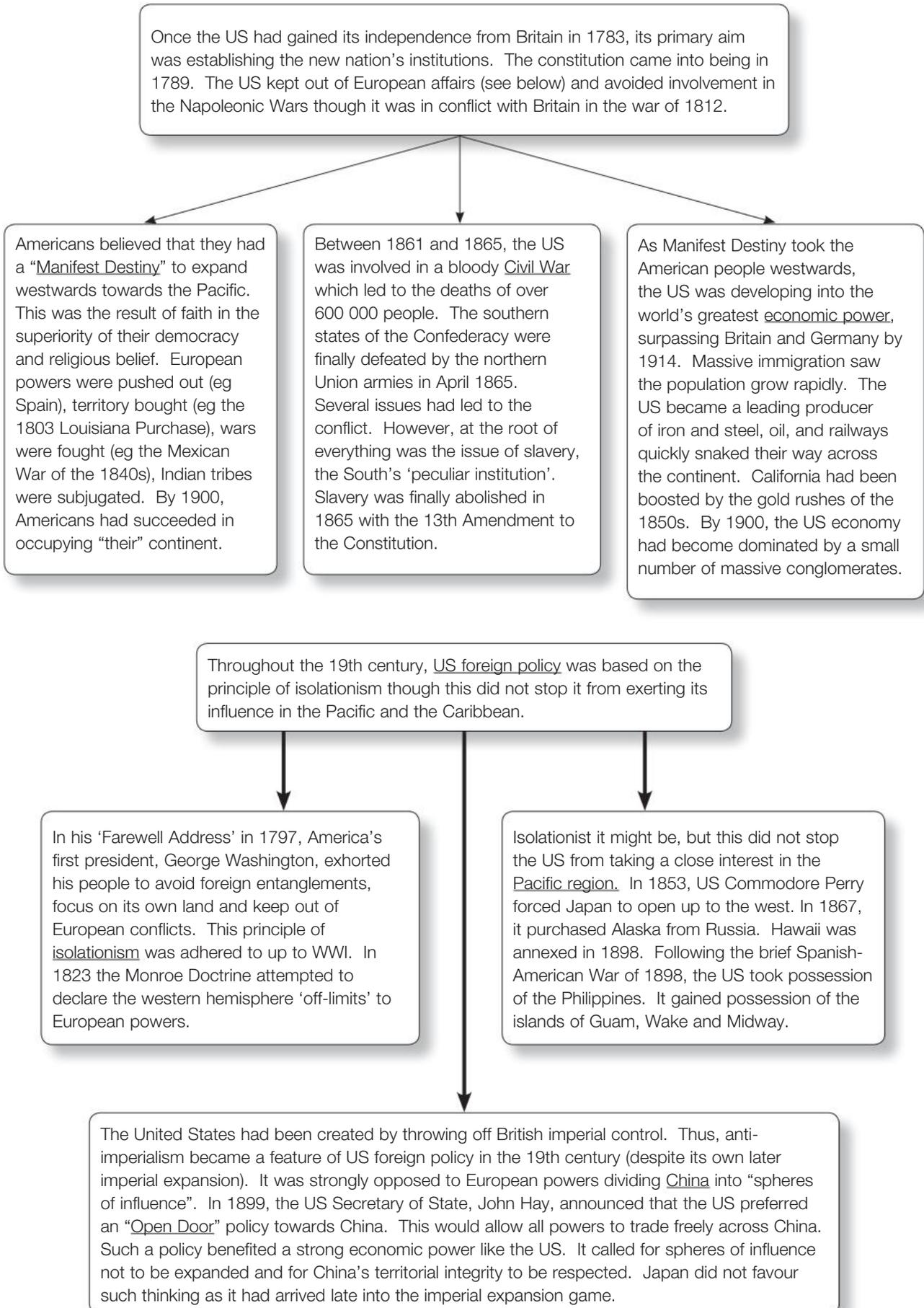
1st event		WASHINGTON CONFERENCE
2nd event		ARRIVAL OF COMMODORE PERRY
3rd event		INVASION OF MANCHURIA
4th event		THE 21 DEMANDS
5th event		THE SECLUSION DECREES
6th event		WALL ST CRASH
7th event		PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE
8th event		ESTABLISHMENT OF MANCHUKUO
9th event		START OF MEIJI RESTORATION
10th event		THE SHIDEHARA POLICY

The United States: the background to the 1930s

The United States had gained its independence from Britain in the late 18th century following the American War of Independence (1775-83). At the beginning of the 19th century, the US was not a major world power. It had a small population, a largely agricultural economy, its armed forces were limited and it occupied only the eastern seaboard of the continent. The transformation that occurred in the US by 1914 was spectacular. Figure 1.3 summarise the changes that occurred.

⁷ Story, R, A History of Modern Japan, Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1968, p 189

Figure 1.3 The transformation of the United States



The United States and World War I

When war broke out in Europe in the summer of 1914, the United States government was determined not to become involved. It viewed the old powers of Europe as nothing more than warmongers. The United States had nothing to gain from becoming involved in the bloody disputes of Europe. However, this did not stop American business from exporting a vast array of war materials and food to the combatants. As a result, its official policy became one of neutrality. When President Wilson sought re-election in 1916, he promised the American people that the US would not be dragged into the war.

However, circumstances changed and in April 1917, the US entered the war against Germany on the side of the allies. Several factors led to this development:

- Germany's 'unrestricted submarine warfare policy' led to the sinking of several US ships in the Atlantic.
- The discovery of the 'Zimmermann Telegram' revealed a conspiracy between Germany and Mexico to try and restore areas such as Texas to Mexico.
- German agents had been discovered attempting sabotage in US factories.

The US entry into the war proved decisive. Germany surrendered in November 1918. When Wilson came to Paris in January 1919 to attend the Peace Conference he was welcomed rapturously. Wilson had idealistic plans for the post-war world but most of these failed to be achieved in the face of tough opposition from Britain and France. Wilson wanted to create a new world order, allow peoples to rule themselves and avoid a vindictive peace treaty. Britain and France were driven by a desire to seek revenge and compensation.

The United States in the 1920s and 1930s

The view quickly developed inside the US that the country had been 'tricked' into entering the war, and that US lives had been lost for nothing. As the European powers continued to squabble, the US reverted to its traditional policy of isolation. America turned inwards; President Harding called for a 'return to normalcy'.

- The US Senate would refuse to ratify The Treaty of Versailles that had been signed with Germany; it signed a separate treaty.
- The US refused to join The League of Nations which had been the brainchild of President Wilson.
- However, though the US was isolationist towards Europe, this did not stop its economic involvement in world affairs. The US also involved itself fully in the affairs of Central and South America.

The United States was also a Pacific power and it could not completely isolate itself from the affairs of the East Asia-Pacific region. It continued to pursue 'the Open Door', and the growing dominance of Japan in the region had to be recognised. In 1921-22, the Washington Conference attempted to deal with these issues (see above). It remained to be seen if peace and stability could continue in the region.

The Wall St Crash of 1929 and subsequent economic depression hurt both the US and Japan enormously. The US would eventually seek to deal with its problems with President Franklin Roosevelt's 'New Deal', following his election in 1932. In contrast, Japan took the path of military expansion.

- It invaded Manchuria in 1931 (see above). Japan's action destroyed the Washington Treaties of 1921-22;
 - in 1934 Japan announced that it would no longer be bound by the naval limits of the Washington Conference.
- The US took no military action but the US Secretary State, Stimson, made it clear that the US refused to recognise Japanese gains following Japan's actions.
 - This became known as The Stimson Doctrine.
 - US-Japanese relations would gradually deteriorate throughout the decade.⁸
- However, inside the United States, public opinion remained strongly isolationist.
 - The American people showed little appetite for dealing with Japanese aggression in Asia (or Nazi aggression in Europe).
 - In the late 1930s, the US Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts in an attempt to prevent the US becoming involved in war, as it had in 1917.

Exercise 1.2

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	Name the term that denoted the American belief of its duty to occupy the American continent.	
2	What was the significance of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution for the US?	
3	Name three Pacific locations that the US had gained control of by 1900.	
4	What was the US attitude to imperialism?	
5	What were the twin goals of the "Open Door" policy?	
6	What was Japan's attitude towards the "Open Door" policy of the United States?	
7	What was the fundamental reason for the US entry into WWI?	

⁸ See Chapter Two and Three.

8	What was the basis of the Stimson Doctrine?	
9	Explain the attitude of most Americans towards dealing with Nazi and Japanese aggression in the 1930s.	
10	How did the US Congress attempt to prevent future US involvement in other nations' wars?	

Exercise 1.3

Rearrange each anagram and identify the position held by each person.

1	TSMTIUOIH		
2	RPYRE		
3	DASAHIREH		
4	NEMOITSI		
5	GASTWIOHNN		
6	PHA		
7	LNIOSW		
8	MTNSSOI		

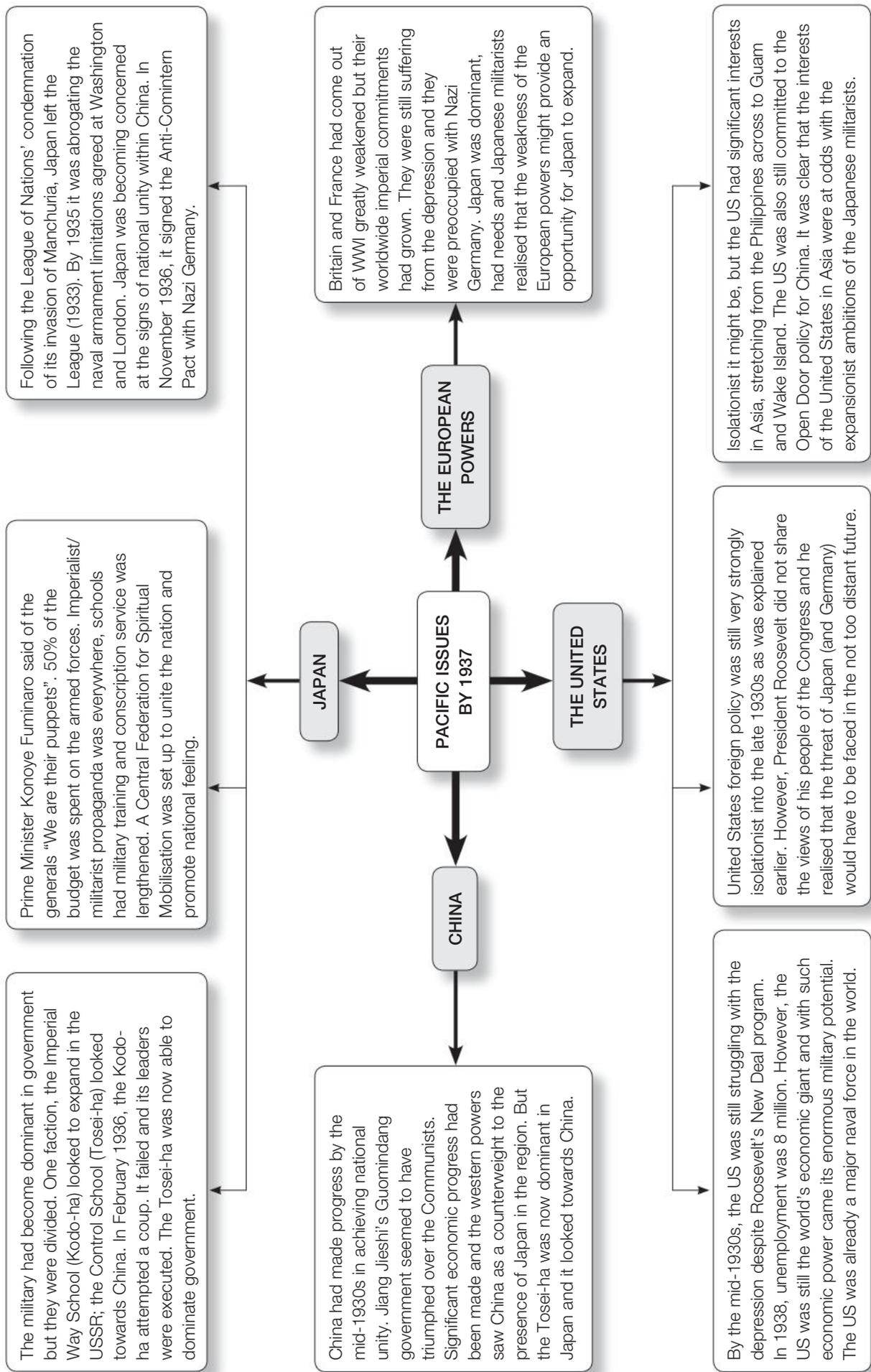
Economic and political issues in the Pacific by 1937

Nothing in history is inevitable; just because something happened, this does not mean that it was bound to happen.

However, an examination of the situation in the East Asia-Pacific region by the mid-1930s does reveal a strong element of great power rivalry, mistrust, and restlessness amongst the colonised subjects of the European powers to suggest that the situation was very unstable.

These issues are summarised in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4 Economic and political issues in the Pacific by 1937



What do the historians have to say about “Economic and political issues in the Pacific by 1937”?

1. S E Morison and H S Commager

The traditional interpretation of The Washington Conference of 1921-22 suggests that it had succeeded in weakening Japan and had managed to put the brakes on Japanese expansion. Japan's naval growth was to be restricted by an agreed ratio, Japan had promised to respect China's territorial integrity, and the alliance it had had with Britain since 1902 lapsed. However, Morison and Commager suggest that the Washington Conference was not a good result for the United States. The US had lost the chance of achieving naval supremacy, they argue, by scrapping fifteen ships valued at \$300 million. By agreeing not to fortify naval bases between Singapore and Hawaii, Britain and the US had effectively rendered these places defenceless.

*“...The action virtually doubled the value of Japanese tonnage quotas for naval operations in the Orient and rendered the defence of Guam, Singapore and the Philippines virtually impossible...”*⁹

2. B J Harrison and K W Palmer

Harrison and Palmer comment on the significance of the failed coup inside Japan of February 1936. During the coup, young officers of the Imperial Way faction assassinated several government figures, including Finance Minister Takahashi and General Watanobe, Inspector General of Military Education. They failed to kill Prime Minister Okada only because the assassins killed his brother-in-law by mistake. The plotters held central Tokyo for three days. The attempt was finally ended following an appeal from the Emperor. The failed coup allowed the Control Faction to gain control of the government. Thirteen officers were executed. Other senior officers were placed on the reserve list and the regulation was brought back that the Minister of War, as well as Army and Navy Ministers, had to be on ‘the active list’.

*“...In this way both the army and the cabinet could be effectively controlled. It is from this point onwards that the civilian government was really in the hands of the military...”*¹⁰

9 Morison, S E, and Commager, H S, *The Growth of the American Republic Vol II*, OUP, New York, 1969, p 429

10 Harrison, B J, and Palmer, K W, *China and Japan Between the Wars*, Brooks and Co Ltd, Sydney, 1973, p 36

Chapter Two

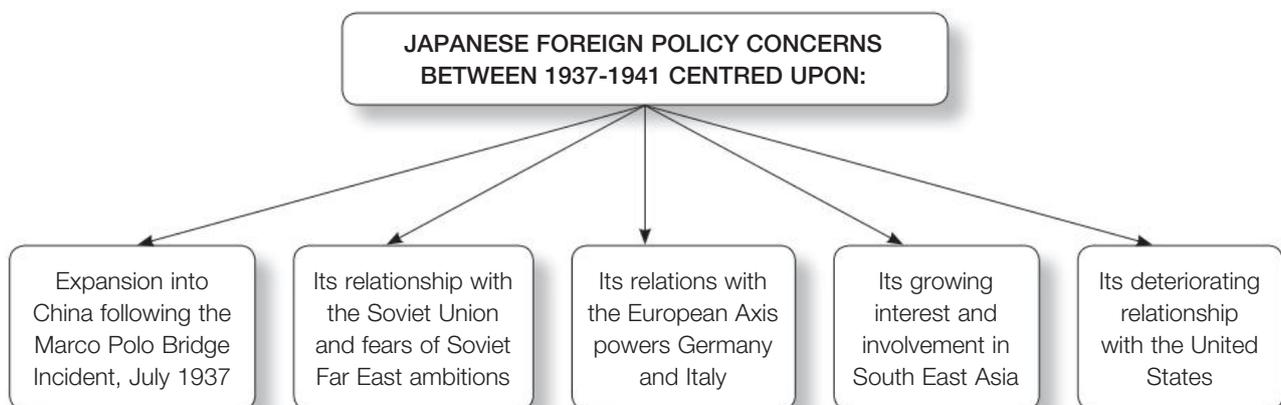
Japanese foreign policy 1937-1941

In July 1937, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China. On 7 December 1941, Japan attacked the US naval base at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii. Japanese actions between these two dates were to help bring on the Pacific war.¹ This chapter will examine Japanese foreign policy in two ways. Firstly, a narration will be provided which essentially tells the story of “*what happened*”. Some analysis will of course make its way in this descriptive account. Secondly, a more analytical account will follow which will “explain the context and motivations” behind Japanese foreign policy.

The course of Japanese foreign policy: 1937-1941

Between 1931 and 1937, Japan’s main foreign policy concerns centred on its consolidation of power in Manchuria, which had become the puppet state of Manchukuo under its puppet leader, Henry Pu Yi in 1932. However, Japanese foreign policy went beyond its deep involvement in Manchuria and China. Figure 2.1 outlines the main areas of Japanese foreign policy between 1937 and 1941.

Figure 2.1 The main areas of Japanese foreign policy 1937-1941



Japan and China: 1937-1941

In March 1937, General Tojo was appointed Chief of Staff of the Kwangtung Army. Tojo represented those in Japanese military and political circles who favoured an aggressive and expansionist foreign policy. They were concerned at the growing unity of China, symbolised in part by the agreement reached between the Guomindang (GMD) and the Communists (CCP) in 1936. The tensions and suspicions that had been building up over recent years between China and Japan were to allow a minor incident in July 1937 to develop into a full-scale war.

On 7 July 1937, a clash occurred at Wanping, north of Beijing between Japanese soldiers and the Chinese 29th army. This minor incident is referred to as the ‘Marco Polo Bridge Incident’,

¹ The role of the United States and Britain in this process will be examined in Chapter Three.

or the 'China Incident' as Japan called it. Militarists inside Japan used the incident to launch a full-scale invasion of China.

- Japanese reinforcements were sent to China.
 - By late July Beijing had been taken;
 - by December Japan was in control of Shanghai and Nanjing.
- The fall of Nanjing to Japan was followed by a series of unbelievable atrocities committed by Japanese troops.
 - For two weeks they were allowed to go on a rampage that led to the deaths of over 200 000 Chinese people, mostly civilians.
 - This terrible event is known as "*The Rape of Nanjing*".
- By the end of 1938, Japan had control of China's richest and most populous provinces and most of the coastline.
- Jiang Jieshi's government moved to Hankou and then further inland to Chongqing. Japan had won some spectacular military victories but it had not won the war. The war in China was going to be a long one. Jiang was holding on in the hope of future western assistance and as long as the temporary GMD-CCP alliance held, Japanese efforts to gain total victory in China would be further frustrated.
- Japan continued its advance. In February 1939 it took Hainan Island. In March 1940, it established a pro-Japanese puppet regime in Nanjing under Wang Ching Wei.

Japan and the Soviet Union: 1937-1941

In November 1936, Japan and Germany signed "The Anti-Comintern Pact".² In November 1937, Italy joined Germany and Japan in this anti-communist pact:

- the pact contained a clause that said if either Germany or Japan was attacked by the Soviet Union, the countries would meet "to discuss possible action".
- negotiations for the pact were conducted not by the Japanese foreign ministry but by the army.

There had long been division in Japanese military circles about 'where to expand'. Some urged action in Siberia against the Soviet Union; others sought southward expansion into China, South East Asia and the Pacific. Events between 1938-1941 would see the matter resolved in favour of southern expansion.

- In July 1938, Japanese forces clashed with Soviet forces at Changkufeng on the Manchukuo border. Further clashes occurred in May 1939 at Nomonhan.
- In both these clashes, the Japanese came off worse!

Japan's position was further complicated when news came through in August 1939 of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact.³ Japan felt a sense of betrayal at this point and decided to remain neutral in the European war. Germany's string of victories in 1939-40 led some in Japan's military to argue for a move against the possessions of the weakened European imperial powers – the Netherlands, Britain and France.

² The Comintern had been established in 1919 by the Bolshevik regime in Russia to promote socialist revolutions across the world.

³ Hitler was intent on attacking Poland. He wanted to ensure Russian neutrality at this time and so avoid the possibility of a prolonged two-front war, as Britain and France had promised to support Poland if attacked.

In September 1940, Japan joined Germany and Italy in the “Tripartite Pact”:

- the pact was to last for ten years;
- assistance was to be given to any partner who was “*attacked by a power at present not involved in the European war or in the China-Japan conflict*” – this presumably meant Russia or the US.
- Article II of the Pact stated: “*Germany and Italy shall recognise and respect the leadership of Japan in the establishment of a new order in east Asia.*”

In April 1941, Japan and the Soviet Union signed a “Neutrality Pact”. Two months later Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Japan now had two choices:

1. attack a stretched Soviet Union and make gains in Siberia;
2. move south knowing that the Soviet Union was ‘preoccupied’.

Japan was to choose the latter option.

Relations with the European “Axis” powers

The combination of Italy, Germany and Japan in agreements stretching from the Anti-Comintern Pact to the Tripartite Pact created what history knows as “The Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis”. During WWII, Italy, Germany and Japan would be referred to as “the Axis powers”. The agreements had little if any practical value for Japan, and indeed it could be argued were actually disadvantageous as Japan’s lining up with Nazi Germany actually hardened the US attitude towards Japan.

Japan and South East Asia

Indochina – Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam ⁴ – was part of the French empire. However, France’s humiliating defeat at the hands of Germany in June 1940 meant that its hold on Indochina was precarious. Japan intended taking advantage of France’s weakness; it had several reasons for seeking to move into and control French Indochina:

- it could prevent American weapons and other western supplies from reaching Jiang Jieshi’s forces fighting the Japanese - these supplies were transported along a railway from Haiphong (in Tonkin province) to Kunming (in China);
- Indochina could provide Japan with several strategic products such as rubber, tin, coal and rice;
- Indochina could provide Japan with a strategic base for future attacks against other European possessions in the region.

German success in Europe opened up many possibilities for Japan. US Ambassador to Tokyo, Joseph Grew, said of the Japanese at the time that Hitler’s victories “*like strong wine have gone to their heads.*”

⁴ French Indochina comprised five regions: Laos, Cambodia, and three regions of Vietnam – Cochinchina (south), Annam (central) and Tonkin (north).

Japan's move into French Indochina came in stages:

France's defeat at the hands of Germany in June 1940 led to the establishment of a pro-German puppet regime called 'the Vichy regime'.⁵ Vichy ordered the French governor in Indochina, Decoux, to cooperate with Japan.

- In September 1940, Japan 'requested' the use of facilities and resources in the Tonkin region. The French had no choice but to agree to the request and so Japanese moved troops into the area north of Hanoi.
- In July 1941, the Vichy government 'allowed' the Japanese to place troops into the south. By late 1941, Japan occupied the whole country.

Japan's relationship with the United States will be dealt with in Chapter Three that examines United States foreign policy between 1937 and 1941.

Exercise 2.1 Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1	General Tojo represented those inside Japan who favoured an aggressive and expansionist foreign policy.	TRUE/ FALSE
2	The Marco Polo bridge incident had been carefully planned well in advance by Japanese army officers.	TRUE/ FALSE
3	Japanese troops were guilty of enormous atrocities against Chinese civilians in Nanjing in December 1937.	TRUE/ FALSE
4	By the middle of 1940, Japanese forces had been successful in completely subduing Chinese forces.	TRUE/ FALSE
5	Japan was very successful in its military action against the Soviet Union in 1938 and 1939.	TRUE/ FALSE
6	Japan became part of the Tripartite Pact in September 1940 with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.	TRUE/ FALSE
7	Once Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Japan quickly moved its troops to also attack that country.	TRUE/ FALSE
8	German success against its European opponents in 1940 and 1941 was viewed excitedly by the Japanese.	TRUE/ FALSE
9	Japan showed little desire to administer French Indochina throughout most of the war.	TRUE/ FALSE
10	French forces in Indochina fought a determined campaign against the Japanese throughout the war.	TRUE/ FALSE

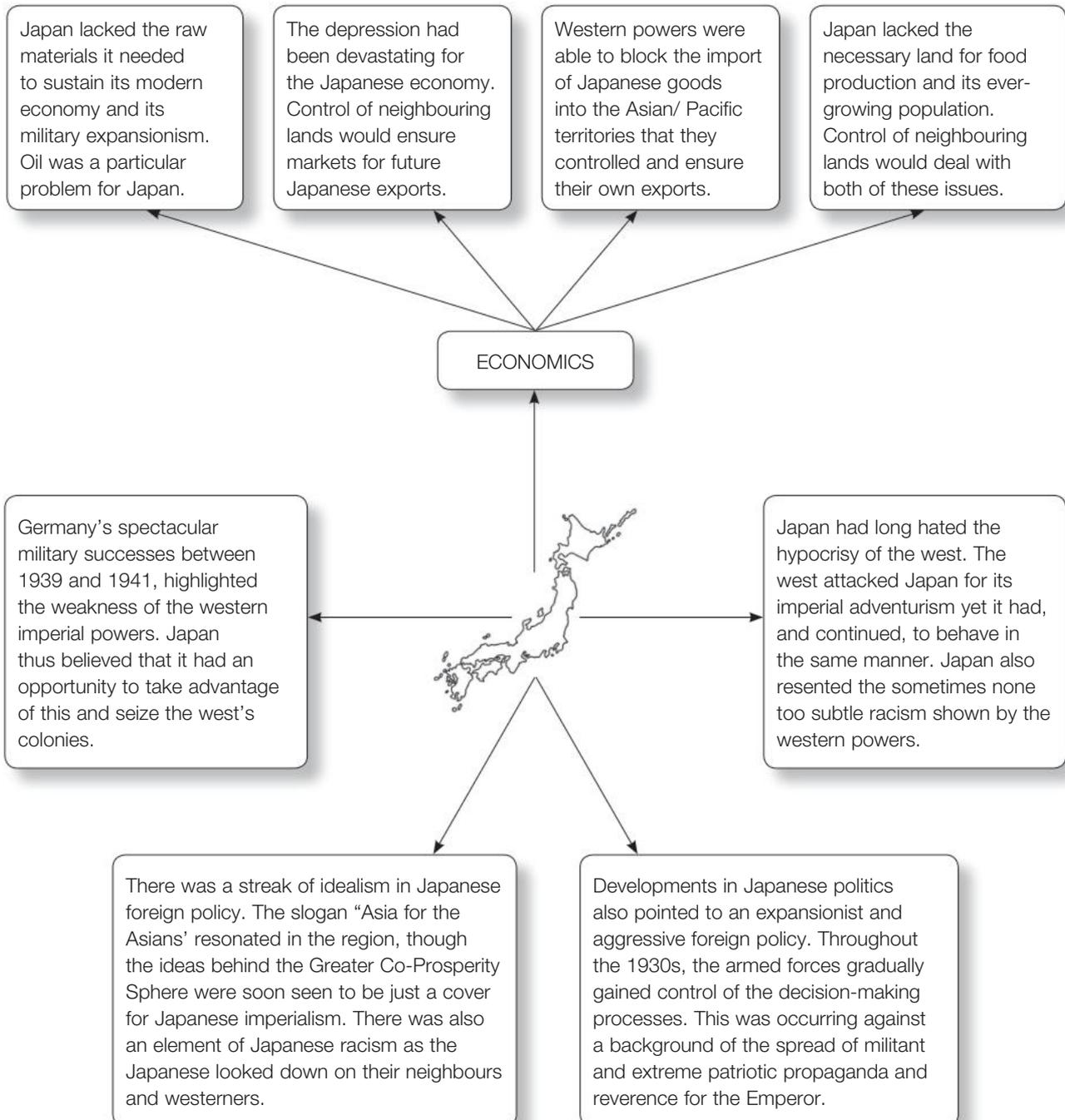
⁵ See historian 1 for more detail on Vichy.

The motivation and context behind Japanese foreign policy 1937-1941

The previous section focussed on the “what” of Japanese foreign policy; this section will focus on the “why”. The motivation of Japanese foreign policy will be dealt with in two parts:

1. Below, Figure 2.2 will explain the longer-term, broader factors which affected the exercise of Japanese foreign policy.
2. Chapter Four will deal in more detail about why it was that Japan decided to attack Pearl Harbour in December 1941.

Figure 2.2 The motivations and context behind Japanese foreign policy 1937-1941



Exercise 2.2 Match the description on the left with the correct term on the right

1	The governing party inside China at the time of the Japanese invasion in 1937.		VICHY
2	Agreement between Japan and the Soviet Union of April 1941.		TRIPARTITE PACT
3	The French governor of Indochina during World War II.		THE AXIS POWERS
4	The combination of Japan, Italy and Germany.		VIETNAM
5	Site of a major Japanese defeat against the Soviet Union in 1938.		DECOUX
6	The pro-German puppet regime established in France in 1940.		GUOMINDANG
7	The area comprising Cochin-China, Annam and Tonkin.		WANG CHING WEI
8	Head of the Chinese government at the time of the Japanese invasion in 1937.		JIANG JIESHI
9	Agreement signed between Japan, Germany and Italy in September 1940.		CHANGKUFENG
10	Head of pro-Japanese puppet regime established in China in 1940.		NEUTRALITY PACT

What do the historians have to say about “Japanese foreign policy 1937-1941”?

1. Fredrik Logevall

Following its defeat in 1940, northern and western France was occupied by Germany. However, the central/southern region was allowed a French administration known as “the Vichy regime”, named after the town in which it was based. Vichy was in essence a pro-German puppet regime. Indochina was nominally under the control of the Vichy regime. Logevall makes the point that Japan did not want to invade French Indochina and certainly did not seek to take over the territory. It was happy to respect (Vichy) France’s rights and interests in the region and sought to work with the pro-Vichy administration in Indochina.⁶ Japan wanted the region’s resources and hoped to use its installations for its future military projects.

“...These the Japanese could most easily and efficiently secure if they left the French nominally in charge and avoided taking on the complicated task of day-to-day governing...”⁷

2. Edwin P Hoyt

In August 1939, Soviet forces managed to virtually destroy the Japanese 23rd Division in the fighting in the far east. The Japanese retreated and prepared to use all the main parts of the Kwangtung Army in Manchuria. The campaign against the Soviet Union had proven a disaster. During the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, Hoyt comments that the Japanese casualty rate had been 20%; in the clashes of 1938-39, the casualty rate was 73%. Japanese forces were ordered to break off contact and return to Manchuria. To make matters, Japan’s generals learned shortly after that Germany and the Soviet Union had signed a Non-Aggression Pact (the Nazi-Soviet Pact). This nullified the value of the Anti-Comintern Pact. Hoyt explains how by late 1939, things were not working out as Japan’s militarists had expected.

“...Two years earlier it had all seemed so easy; first China to be brought to heel, and then Russia to be defeated once again. But at the end of August 1939, the world of the militarists had turned upside down...”⁸

3. John Rabe

John Rabe was a German living in Nanjing at the time of the Japanese attack on the city in 1937. Having sent his family to safety, he stayed to organise an ‘International Safety Zone’ for unarmed Chinese civilians. He kept a detailed diary at the time. He gives many examples of groups of disarmed Chinese being led out to be shot, of homes and

⁶ Japan would eventually take full control of Indochina from the French in March 1945.

⁷ Logevall, F, *Embers of War*, Random House, New York, 2012, p 30

⁸ Hoyt, E P, *Japan’s War: The Great Pacific Conflict*, Guild Publishing, London, 1986, p 186

shops looted, of young girls and women raped. This extract gives some flavour of the Japanese behaviour in Nanjing at that time.

*“...The road to Hsiakwan is nothing but a field of corpses... There are piles of corpses outside the gate (of the Communications Ministry) ... There are executions everywhere, some are being carried out with machine guns... We Europeans are all paralysed with horror...”*⁹

⁹ Rabe, J, *The Diaries of John Rabe: The Good German of Nanking*, Little, Brown and Company, London, 1998, pp 75-76

Chapter Three

US and British policies in the Pacific 1937-1941

United States isolationism: the case against

In some respects, it can be argued that the United States did not follow an isolationist policy between the wars. Consider the following:

- the US was the world's strongest economic power and was one of the major trading nations, it could not isolate itself in economic affairs:
 - it assisted with the issue of German reparations in the 1920s seen with the Dawes Plan (1924) and the Young Plan (1930);
 - it was a major lender to many countries in the 1920s;
 - Ford and Woolworths were the McDonalds of the inter-war era and could be found all over the world;
- it was concerned with issues of peace and disarmament:
 - the US hosted the 1921-22 Washington Conference; ¹
 - though not a member, the US often worked with the League of Nations;
 - by 1924, the US was sending official delegates to the League;
 - by 1932, the US had accepted thirteen League-sponsored international agreements;
 - in 1928, Secretary of State Kellogg sponsored the Kellogg-Briand Pact or Pact of Paris, an international agreement against war;
- the US was heavily involved in the affairs of Latin America, on occasions willing to condone direct military intervention:
 - eg Guatemala (1920-21), Nicaragua (1930s).
- as was shown in Chapter One, it already had a major presence in the Asia-Pacific region:
 - it controlled the Philippines and several Pacific islands;
 - it still pursued the "Open Door" policy regarding China.

United States isolationism: the case for

However, despite these examples of US international involvement, it cannot be denied that the United States pursued an **isolationist** policy and that sentiment within the country was very much against becoming involved in foreign entanglements.

- though the US had a world-wide economic role, it followed a strict policy of protection ² to prevent foreign goods competing with American goods;
 - protectionist measures were expanded during the depression, as seen with the Hawley-Smoot Tariff of 1930;

¹ See Chapter One.

² Protectionist policies involved placing tariffs on imports to make them more expensive so consumers would prefer to buy American.

- strict limits to immigration were imposed in the 1921 Immigration Act;
 - the Johnson Act of 1924 went further, banning all Asian immigration.
- The prevailing mood inside the United States in the 1920s was extremely conservative and this was reflected in the desire to avoid foreign involvement and focus on what mattered to the United States:
 - the severity of the depression increased this feeling.

Events inside Europe in the 1930s, only served to extenuate isolationist feeling. Hitler came to power in 1933 and he made it clear he intended expanding Germany's military capability and territorial control. In 1936 he ordered his troops into the demilitarised Rhineland and in 1938 he annexed Austria. In September 1938, war was only narrowly avoided over the issue of Czechoslovakia at the Munich Conference. Sentiment inside the United States was very much against becoming dragged into another European war, as the country had been in 1917.

To this end, the Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts between 1935-37:

- an embargo was imposed that stopped munitions being sent to any belligerent nation, ie one that was involved in a war;
- 'indirect' war materials, such as steel, could only be obtained from the United States on a 'cash and carry' basis, ie purchasers of such goods had to transport them in their own ships (not American), and the goods had to be paid for in cash;
- US citizens were forbidden from travelling on the ships of belligerent nations;
- belligerent nations were not allowed to float loans in the United States.

The aim of the Neutrality Acts was quite simple – to prevent any possible involvement of the United States in another war. The Congress was very much reflecting public opinion. In 1936, a Senate Committee set up by North Dakota Senator Nye, showed that bankers and munitions producers had made great fortunes during WWI. The belief grew that the US had entered WWI not for idealistic reasons but merely greed. This, plus the memories of the horrors of the trenches ensured that most Americans did not want to repeat the experience.

The position of President Roosevelt

Roosevelt's depth of foreign policy knowledge and experience meant that he did not share the isolationist sentiments of the American people.

- As Germany expanded across Europe, as Italy invaded Abyssinia (1935) and as Japan invaded China (1937), he realised it would be impossible for the United States not to become involved in a future conflict.
- He understood that peace was indivisible and that the US would have to act against the Axis powers eventually.

However, he understood public opinion even if he believed it was wrong. Roosevelt tried to explain to the American people his thinking in his "Quarantine Speech", delivered in Chicago on 5 October 1937. He was roundly attacked at the time for this speech, with its overt criticism of isolationist policy.³

³ See Historian 2 for a more detailed consideration of President Roosevelt's speech.

Exercise 3.1 Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1	The United States showed little interest in disarmament and League of Nations affairs in the inter-war period.	TRUE/ FALSE
2	In the 1920s and 1930s, the United States continued to be a significant presence in the Pacific region.	TRUE/ FALSE
3	Throughout the inter-war period, American public opinion was overwhelmingly isolationist in its outlook.	TRUE/ FALSE
4	During the 1930s, events in Europe tended to lessen the depth of isolationist feeling inside the United States.	TRUE/ FALSE
5	The prime aim of the Neutrality Acts of 1935-37 was to ensure that when the US did enter a war, it would be on the side the western allies.	TRUE/ FALSE
6	The impact of the report of the Nye Committee in 1936 was to further strengthen American isolationist sentiment.	TRUE/ FALSE
7	President Roosevelt fully shared the isolationist sentiments of the American public.	TRUE/ FALSE
8	President Roosevelt's "Quarantine Speech" of October 1937 was deliberately aimed at reinforcing the isolationist practices of the United States.	TRUE/ FALSE
9	President Roosevelt's "Quarantine Speech" of October 1937 was generally poorly received within the United States at the time.	TRUE/ FALSE
10	President Roosevelt was well aware of the state of US public opinion in the 1930s and realised he had to tread carefully when explaining his foreign policy views.	TRUE/ FALSE

The United States and Japan: 1937-1941

The United States had opposed the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, as was seen in the Stimson Doctrine (see Chapter One). The US was distrustful of Japan's long-term aims in the Asia-Pacific region and continued to promote its Open-Door policy. Japan's invasion of China in July 1937 posed a problem for President Roosevelt. He wanted to put pressure on Japan, even try to push it back but he was stymied by the Congressional Neutrality Laws that had been passed.

As Japan continued its campaign in China, it accidentally bombed an American ship, the USS Panay:

- the Panay was on the Yangzi River just outside of Nanjing as Japan was attacking the Chinese capital;
 - profuse Japanese apologies and an indemnity were enough to defuse the situation.
- A British vessel, The Ladybird, was also 'accidentally' attacked on the Yangzi.

Although war was avoided over the Panay incident, relations between Japan and the US steadily deteriorated. Japan had no intention of withdrawing from China; to do so at America's behest would have involved such a loss of face as to be inconceivable. The US was not prepared to allow Japan to totally disrupt the Pacific balance of power. These factors, plus Roosevelt's need to consider isolationist feeling within the US, would determine the course of US-Japan relations over the next few years.

- Roosevelt refused to label the Japan-China conflict 'a war'. By doing this he was able to sidestep the Neutrality Laws and so provide China with war materials.
 - China was also granted loans through the Import-Export Bank.
- US Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, told Japan relations between the powers could not improve unless Japan '*changed her attitude and practice*' towards US rights in China. However, the US informed Japan that the door was 'still open' for the two sides to achieve a compromise.
 - Japan saw this desire to seek compromise as an indication that the US was unwilling to fight.
- In 1939, Roosevelt revoked a 1911 US-Japan Trade Treaty. By doing this, Japan was prevented from buying steel and scrap iron from the US.

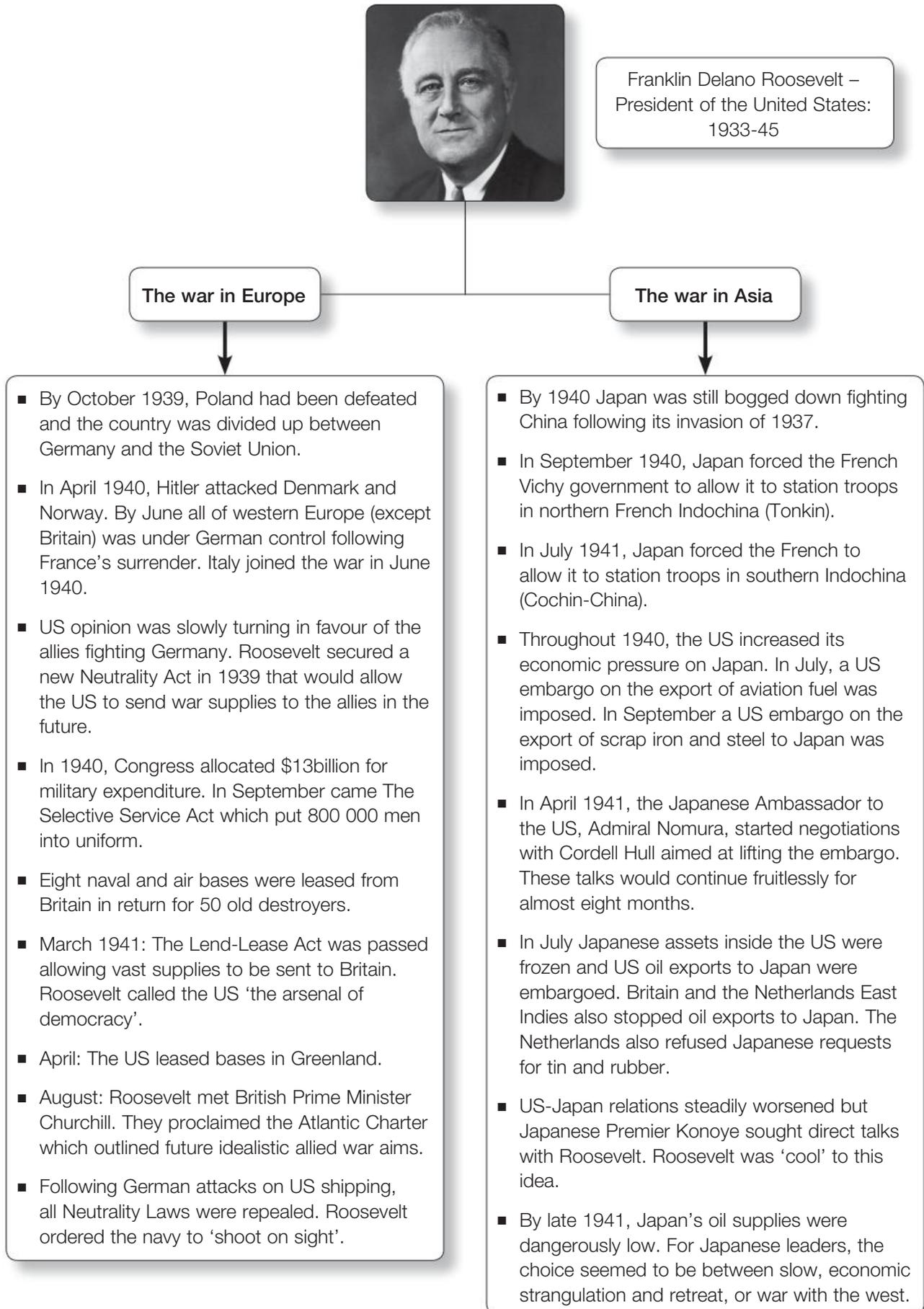
By September 1939, Europe was at war. ⁴ Roosevelt was now in a dilemma.

- He rejected isolationism and saw US policy in global terms. He agreed with his army leaders that if war came, Europe would have to have priority while holding the line with Japan.
 - However, he could not simply 'jump into' the European War and he could not 'give in to' Japan.
- 1940 was also an election year. Roosevelt had to avoid being seen rushing into a war that he knew the US eventually would have to enter. American opinion was now sharply divided:
 - The 'America First Committee', which was supported by the newspaper publisher Randolph Hearst and aviator Charles Lindbergh, pushed hard for America to stay out of the war;
 - The Committee to defend America by Aiding the Allies, supported by the newspaper man W A White, argued the allies must be helped in every way short of war.
 - Roosevelt easily won the 1940 election defeating the Republican candidate, Wendell Willkie by 449 electoral votes to 38.

The final months of 1940 and early months of 1941 seemed to be pushing the US inexorably towards war, as Figure 3.1 outlines.

⁴ On 1 September Germany invaded Poland; on 3 September Britain and France declared war on Germany.

Figure 3.1 The United States edging towards war



British policies in the Pacific 1937-1941

Britain was in a weak position in the late 1930s.

- It was still recovering from the impact of the Great Depression.
- The empire was at its greatest extent and Britain's resources were stretched from the Far East to India to Palestine to the Caribbean;
 - in the Asia-Pacific region, Britain's interests ranged from India to Burma to Malaya to Singapore to Hong Kong to Australia;⁵
- Militarily, Britain was in the unenviable position of having to confront three major potential enemies in three different theatres spread across the world – Japan in the Asia-Pacific region, Italy in the Mediterranean, and most importantly Germany across Europe.
- The National Government throughout the 1930s pursued appeasement in Europe, ie making concessions to Germany, partly based on the belief that Hitler's demands were limited, but primarily with the intention of avoiding war at all costs.
 - Appeasement also meant that Britain did not have to spend as much on the military (this policy had its critics most notably Churchill).

Europe narrowly avoided war in September 1938.⁶ However, Hitler's invasion of the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 proved the failure of appeasement, and Britain now faced the real possibility of war in Europe. With a weakened economy and military, Britain was in no position to wage an effective war in both Europe and Asia. For obvious reasons, Europe would have to take precedence.

If Japan was determined to pursue an aggressive policy in the Asia-Pacific region, there was little that Britain would be able to do:

- already in July 1940, *“Churchill was forced to appease Japan by closing the Burma Road that connected the British colony to the Chinese border, thereby cutting supplies of war material off from the Chinese nationalists... fighting against the Japanese.”*⁷
- Singapore was always seen as the mainstay of British security in Asia but its defences were being neglected as Britain was involved in its life and death struggle against Nazi Germany in 1940 and 1941;
- British troops were sent to Burma and Malaya in 1941 but as events would later show, the Japanese had little trouble taking over the Malay peninsula and Singapore in 1942;
- Britain's hope was that US sanctions could curb Japanese ambitions, and if this failed the US would be dragged into World War II; to this end:
 - Britain supported US trade embargoes against Japan in 1941;
 - the Burma Road was reopened in October 1940.

⁵ Australia's inter-war leaders always believed that their security in the region was guaranteed by the British presence at Singapore.

⁶ Hitler was given the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia at the Munich Conference. Up to this point, there was a real possibility that war might have broken out over the Czechoslovak crisis.

⁷ Roberts, A, Churchill, Penguin, 2019, p 574

Exercise 3.2 Match the person on the right with the self-description on the left

1	I am the leader of Chinese nationalist forces who have been fighting the Japanese since 1937.		RANDOLPH HEARST
2	I support the Committee to defend America by Aiding the Allies		W A WHITE
3	I am keen to talk to the Americans to avoid a war, even as late as the summer of 1941.		FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT
4	My committee's report in 1936 did much to solidify isolationist sentiment in the United States.		JIANG JIESHI
5	I am the US Secretary of State dealing with the Japanese as they continue their aggression		PREMIER KONOYE
6	I support the America First Committee and strongly oppose US involvement in a European war.		WINSTON CHURCHILL
7	I am the US Secretary of State whose doctrine outlined the US attitude to Manchuria in 1931-2.		SENATOR NYE
8	I oppose the isolationist thinking of the American people and see peace as being indivisible.		CORDELL HULL
9	I am a strong opponent of the British government's policy of appeasement during the 1930s.		KELLOGG
10	I am the US Secretary of State who signed the Pact of Paris which aimed to guarantee world peace.		STIMSON

What do the historians have to say about "US and British policies in the Pacific 1937-1941"?

1. Fredrik Logevall

On 25 July 1941, the US froze all Japanese assets inside the United States, placed an embargo on Japan and stopped oil exports. Some historians have suggested that Roosevelt was deliberately trying to goad Japan into an aggressive act which would force a US declaration of war. This way, Roosevelt would be sure to have the American

people behind him. However, Logevall suggests that the President did not aim to stop all oil exports or to freeze Japanese assets permanently. His aim, argues Logevall, was to create uncertainty in Japanese ruling circles, not provoke a full-scale war. However, when Roosevelt was meeting Churchill at Placentia Bay in August, state department officials,⁸ had imposed a total embargo and gone further than Roosevelt had intended.

*“...By the time Roosevelt returned to the capital on August 16, it was deemed too late to step back, for reasons political and diplomatic... US officials feared that the Japanese would see any modification as a sign of American weakness...”*⁹

2. President Franklin Roosevelt

On 5 October 1937, Roosevelt delivered a speech in Chicago which became known as “the Quarantine Speech”. The sentiments that Roosevelt expressed in his speech were totally at odds with the prevailing isolationist sentiment and he was strongly criticised at the time. He referred to “innocent peoples.. being cruelly sacrificed to a greed for power and supremacy”. He referred to “vast numbers of women and children.. being ruthlessly murdered with bombs from the air.” When the President was giving his speech, the Spanish Civil War was in progress, Japan was bombing Chinese cities and Italy was concluding its takeover of Abyssinia. In his speech, Roosevelt was explaining that eventually the United States would have no choice but to become involved against the dictators. He argued that as aggression proceeded apace around the world:

*“...let no one imagine that America will escape, that America may expect mercy, that this Western Hemisphere will not be attacked and that it will continue tranquilly and peacefully to carry on the ethics and the arts of civilization... there is no escape through mere isolation or neutrality...”*¹⁰

3. David A Shannon

Shannon describes the measures Roosevelt took following the Japanese move into southern Indochina. As well as freezing Japanese assets and strengthening trade embargoes, Roosevelt brought the Philippines armed forces into the American army and appointed General Douglas MacArthur commander of US Far East forces. He also closed the Panama Canal to Japanese shipping. Shannon suggests that Roosevelt’s strong response to the Japanese move was partly due to “Magic”, the US navy’s code-breaking operation that had broken a key Japanese code. The information that this operation had gained:

*“...confirmed Washington’s suspicions that the purpose of the Indochinese move was to put Japanese troops in a better position to attack Malaya and the Dutch East Indies...”*¹¹

8 Including Dean Acheson, later a Secretary of State under President Truman.

9 Logevall, F, *Embers of War*, Random House, New York, 2012, p 42

10 President Franklin Roosevelt, 5 October 1937

11 Shannon, D A, *Between the Wars: America 1919-1941*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1979, p 278

Chapter Four

Strategic and political reasons for the bombing of Pearl Harbour

Chapter Seventeen provides a detailed study guide to the 1970 Hollywood movie “Tora, Tora, Tora”. This movie deals with the events leading up to the bombing of Pearl harbour and the US response. “Tora, Tora, Tora” was praised at the time for its accuracy and even-handedness in how it dealt with the events of late 1941.

With the benefit of hindsight, it seems incredible that Japan could even have considered taking on a power such as the United States in a war. The ultimate defeat and destruction of Japan by 1945, culminating in the dropping of the atomic bomb, only reinforces such a view. However, in late 1941, a combination of strategic, economic and political factors combined to make the bombing of the United States naval base at Pearl Harbour seem a rational and appropriate action, be it one fraught with enormous risk.

The essence of the issue. By late 1941, Japan faced a simple choice:

1. Submit to US demands – and lose face in the process.
2. Launch a pre-emptive attack on the US in a massive strategic gamble.

The economic, political and strategic factors which convinced Japan’s leaders to take the second option are all closely intertwined. Each will be dealt with separately but clearly some overlapping is inevitable.

Economics

The United States made it clear that it would never accept Japan’s occupation of China and on several occasions demanded Japan’s withdrawal. Of equal significance was the American refusal to consider under any circumstances Japan’s plans for changing the balance of power and the territorial arrangements existing in the region.

- US Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, addressed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January 1941 on this subject.
- He said that the US would never sanction:
“...the formation of a New Order in the Western Pacific under Japanese political and economic domination...”

In March 1941, the US passed the Lend-Lease Act ¹ which allowed for military supplies to be sent to Britain. This put the final nail in the coffin of the Neutrality Laws of the 1930s and showed the US openly siding with the Allies. The next day, Japan’s ultra-nationalist Foreign

¹ See Chapter Three.

Minister, Matsuoka, visited Berlin to cement Japan's ties with Nazi Germany. Soon after, Japan signed a Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union. Emboldened by German support and the securing of its northern frontier, Japan moved south. As was shown in Chapter Three, by July 1941, Japan effectively occupied French Indochina, though the Vichy colonial regime was allowed to continue its routine administration of the country.

Britain and the US froze Japanese assets in their territories. Britain, the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the Netherlands East Indies ² cancelled various trade agreements with Japan. **However, by August 1941, the crucial factor determining events was Japan's access to oil:**

- July 1940, the US placed an embargo on the export of aviation fuel to Japan;
- June 1941, the Netherlands East Indies rebuffed Japan's requests for extended oil concessions (and demands for tin and rubber);
- August 1941, the US placed an embargo on all oil exports to Japan;

Oil was becoming the deciding factor in Japanese policy. If Japan was to get the oil it needed, it had to disengage from China. However, if it refused to do that, the oil embargoes would continue. Bowing to western demands to withdraw was inconceivable to Japan's nationalists (see below). Various estimates have been made about the extent of Japan's oil stocks at the time; by late 1941, there was probably about six months' worth.

"...unless the Japanese were content to suffer slow economic strangulation, war with Great Britain and Holland, and probably the US also, was inevitable..." ³

The oil issue presented Japan with a stark choice: a humiliating backdown or war!

Political

Faced with its oil dilemma, Japan pursued a dual policy throughout 1941:

- it prepared for war;
- but it also continued negotiations with the US to end the embargo.

In April 1941, Admiral Nomura was appointed as Japan's ambassador to the US. On 10 April, he began negotiations with Cordell Hull aimed at ending the embargo. Talks would continue intermittently until early December. In early November, Saburo Kurusu, was sent to Washington to assist Nomura. The talks went nowhere. On 25 November, Japan was handed the 'Hull Note'. It presented Japan with a set of uncompromising demands. The gist of these demands was as follows:

- removal of Japanese forces from Indochina and China;
- forget about the Axis;
- sign non-aggression pacts with the west.

² Modern day Indonesia.

³ Storry, R, A History of Modern Japan, Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1968, pp 210-11

While diplomatic efforts were continuing in Washington, there were domestic political developments that were pushing Japan towards war. Earlier in the year, Prime Minister Fuminaro Konoye had proposed a meeting with President Roosevelt to resolve US-Japan differences. Roosevelt refused such a meeting. Konoye wanted to keep the negotiating window open but he was facing strong opposition inside Japan from the ultra-nationalists and military men.

- On 6 September, War Minister General Hideki Tojo submitted a plan to the Konoye cabinet that involved a plan for pursuing war preparations, and for actual war if the negotiations failed.
- The army was confident of success though there were doubts within Japanese naval circles. The cabinet could not agree and so Konoye resigned. On 18 October, General Tojo became Prime Minister, also assuming the roles of Minister of War and Minister of Internal Affairs.

The refusal of the US to accept Japan's position, seen clearly in the Hull Note meant that pressure was building inside Japan for quick decisive action. Act now or the oil situation would mean that action in the future impossible. On 1 December 1941 the decision for war was taken at an Imperial Conference, although the fleet had set sail for Hawaii in late November.

Strategic

A surprise attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbour would obviously mean war between Japan and the United States. Japan's generals and admirals understood that the chances of victory in a long, drawn-out war with the US were small. However, there was a strategic argument for the attack:

- if Japanese carrier-based aircraft were able to carry out a surprise attack on Pearl Harbour, it might be possible to destroy the US Pacific fleet;
- as a result of the war in Europe, Britain, France and the Netherlands were greatly weakened;
 - without US support, the European powers' colonies could be quickly taken over;
- it would take the United States probably at least twelve months to replace the fleet lost in a surprise attack;
 - by this time, Japanese planners believed that they would have been able to establish a wide defence perimeter which even the US might find too difficult to break;
 - Japan would also have at its disposal the raw materials needed for war – particularly oil – of the former western colonies.

Figure 4.1 summarises the factors which drove Japan to attack Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941.

Figure 4.1 Summary of the factors leading to Japan’s decision to attack Pearl Harbour

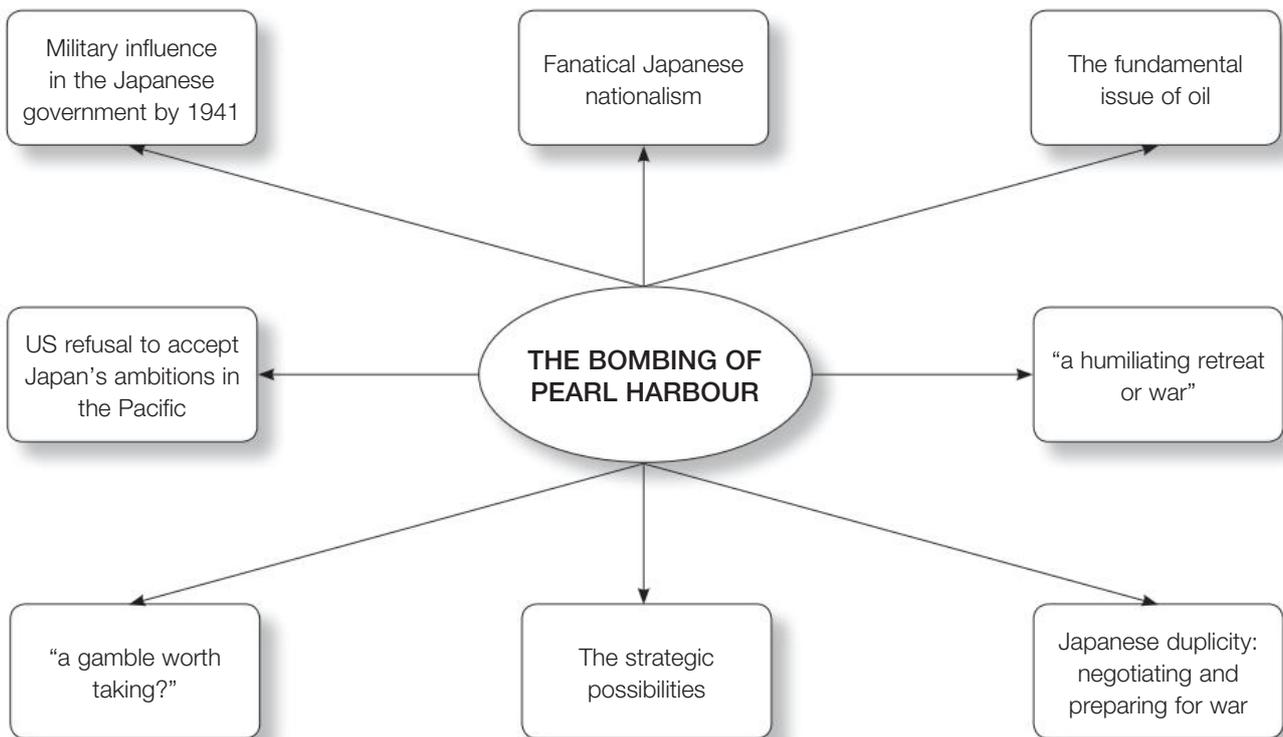
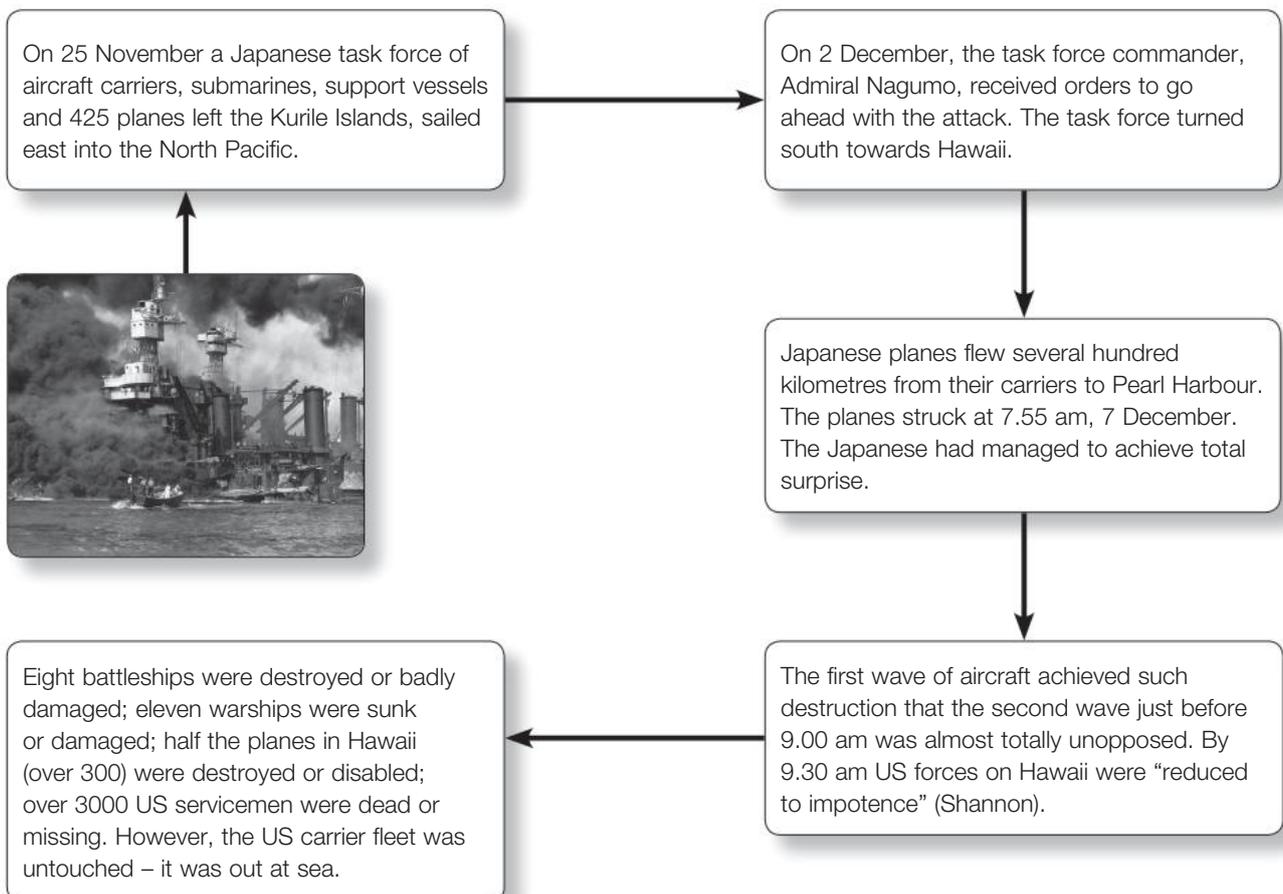


Figure 4.2 The bombing of Pearl Harbour: 7 December 1941



Exercise 4.1 Place the following events in the correct chronological order.

1st event		Tojo becomes Japanese Prime Minister
2nd event		The Hull Note
3rd event		The Lend-Lease Act
4th event		US oil embargo
5th event		Attack on Pearl Harbour
6th event		Saburo Kuruso join Washington negotiations
7th event		Japan takes the decision for war
8th event		Nomura-Hull negotiations begin
9th event		Minister of War Tojo's war plan is submitted
10th event		US aviation fuel embargo

What do the historians have to say about “Strategic and political reasons for the bombing of Pearl Harbour”?

1. Joseph C Grew

Joseph C Grew was the American ambassador to Tokyo from 1932 to 1941. He wrote of his time in Japan and decried the fact that policy makers in Washington failed to understand the psyche of the nationalists inside Japan. He said that commentators back in the United States were failing to take Japan seriously enough.

*“...many American writers and speakers discount the possibility of Japan’s declaring war on the United States under any circumstances especially while the former had her hands full in China...(Americans are unaware of) the political intensity of Japanese nationalistic fanaticism...”*⁴

2. Paul Manning

The ‘success’ of the Japanese attack was met with gleeful hysteria in the bars and on the streets of Tokyo. However, Manning highlights the doubts felt by Japanese leaders at the time and a major strategical error that was made immediately. The overall planner of Pearl Harbour, Admiral Yamamoto, knew that the failure to sink any US aircraft carriers at Pearl Harbour (they were out on exercises) augured badly for the future. Yamamoto urged Tojo to follow up the bombing with an army landing but Tojo said it was too dangerous. However, Manning suggests:

*“...If Tojo had listened to Yamamoto and seized the great island bastion, which he could have done with reasonable ease, the naval battles of Coral Sea and Midway would have been forestalled... The US Carrier Fleet would also have been isolated from supply lines...”*⁵

4 Grew, J C, Ten Years in Japan, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1944, p 315

5 Manning, P, Hirohito: The War Years, Bantam Books, New York, 1989, p 60

Chapter Five

The US response to Pearl Harbour

Chapter Seventeen provides a detailed study guide to the 1970 Hollywood movie “Tora, Tora, Tora”. This movie deals with the events leading up to the bombing of Pearl Harbour and the US response. “Tora, Tora, Tora” was praised at the time for its accuracy and even-handedness in how it dealt with the events of late 1941.

Did Roosevelt know what was coming?

Over the years, historians have debated the circumstances surrounding the bombing of Pearl Harbour and the American response to it.

- Did Roosevelt know what was coming and did nothing because he wanted the US to enter the war, and a Japanese attack would bring the American people along with him and finish off isolationism?
 - Members of the America First Committee later pushed this argument;
- Were the Americans provoking the Japanese into an attack in late November?
- Was the Hull Note nothing more than a means of pushing Japan to attack?
- Roosevelt firmly believed that the US had no choice but to become involved in a war with the Axis powers.
 - Thus, did Roosevelt anticipate, indeed welcome the attack on Pearl Harbour?
- Did the US administration deliberately ignore intelligence it had that an attack was imminent?

And so it goes on. Great fun for conspiracy theorists and the makers of second-rate history documentaries, but that is all. Certainly, the US believed an attack was likely but the administration had in mind an attack on Guam or The Philippines. It expected Japan to move southwards, which it did immediately; Pearl Harbour was after all just a raid, be it a major one.

On 6 December, the US received intelligence that Japanese troops were heading to Malaya. Roosevelt sent a cable to Hirohito, a personal appeal for peace. This does not seem to be the actions of a man hellbent on war (unless one sees such an action as a clear act of cynicism, with an eye to posterity). By the time Hirohito received the cable, Pearl Harbour was already in flames. Shannon sums up the debate about American foreknowledge in the following way:

*“...The military and naval establishments were grossly inefficient in sending further warnings to the commanding officers in Hawaii, but the “Pearl Harbour bait” argument does not stand up under careful analysis...”*¹

¹ Shannon, D A, *Between the Wars: America 1919-1941*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1979, p 281

The United States declares war on Japan

In the American system of government, the President does not have the power to declare war. The President is the Commander-in-Chief and has the final say in military matters during time of war but he cannot declare war on another nation. It is the Congress which has the power to declare war. Article 1, Section 8 of the American Constitution states Congress can:

“...declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water.”

The day after the bombing of Pearl Harbour, President Roosevelt addressed a joint sitting of the American Congress and “asked” Congress to declare war on the Empire of Japan:

- The House of Representatives voted in favour of war 388-1.²
- The Senate voted in favour 82-0.³

The anger felt throughout the country and inside the Congress was hardly surprising. Japan had attacked a US base and almost three thousand Americans were dead. However, the anger was compounded by the circumstances of the attack:

- Japan attacked the United States before it had actually declared war. Some might argue that an actual declaration of war at such a time is rather a moot point, but it added to American anger;
- the 1 December Imperial Conference in Tokyo had decided on Tojo’s war plan but the Americans were not to be told that negotiations had come to an end until 7 December;
- due to decoding problems, Nomura and Kurusu were not able to hand over notice that negotiations had ended until an hour after the bombing of Pearl Harbour had begun;
 - this put the action in the category of “a sneak attack”.

President Roosevelt’s address to Congress: 8 December 1941

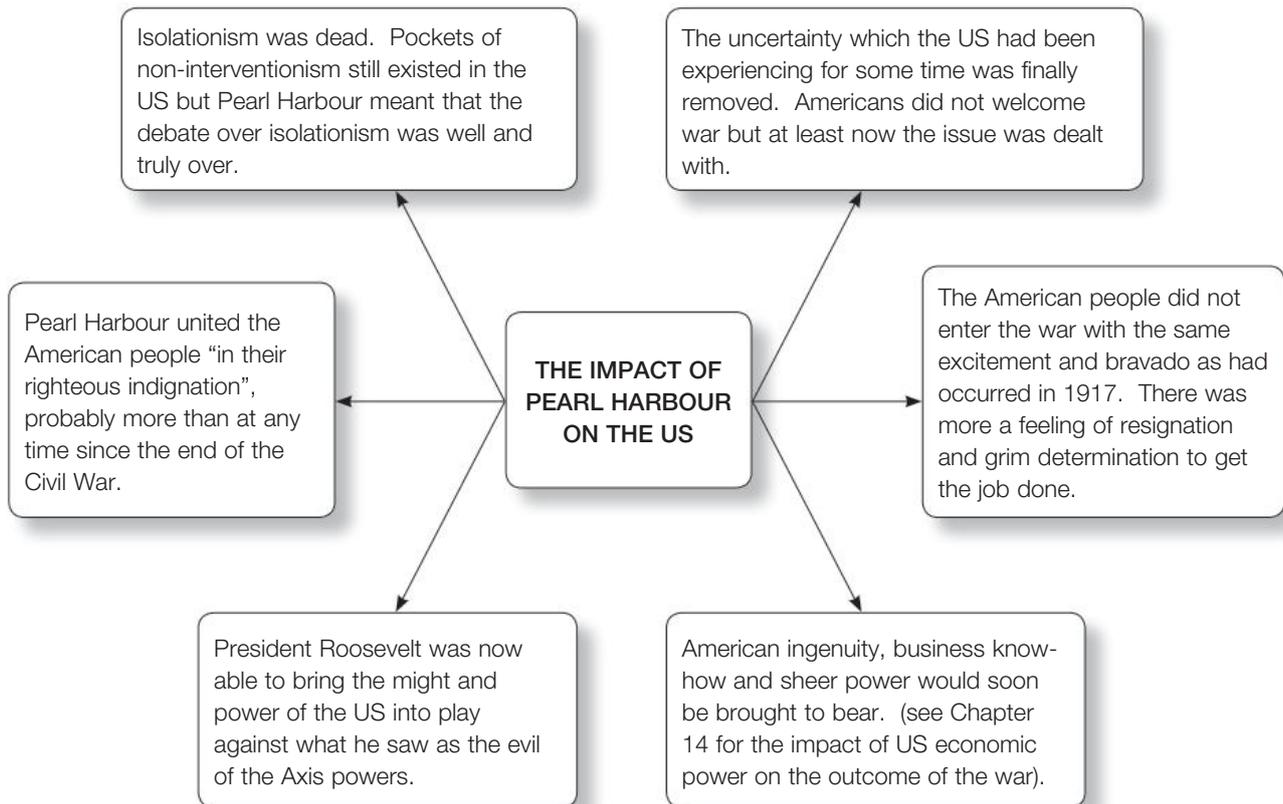
In his speech, Roosevelt stated clearly the anger that the American people felt about being “*suddenly and deliberately attacked*” by the forces of the Japanese Empire.

- He stated that 7 December would be “*a date that will live in infamy*”.
- He made the point that as Japan was so far from Hawaii, the forces that attacked Pearl Harbour must have left many days before while Japanese diplomats were still negotiating with their US counterparts, who “*sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace*”.
- He attempted to rally the American people by saying that no matter how long this war might take, the American people “*in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory*”.
- He asked the Congress to acknowledge that a state of war existed between the United States and the Empire of Japan since the latter’s “*unprovoked and dastardly attack*”.

² The dissenting vote came from Jeannette Rankin of Montana. Rankin had been a long-time pacifist, and had also voted against war in 1917.

³ On 11 December the Senate would also vote unanimously in favour of war against Germany and Italy

Figure 5.1 The immediate reaction to Pearl Harbour inside the United States



Immediate actions post-Pearl Harbour

The attack on Pearl Harbour was merely one part of a series of concerted actions carried out by the Japanese military. In his address to Congress, Roosevelt referred to Japan's *"surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area."*

- Guam fell to the Japanese on 10 December;
- Two British battleships, 'The Prince of Wales' and 'The Repulse' were sunk on 10 December;
- Wake Island on 13 December;
- Hong Kong on 25 December;
- Manila (The Philippines) on 2 January. ⁴

Japan's action brought about "global war". On 8 December the Netherlands, Britain, Australia and New Zealand declared war on Japan. On 11 December, Germany declared war on the United States. ⁵ A few hours later, the US Congress declared war on Germany. The vote was 393-0 in the House, and 88-0 in the Senate. The US was now committed to war both in Europe and in the Pacific.

⁴ The detail of Japanese actions will be examined in Chapter Six.

⁵ Germany was not obliged to do this under the terms of the Tripartite Pact.

Exercise 5.1 Complete the following passage using the terms in the box below.

For some years, opponents of Roosevelt have presented _____ notions that the President deliberately _____ Japan into bombing Pearl Harbour. Most reputable historians _____ this idea. The US _____ does not allow the President to declare war; it is _____ that has this power. The US declared _____ on Japan on 8 December; it declared war on _____ on 11 December. Roosevelt stated that 7 December was a day that would live in _____. He described the Japanese attack as unprovoked and _____. The US Congress voted in favour of war, the Senate _____, and in the House with one _____ vote. Pearl Harbour _____ the country. There was no real _____ for war, more a grim _____ of its necessity. The bombing of Pearl Harbour brought a final end to US _____.

GERMANY – CONSTITUTION – ENTHUSIASM – PROVOKED – UNITED –
CONSPIRATORIAL – WAR – ISOLATIONISM – REJECT – DASTARDLY – CONGRESS
– DISSENTING – ACCEPTANCE – INFAMY – UNANIMOUSLY –

What do the historians have to say about “The US response to Pearl Harbour”?

1. Robert Dallek

Dallek attacks the critics of Roosevelt who tried to argue that the President knew that Pearl Harbour was coming, and indeed provoked it as a backdoor way of becoming involved in the European war. He says that the country’s military and political leaders simply underestimated the likelihood of a Japanese attack. He counters the critics of Roosevelt by arguing that they did not want to see Pearl Harbour as a surprise in order to vindicate their isolationist beliefs.

*“...Having consistently argued that American security was not at stake in the war, or that the United States was invulnerable to attack, diehard isolationists tried to answer a devastating refutation of this theme by placing the blame for Pearl Harbour on FDR...”*⁶

⁶ Dallek, R, Franklin D Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945, 1979

2. President Franklin Roosevelt ⁷

Roosevelt addressed the American people two days after Pearl Harbour in a national radio address. The President was known for his “fireside chats” to the American people which he had been delivering since the worst days of the depression. What Roosevelt said to the American people was fairly predictable. He castigated the behaviour of Japan (and Germany and Italy) throughout the 1930s, and as Churchill had said to British people in May 1940, victory was the only option on the table:

“...I repeat that the United States can accept no result save victory, final and complete. Not only must the shame of Japanese treachery be wiped out, but the sources of international brutality, wherever they exist, must be absolutely and finally broken...”

Roosevelt highlighted the nature of the fundamental response of the United States to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. It was the final nail in the coffin of isolationism. No longer could the US cocoon itself within its borders:

“...There is no such thing as security for any nation – or any individual – in a world ruled by the principles of gangsterism...”

He reiterated what he had said in Congress the previous day about the US policy of isolationism. The United States must abandon:

“...once and for all the illusion that we can ever again isolate ourselves from the rest of humanity...”

He also showed that he foresaw that in the future, the United States would become a world player:

“...We are going to win the war and we are going to win the peace that follows...”

⁷ President Roosevelt, radio address from Washington, 9 December 1941

Notes

Chapter Six

Japanese advance 1941-42: the Philippines, Singapore, Burma, the Dutch East Indies

Japan's early moves

Japan's attacks across the Pacific and down through South East Asia were audacious. They represented an enormous gamble that at first seemed to have paid off. Japan had three fundamental aims during the early months of the Pacific war:

- the first aim was to grab control of the resources of South East Asia which it badly needed if it was to be able to sustain its campaigns;
 - in particular there was oil but also tin, rubber and food;
- the second aim was to destroy and remove the western presence – British, Dutch and American – from the region;
 - the French in Indochina had already been neutralised;
- the third aim was to create a defensive perimeter from Burma to Java to New Guinea and across the western Pacific to the Aleutian Islands.

In the short-term, Japan was spectacularly successful in achieving these goals:

- within six months, it had ended British control of Hong Kong, Burma, Malaya and the massive naval base of Singapore;
- it had gained control of the Dutch East Indies;
- it had ejected the United States from the Philippines

On the same day as the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour, Japanese military forces seemed to be everywhere. Guam, Wake and Midway Islands were attacked. Guam was taken by 13 December; Wake Island was taken on 20 December. Japan occupied the Gilbert Islands ¹ on 10 December.

In China, the international settlements in Shanghai and the foreign concessions in Tianjin were immediately seized. British and American establishments in Tangku, Taku and Chinwangtao were taken over. Hong Kong fell on 25 December.

Japanese troops were landed in north-eastern Malaya and southern Thailand. Japanese troops moved southwards down the isthmus of Kra to Malaya. On 21 December, Thailand and Japan signed a treaty of alliance; on 25 December Thailand declared war on Britain and the United States.

On 10 December, Japanese planes flying out of Vichy French-administered Indochina attacked and sank the British navy's HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse. The British far east fleet was now crippled.

¹ Since 1979 the independent nation of Kiribati.

In summary: by mid-February Japan had taken Singapore; Burma was under Japanese control by late March; the Dutch East Indies were Japanese by mid-March; by early May, the Japanese had control of the Philippines.

The Japanese conquest of the Philippines

The Philippines were crucial for the overall success of Japanese strategy:

- there was a significant US military presence in the country that had to be neutralised;
- taking over the Philippines would make possible further advance, for example towards the Dutch East Indies (and its all-important oil);
- by controlling the Philippines, communication links between S E Asia and Japan itself, as well as within S E Asia, would be secured.

Within hours of the attack on Pearl Harbour, Japanese planes attacked US air bases in the northern Philippines. Almost all the planes making up the FEAF (Far East Air Force) were lined up neatly at Clark Air Base, 70 kms north of Manila when the attack began. Simultaneously, the fighter base at Iba, on the western coast of Luzon, was attacked. The FEAF's strength was cut in half on the first day. Within a week, the Japanese had effectively destroyed the FEAF.

Having gained air superiority, the Japanese began its land invasion.

- Japanese forces landed first at Batan Island, north of the main island of Luzon.
 - Other landings in Luzon followed during the next few days,
- On 14 December, the Japanese 16th Division landed 2500 men in southern Luzon at Legazpi.
- On 21 December, Mindanao island was attacked.
- On 22 December major Japanese forces landed at Lingayen Gulf.
- US General Douglas Macarthur ordered US/ Filipino forces out of Manila on 24 December.
 - Manila was declared an "Open City".²
 - However, this did not stop the Japanese bombing the city. Japan began its occupation of Manila on 2 January.
- After the Lingayen Gulf landings, Macarthur ordered troops and supplies to be moved to the Bataan Peninsula, on the western side of Manila Bay.³
 - A three-month intense battle followed between Japanese and US forces.
 - US General King Jr was finally forced to surrender on 9 April 1942.
- US troops were still present on the small island of Corregidor just south of the Bataan Peninsula.
 - General Homma landed his troops there on 5 May and within two days, US forces under General Wainwright were forced to surrender.
 - After Corregidor, all allied forces within the Philippines surrendered to the Japanese.⁴

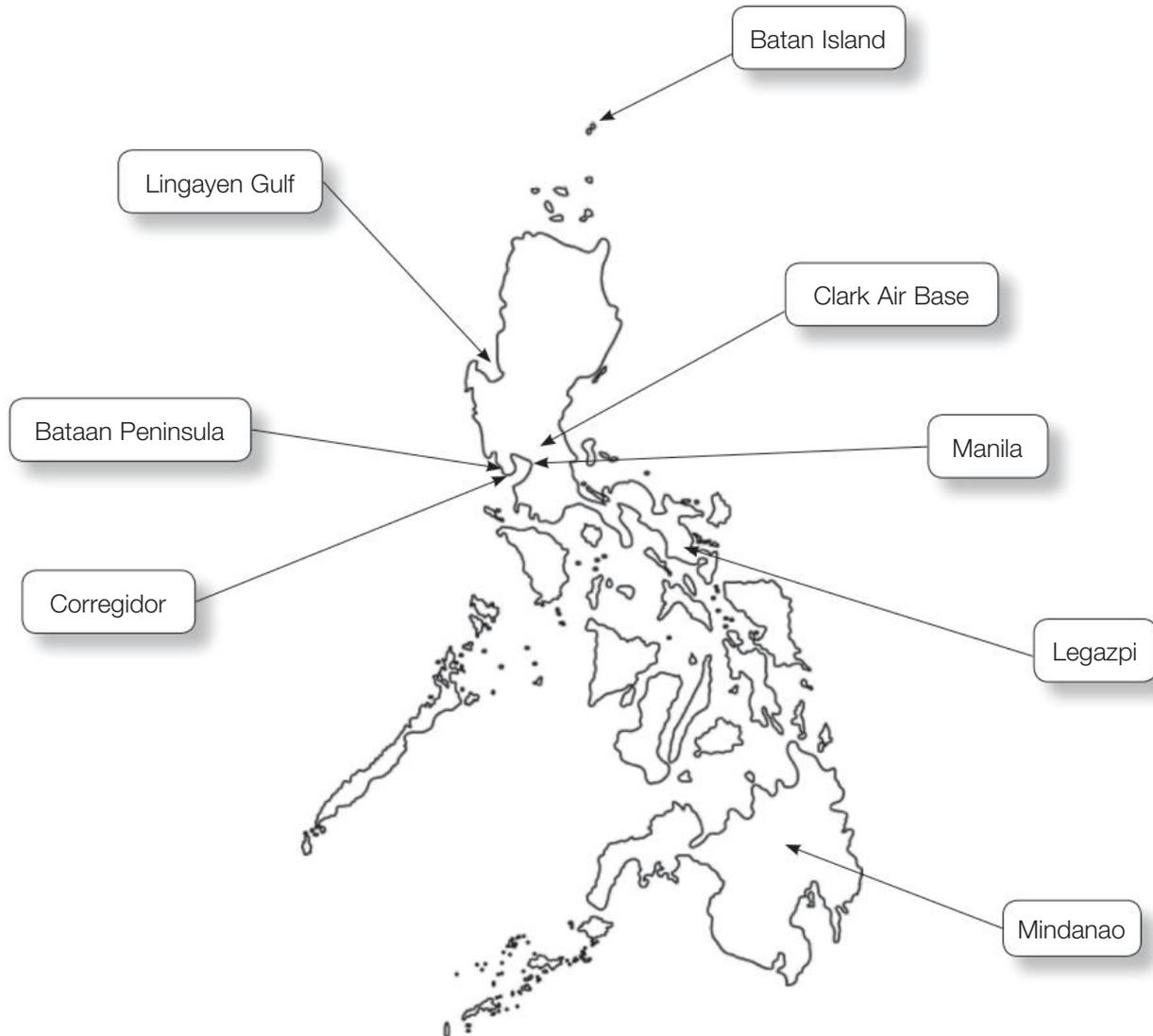
² If a settlement declares itself an "Open City" in time of war, it is announcing that it has ended any attempt to defend itself. The invading enemy is then expected to peacefully take over the city. The aim of this policy is to avoid unnecessary destruction of a city by an invading force.

³ President Roosevelt ordered General Macarthur to flee the Philippines. Macarthur, his family and senior officers left the Philippines on 11 March. They arrived at RAAF Bachelor Field, south of Darwin, on 17 March.

⁴ Anti-Japanese guerrilla activities against the Japanese did continue over the next two years.

Figure 6.1 shows the principal locations of the connected to the fall of the Philippines.

Figure 6.1 The Philippines December 1941-May 1942



The Bataan Death March: Following the US surrender on the Bataan Peninsula on 9 April 1942, the Japanese forces marched approximately 75 000 US/ Filipino soldiers north, from Mariveles to San Fernando. Between five and ten thousand prisoners died during the march. Many more died in captivity having to suffer brutal beatings, bayoneting, torture and beheadings at the hands of the Japanese. News of what happened did not reach the US until January 1944 and it predictably caused great anger. The man responsible for the Death March was General Homma Masaharu. He was found guilty of the atrocities at a post-war US Military Tribunal. He was executed on 3 April 1946.

The Doolittle Raid: After Pearl Harbour and the Philippines, Roosevelt sought a symbolic act of retaliation. On 18 April 1942, fifteen planes, led by Lt Colonel James Doolittle, took off from a US ship east of Japan. Each had four bombs which were dropped on Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Kobe. The planes flew on to Japanese-occupied China where most were rescued by Chinese peasants. One crew landed in the Soviet Union and was interned. Eight airmen were captured by the Japanese; four were executed. The raid had no military value but it showed the Japanese that they were vulnerable, and it was a fillip to US morale at the time.

Exercise 6.1 Place the events on the right in the correct chronological order.

1st event		Battle of Bataan
2nd event		Japan captures Manila
3rd event		Bombing of Pearl Harbour
4th event		Battle of Corregidor
5th event		Japan captures Hong Kong
6th event		Sinking of the HMS Prince of Wales
7th event		Japan captures Guam
8th event		Bataan Death March
9th event		Japan captures Wake Island
10th event		The Doolittle Raid

The Fall of Singapore: 15 February 1942

Singapore represented all that was great about the British Empire. It was seen as the bastion of British power in the Far East. Following improvements to its defences in the 1930s, it was considered far too strong for the Japanese to take. However, Singapore's defensive guns pointed out to the sea; it was considered inconceivable that the island could be attacked from the jungles and swamps of Malaya.

At the time, there was also a degree of arrogant racism amongst the British there. "The Japanese are poor fighters, okay against the Chinese, also poor fighters, but when they have to the face the British army...." There was even a view at the time that Japanese had poorer eye sight than the British and so could not operate so well during the night. The Japanese were soon to prove what able fighters they were.⁵

The Japanese advance was rapid and took the British totally by surprise.

- In mid-December, Japanese troops landed in southern Thailand and north east Malaya.
 - As Japanese forces moved south, each British defence line crumbled.
 - British Indian troops defending northern Malaya were wiped out.

⁵ There is an instructive scene at the beginning of the 1997 film, "Paradise Road" which highlights the arrogance and complacency of the British in Singapore on the eve of the Japanese invasion.

- Australian troops defending southern Malaya were forced to retreat.
- Japanese forces moved rapidly south along the Malaya Peninsula, using lorries, tanks and even bicycles.
- General Percival's troops were defeated at the Battle of Jitra, 11/12 December and were forced to retreat.
- Japanese brutality in the Malay Peninsula was a portent of what could be expected from the Japanese during the war.
 - prisoners and enemy troops surrendering were killed;
 - locals who helped allied troops were tortured and killed.
- On 11 January, the Japanese captured Kuala Lumpur; Johore, the capital of Malaya's southern region fell on 14 January.
- By 31 January, British and Australian troops were withdrawing across the causeway separating Malaya from Singapore.
- Percival spread his men out thinly along a 110 km line, the entire coastline. He was expecting a larger Japanese force that might attack at several locations. He was wrong.

On 8 February, the Japanese crossed the Johor Strait. Japanese air attacks effectively wiped out allied air forces in the first few days. As a result, the Japanese were able to bomb the city at will. Soon over 23 000 Japanese troops were heading towards Singapore.

- Though vastly outnumbered, the Japanese moved quickly. Over a million people were trapped in the city and with the Japanese in control of water supplies, General Percival felt that he had no choice but to surrender.
 - It was an outstanding military victory, masterminded by the Japanese general, Tomoyuki Yamashita.
- Over 130 000 allied soldiers became POWs. ⁶
 - Of these, 15 000 were Australian (8th Division AIF); 7000 of them would die as POWs. ⁷

The Fall of Singapore was a catastrophe for the allied cause, for Britain and in particular for Australia.

- The capture of Singapore and the British naval base, along with the sinking of the Prince of Wales and the Repulse, left Japan as master of the seas in South East Asia and the Western Pacific (at least in the short term).
 - Japan's progress towards the Dutch East Indies, and its oil, could now continue unhindered.
- For Britain it was a humiliation of the highest order. Britain's presence east of India had disappeared at a stroke. British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, had no doubts about the significance of the Fall of Singapore:

"...the worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history..." ⁸

⁶ Prisoners-of-war.

⁷ "Controversially, the commander of Australian forces on the island, Major General Gordon Bennett, escaped the island with two staff officers on the night of the surrender." (Australian National Museum).

⁸ Churchill, W, *The Hinge of Fate*, Cassell, London, 1951, p 43

- For Australia, the Fall of Singapore was a calamity:
 - within four days, Darwin was being bombed;
 - the security blanket of British power which Australia had always taken for granted was destroyed;
 - there were real fears inside the country that Japan might invade;
 - post-war research suggests that an invasion was highly unlikely, but for a while in 1942, the fear was real.⁹

Japan's takeover of Burma

Japanese air raids on Rangoon, Burma's capital, began soon after Pearl Harbour. Japanese forces invaded Burma in mid-December. By the end of January all major British air bases had been destroyed. Rangoon was captured on 8 March 1942. By 20 March, most British forces had been pushed out of Burma. The city of Mandalay fell to the Japanese on 2 May. Figure 6.2 outlines the significance of the defeat of the British in Burma.

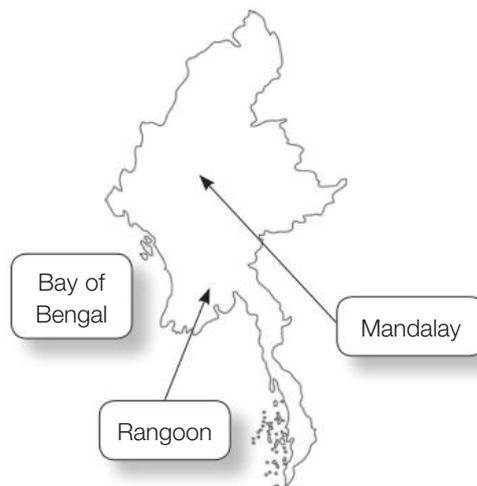
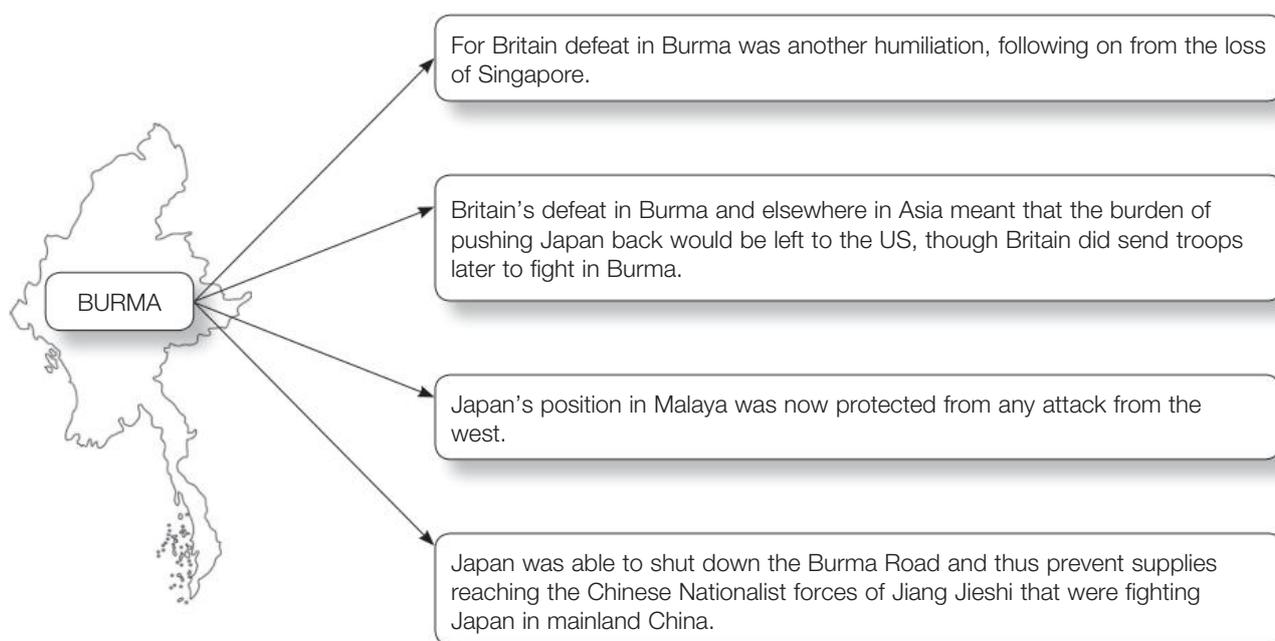


Figure 6.2 The British defeat in Burma



⁹ See the historians section at the end of this chapter for more on the significance for Australia.

Japan's takeover of the Dutch East Indies

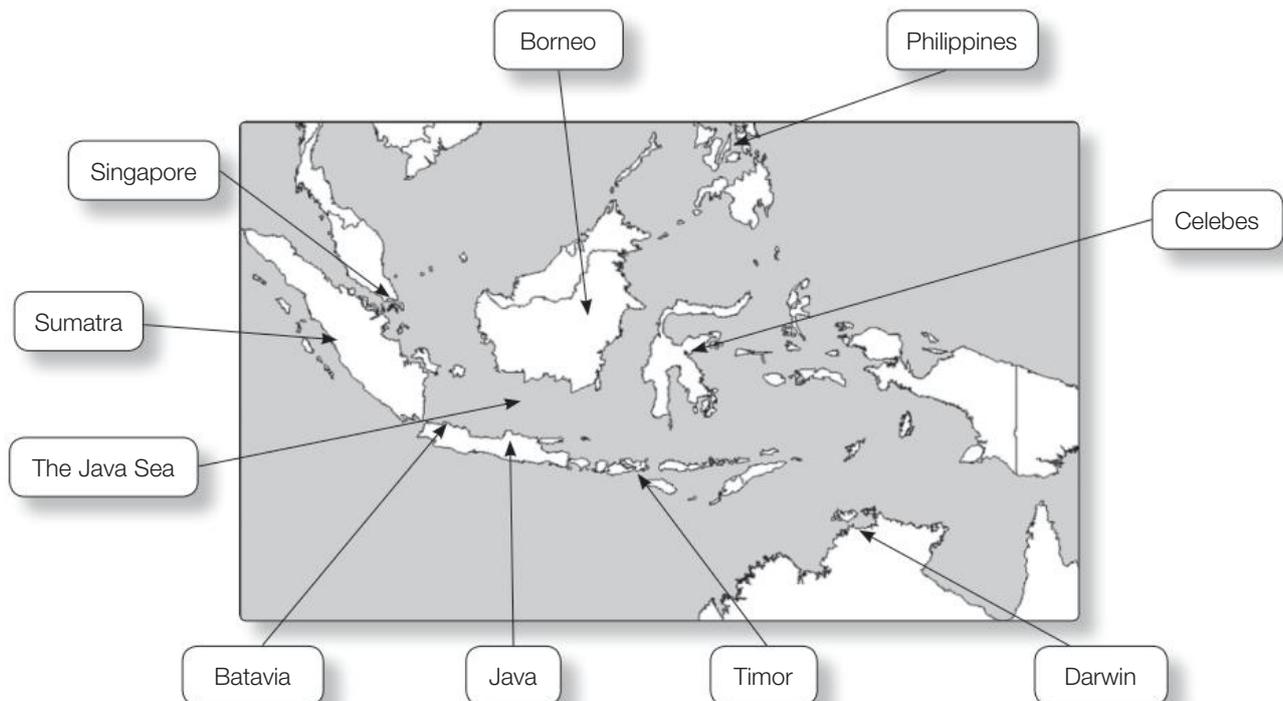
The Dutch East Indies was of particular importance for the Japanese due to the oil resources. On 16 December 1941, Japanese troops entered Borneo; on 14 February they moved into Sumatra.

At the end of February came the Battle of the Java Sea:

- as Japanese forces were attempting to take the Dutch East Indies, allied forces tried to slow the Japanese advance towards Australia;
- a Japanese fleet commanded by Rear Admiral Takeo Takagi and Rear Admiral Shoji Nishimura was challenged by a combined American/ British/ Dutch/ Australian (ABDA) fleet led by Rear Admiral Karel Doorman;
- the Battle of the Java Sea resulted in a great victory for the Japanese and ended any significant resistance from the ABDA forces.
- ABDA's losses included two light cruisers, three destroyers and the loss of over 2300 men. Japan was now able to land troops 65 kms west of Surabaya at Kragan.

The Japanese takeover of the Dutch East Indies were quick. By the end of January 1942, Japan controlled most of Celebes (Sulawesi) and Borneo (Kalimantan). On 19 February Japan landed troops in Timor. Following the Battle of the Java Sea, Japanese troops landed at various points in Java. Following fierce fighting, Batavia was taken on 9 March and the Dutch forces finally surrendered.¹⁰ Figure 6.3 shows the key locations of Japanese action in the Dutch East Indies.

Figure 6.3 Japanese actions in the Dutch East Indies



¹⁰ Batavia is today Jakarta.

Exercise 6.2 Rearrange each anagram and identify the position held by each person.

1	RLAPEVIC		
2	MRODONA		
3	MHAOM		
4	GATAKI		
5	RAMRUATCH		
6	AMTSAYAH		
7	RWTANHWIGI		
8	TEBNETN		
9	GINK		
10	TOLELDOTI		

What do the historians have to say about the “Japanese advance 1941-42: the Philippines, Singapore, Burma, the Dutch East Indies”?

1. Edwin P Hoyt

By mid-1942, Japan had a major problem; it had been ‘too successful, too quickly’. In Hong Kong it had taken 10 000 prisoners; in Singapore 130 000; thousands more were taken in the Dutch East Indies. What to do with them? Tojo decided that everyone in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere must earn their keep by contributing to the war effort. Field Marshal Terauchi was given the task of building a railway through Thailand into Burma to connect to the far western part of Japan’s new empire. This way supplies could be moved overland rather than down the Arakan Peninsula by sea. Imperial headquarters gave him eighteen months to complete the task. The labour force would comprise POWs and forced Asian labour. By the end of the war, the railway had taken the lives of 16 000 allied POWs and up to 60 000 Asian forced labourers.

*“...The scandal was so enormous that before war’s end it had spread halfway around the world, despite Japanese security precautions, and even the Japanese government was trying to hush it up...”*¹¹

2. Andrew Roberts

In his biography of Churchill, Roberts brings out how the thinking at the time fully understood what a disaster the Fall of Singapore was. As well as the enormous number of prisoners who had been taken:

*“...‘India is naked’, noted General John Kennedy. ‘Ceylon the main fleet base, very bare. Fighting is going on near Rangoon... Australia (and the base at Port Darwin) is also comparatively defenceless... In his broadcast to the nation at 9.00 pm, Churchill made no attempt to minimize the catastrophe...’*¹²

3. John Curtin

John Curtin was Prime Minister of Australia (1941-45). Even before the Fall of Singapore, Curtin recognised that Australia could not rely on the power of Britain any more for its protection and that Australia must look to the United States. Curtin’s “turn towards the US” speech, presaged the fundamental basis of post-war Australian foreign policy.

*“...Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom ... we shall exert all our energies towards the shaping of a plan, with the United States as its keystone, which will give our country some confidence of being able to hold out until the tide of battle swings against the enemy...”*¹³

¹¹ Hoyt, E P, Japan’s War: The Great Pacific Conflict, Guild Publishing, London, 1987, p 256

¹² Roberts, A, Churchill, Penguin, 2019, p 715

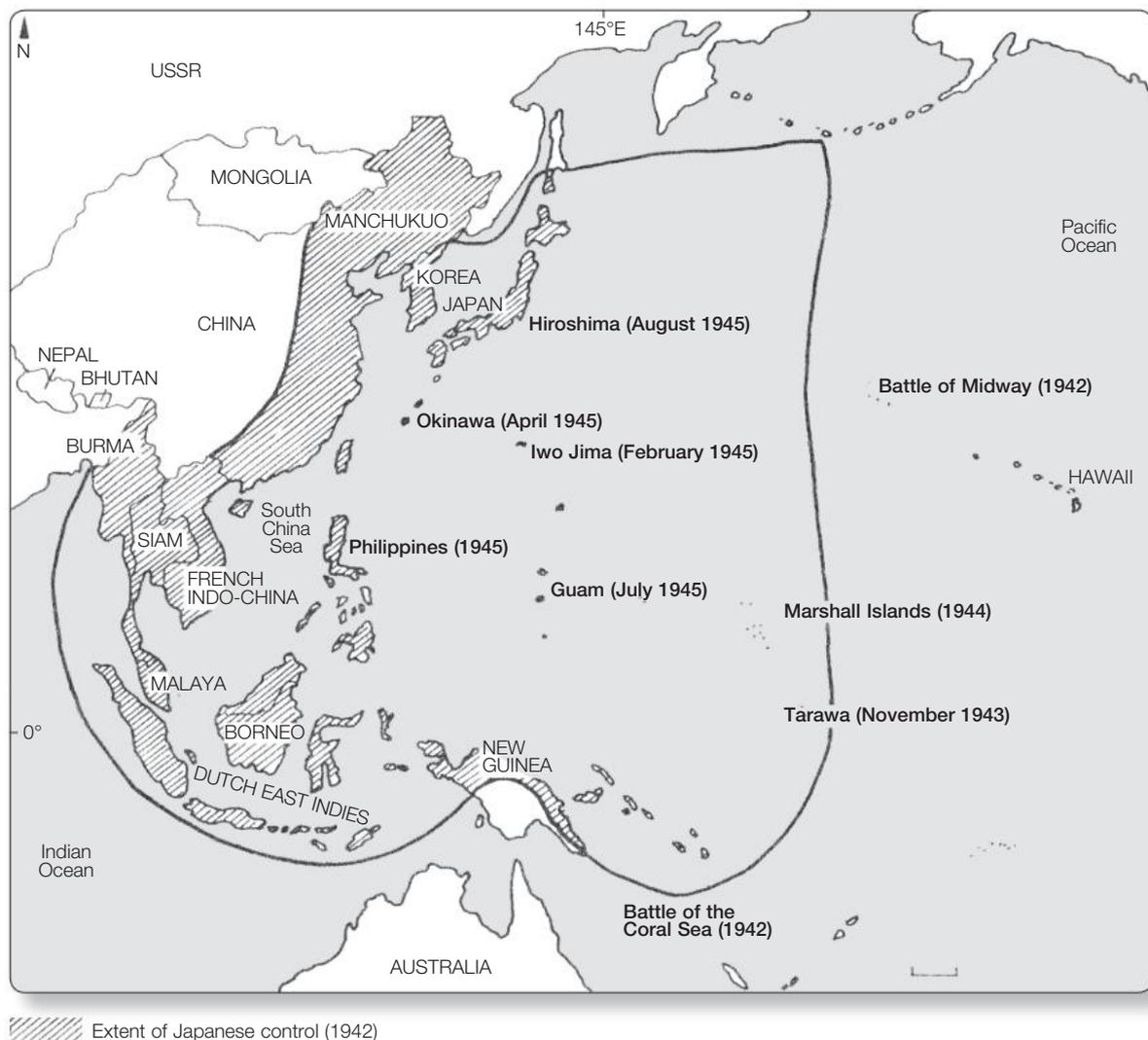
¹³ Prime Minister John Curtin, 27 December 1941.

Chapter Seven

Turning points in the war: Battle of the Coral Sea, Battle of Midway, Battle of Guadalcanal, New Guinea

Within six months of Pearl Harbour, Japan was in control of S E Asia and the western Pacific. The war in China was dragging on but Japan controlled the key coastal and industrial areas from Manchuria to Indochina. French Indochina was compliant, Thailand was an ally. Burma was taken over and the Burma Road had been closed. Malaya was under control and Singapore had been a dramatic military success. The Dutch East Indies, and its all-important oil supplies were in Japanese hands. A defensive perimeter stretched from the Ellice Islands to Wake Island to the Aleutian Islands in the north. The extent of Japanese control by May 1942 is shown in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1 The extent of Japanese control by May 1942



However, though the war would drag on for over three years more, Japan was to suffer a series of major setbacks which would eventually lead to its defeat. These turning points included:

- the Battle of the Coral Sea: 4-8 May 1942
- the Battle of Midway: 4-7 June 1942
- the Battle of Guadalcanal: 7 August 1942-9 February 1943
- the failure to capture New Guinea from January 1942-August 1945

The Battle of the Coral Sea

The Battle of the Coral Sea took place between 4th and 8th May 1942. It was fought in the Coral Sea in an area between the Solomon Islands, the north-eastern tip of Australia (from Townsville to Horn Island), and the eastern tip of New Guinea. The area covered thousands of square kilometres of sea and often each side did not know where their enemy was.

The Japanese commander, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, had several objectives when he moved his naval forces into this area:

- in one sense it was a desire to increase the area under Japanese control as an air of over-confidence was creeping into the Japanese mind, following its string of easy victories since Pearl Harbour;
- Yamamoto may have been hoping to inflict some significant damage on US forces in a final engagement before they had a chance to make good the losses suffered the previous December;
- the Japanese were concerned at having failed to hit any aircraft-carriers at Pearl Harbour, and the US had managed to launch small-scale raids on Japanese bases in the central and south Pacific, as well as the Doolittle Raid of April 1942;¹
- the Japanese were also hoping to extend their defence perimeter and so provide greater security for their base at Rabaul in north eastern New Guinea;
- the immediate objective of the Japanese was to capture Port Moresby in New Guinea and Tulagi in the southern Solomons;
 - Japanese captured Tulagi but not Port Moresby;
- if this could be achieved, lines of communication between Australia and the west coast of the US could be cut.

The Battle of the Coral Sea was the greatest naval battle that had occurred off the coast of Australia. The battle was evenly matched and is significant in warfare history for being the first naval battle to be decided by aircraft action. Planes were used to damage the rival carriers and the naval craft never got to see each other let alone fire upon each other.

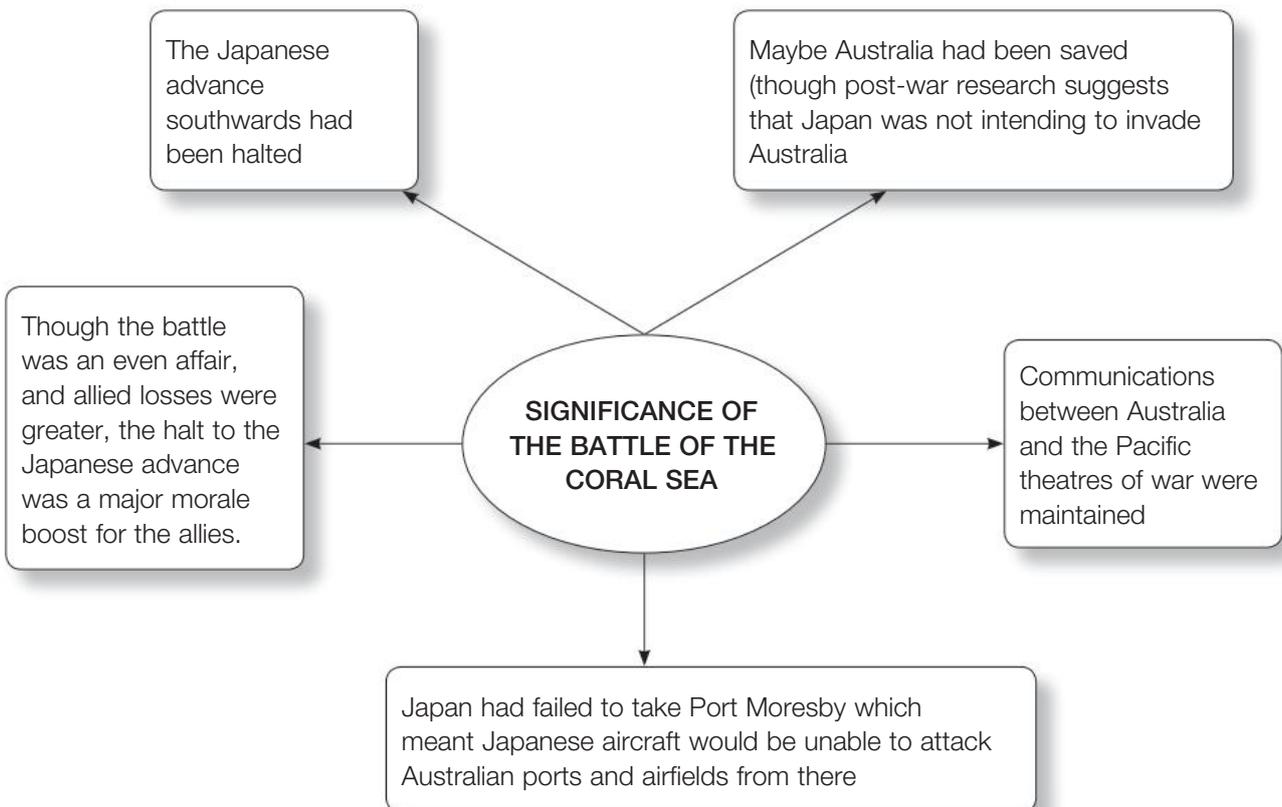
- The battle resulted in greater US losses:
 - one US carrier (the Lexington) was destroyed and another (the Yorktown) was damaged; a tanker and one destroyer were also sunk;
 - the US lost 66 aircraft;
 - 543 men were killed or wounded.

¹ See Chapter Six.

- Japanese losses included:
 - one carrier destroyed and one badly damaged;
 - a destroyer and three smaller vessels sunk;
 - 77 carrier aircraft lost;
 - 1071 men killed or wounded.

In material terms, the Coral Sea Battle was a Japanese victory. However, as Figure 7.2 suggests, it can be viewed as an allied victory.

Figure 7.2 The significance of the Battle of the Coral Sea



The Battle of Midway

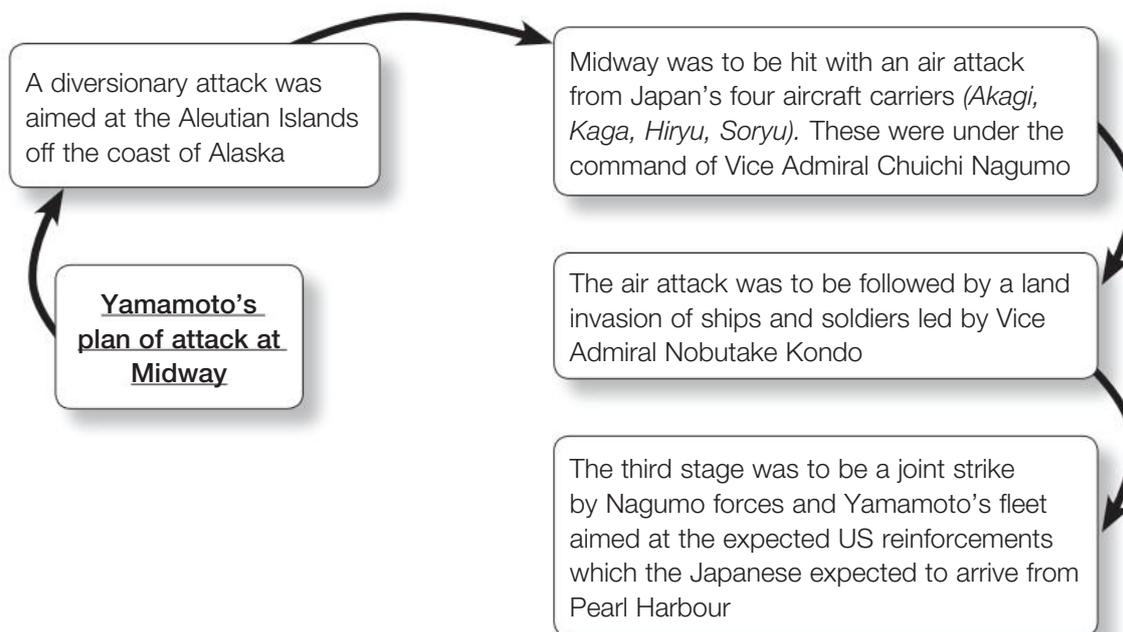
Midway is a 6.2 sq km atoll in the North Pacific. It is roughly halfway between North America and Asia, and so occupied an extremely important strategic position. If the US lost control of Midway, it would face a major setback in its attempt to push back the Japanese advance.

The Battle of Midway (4-7 June 1942) is recognised as the key turning point in the Conflict in the Pacific. Japanese success at Midway could have secured their control of the Western Pacific.

- Even if it did not mean the final defeat of the US, it would have meant the survival of Japan and a continuation of its control of east Asia.
- Japanese failure at Midway was to be the key turning point in the war. After Midway, it was not a case of will Japan be defeated, but how long it would take to achieve its defeat.

Admiral Yamamoto was hoping to achieve a decisive victory which would weaken the US war effort for some time to come. Figure 7.3 outlines his plan.

Figure 7.3 The Japanese plan for Midway



Yamamoto did not realise that US cryptologists had been working on breaking Japanese codes. The result was that US forces were able to work out the planned order of battle that the Japanese naval forces had in mind. With this information, the US Commander of the US Pacific Fleet, Admiral Chester Nimitz was able to put in place an effective US counter-plan.

On 3 June, US B-17 Flying Fortress bombers attempted to attack Kondo's forces but with little success. A second attack early on 4 June was also unsuccessful. Japanese warplanes then attacked the US base on Midway. Over the next two days, the battle ebbed and flowed but the main part of the battle was over by the evening of 4 June following the successful attack by US carrier-launched bombers on Japan's aircraft carriers. By late on 6 June, Yamamoto had ordered a retreat of his forces which ended the Battle of Midway.

The outcome of the Battle of Midway was of enormous significance: the Japanese had suffered a massive defeat from which they would never recover.

- The Japanese navy lost four aircraft carriers (Akagi, Kaga, Soryu, Hiryu):
 - considering the extent of the Pacific Ocean, this ended any hopes that the Japanese might have had to extend its reach across the Pacific;
 - from now on, Japan was able to fight only a defensive campaign;
- Japan also lost a heavy cruiser and almost 300 aircraft;
 - perhaps even more significantly, it lost over 200 of its most experienced pilots;
 - Japanese losses exceeded 3000 men;

- American losses were significantly less than the Japanese:
 - the Americans lost an aircraft carrier, The Yorktown and the destroyer the USS Hammann;
 - 145 aircraft went down;
 - US losses were just over 350.

The Battle of Midway was a decisive moment in the war. Japan was now put on to a permanent defensive stance. While US morale soared, Japanese morale fell. It certainly did not mean the war was over; many savage battles lay ahead. However, it did mean that the tide had been turned decisively in favour of the allies.²

Exercise 7.1 Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1	Due to their success in early 1942, Japan's military leaders were not that worried about having failed to strike at the US' aircraft carriers at Pearl Harbour.	TRUE/ FALSE
2	A key objective of the Japanese at the time of the Battle of the Coral Sea was to capture Port Moresby.	TRUE/ FALSE
3	The Battle of the Coral Sea was noteworthy because it was a naval battle where rival fleets never sighted each other.	TRUE/ FALSE
4	In the Battle of the Coral Sea, the United States suffered greater losses than Japan.	TRUE/ FALSE
5	The Battle of the Coral Sea resulted in a very decisive victory for Japan.	TRUE/ FALSE
6	Historians are generally agreed that Japan did not harbour plans for a full-scale invasion of Australia.	TRUE/ FALSE
7	As with the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Battle of Midway ended rather inconclusively.	TRUE/ FALSE
8	At the Battle of Midway, the Japanese had the great advantage of having broken the US' secret codes.	TRUE/ FALSE
9	As a result of the Battle of Midway, the Japanese had been put on a permanent defensive stance.	TRUE/ FALSE
10	Due to the American victory at Midway, it meant that the war would be over in a very short time.	TRUE/ FALSE

Guadalcanal

The island of Guadalcanal is part of the Solomon Islands situated about 1000 kms east of Port Moresby. The Bismarck Archipelago is a string of islands to the north east of New Guinea. The Battle of Guadalcanal would involve six months of gruelling combat in the steaming, fetid jungles of the island. It was the first major allied offensive and involved a complex series of battles on land, at sea and in the air. In its way, Guadalcanal was as much a turning point in the war as Midway.³

² Two major Hollywood movies have been made on Midway: "Midway" (1976) and "Midway" (2019). Neither film is perfect but each deals with the events of the battle and its context pretty well. If students have the time, it is definitely worth watching one or the other.

³ The 1998 movie, The Thin Red Line, directed by Terrence Malick and starring Sean Penn, provides a vivid portrayal of the fighting conditions on Guadalcanal. The film was based on James Jones' 1962 novel.

The US offensive in Guadalcanal was codenamed 'Watchtower'. The campaign had several key objectives:

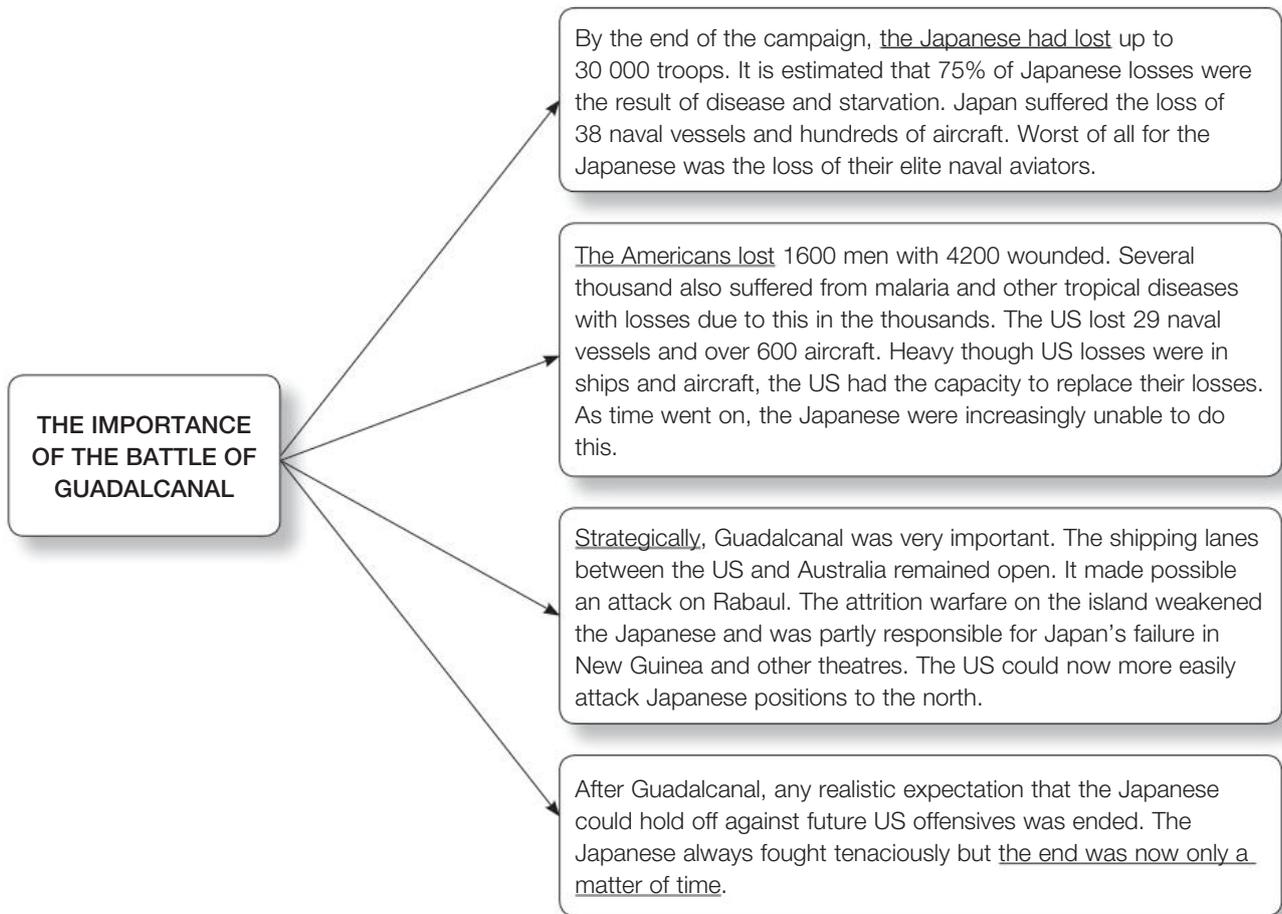
- US intelligence reports had indicated that the Japanese were building an airstrip at Lunga Point on the northern coastal plain of Guadalcanal;
 - Japanese forces arrived in June to begin construction;
 - this prompted the US decision to invade the island;
- a Japanese presence in the islands backed by an airstrip was a threat to communications between the US and Australia;
- allied control of Guadalcanal would make possible an attack on the Japanese base at Rabaul;
- a continued Japanese presence in the Solomons could thwart the eventual allied road to Tokyo.

The Battle of Guadalcanal began on 7 August 1942; it lasted until 9 February:

- a massive American amphibious force landed on the island on 7 August 1942;
 - it comprised almost 100 vessels, including an aircraft-carrier which provided air support for the troops;
 - the Americans landed 60 000 troops; the Japanese had just over 36 000;
 - US ground forces were first led by General Alexander Vandegrift and later General Alexander Patch;
 - US naval forces were led by Admiral Richmond Turner;
 - Japanese forces were led by Admiral Yamamoto and General Hitoshi Inamura;
- US troops quickly captured the small islands of Tulagi and Florida to the north of Guadalcanal and soon captured the airfield;
 - the airfield was renamed Henderson Field;⁴
- the Japanese offered stiff resistance and showed a clear unwillingness to surrender even when the odds were stacked against them;
 - several naval battles were fought, including the Battle of Savo Island in which the Japanese were successful;
 - the authorities in Tokyo sent many reinforcements;
 - in November the Americans destroyed or badly damaged ten of eleven transport ships bringing more troops to the island;
 - the brutal fighting in incredibly hot, humid conditions continued for months with neither side willing to back down;
- a Japanese attack in mid-November involving over 10 000 troops was halted after fierce fighting;
 - the Japanese were forced back and never recovered;
 - the Americans finally were able to claim total control of the island on 9 February 1942.

⁴ Henderson was an American pilot who had died during the Battle of Midway.

Figure 7.4 outlines the significance of the Battle of Guadalcanal

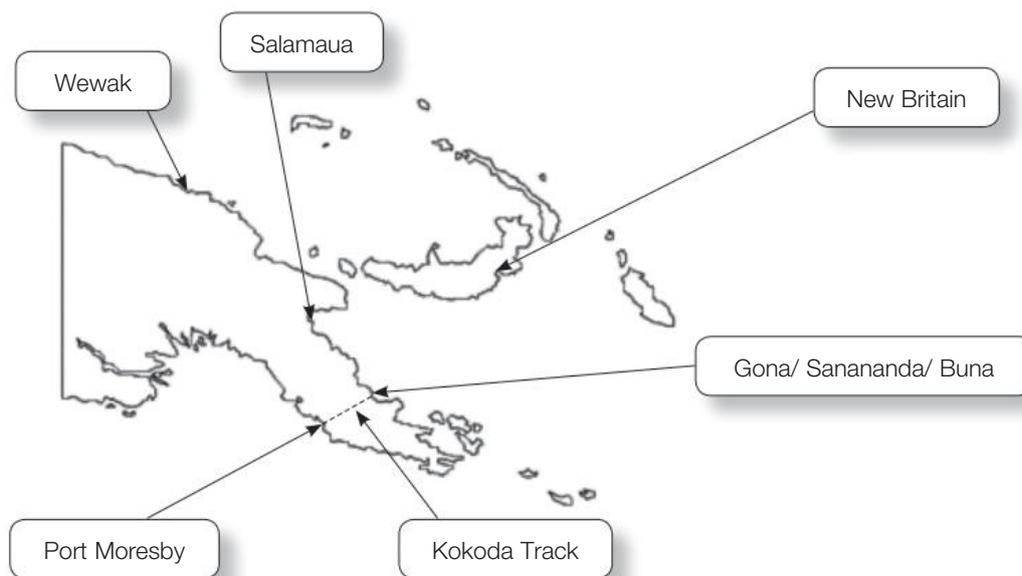


New Guinea

The campaign in New Guinea would last from January 1942 to the very end of the war. The campaign in New Guinea was marked by persistence of both sides. The allies dare not let the Japanese succeed; the Japanese fought to the very end despite enormous, and disproportionate losses. Both Japanese and allied forces had to endure the harshest of fighting environments which included thick jungle, mountain, torrential rain, humidity, cold nights and ever-present disease.

- The principal aim of the Japanese invasion was to eventually gain control of Port Moresby.
 - This would then give them the ability to dominate the Coral Sea, the northern coast of Australia and prevent communications between the US and Australia.
- If success could also be achieved in the Battle of Coral Sea, success for the Japanese in New Guinea would have been extremely damaging for the allied war effort in the South West Pacific theatre of war.

Figure 7.5 Locations of the New Guinea campaign



The course of the New Guinea campaign

Early 1942	Japanese troops land at Salamaua on the northern coast of New Guinea and on the island of New Britain to the east.
June	The 39th Division of the Australian militia are sent to secure the airfield at Kokoda, midway along the Kokoda Track between Port Moresby in the south, and Buna and Gona in the north. ⁵
21 July	The Japanese land at Gona. The aim was to advance across the 200 km track through the Owen Stanley Ranges to Port Moresby.
29 July	The Australian troops are forced out of Kokoda.
11 August	The Japanese capture the airfield at Kokoda.
August	The Japanese push the Australians back to Isurava and Alola. The militia are replaced by AIF troops of the 9th Division recently returned from the Middle East. 7000 Japanese troops continue their advance taking Menari. The Australians fall back to Imita Ridge.
August/ September	Japanese troops land in the east at Milne Bay. By 6 September, the Japanese are forced to withdraw. This is the first defeat on land the Japanese experience in the war.
September	Being closer to Port Moresby and able to get reinforcements and supplies more easily than the Japanese, who had to contend with long lines of communication, the Australians slowly push the Japanese back along the Kokoda Track, in some of the toughest conditions yet faced in the campaign.
2 November	The Australians are back in Kokoda.
16 November	Australian and US forces are attacking Japanese positions in Buna and Gona.

⁵ The militia were not professional soldiers but part of the home reserve. With an average age of eighteen and a half, they were derisively called 'chocos' at the time as it was believed they would melt away in the face of a real enemy like the experienced Japanese.

1 December	The allies take Gona.
2 January '43	The allies take Buna.
22 January	The allies capture Sanananda
3 March	A Japanese convoy carrying 3000 reinforcements is sunk in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea.
September	Japanese forces abandon Salamaua; US troops take it on 11th.
November	General Macarthur calls a temporary halt to the allied advance.
May 1944	In the last great advance of the New Guinea campaign, Australian troops capture Wewak.
To August 45	Though having no chance of victory, Japanese General Adachi 2 refused to give in until the end of the war when he surrendered along with his 13 500 remaining troops.

The allied victory in New Guinea had a significant impact on the course of the war:

- By ending effective Japanese control of New Guinea (though some of their troops continued to fight until August 1945), Japan's attempt to extend its defence perimeter in the South West Pacific was ended. Japanese losses in New Guinea were far greater than those of the allies.
- If Japan had captured Port Moresby, communications between Australia and the US would have been seriously threatened.
- It ended any possibility of an invasion of Australia (though most historians today doubt whether Japan had serious invasion plans).
- Success in New Guinea helped promote General Macarthur's push through the South West Pacific, his island-hopping campaign and his return to the Philippines. ⁶

Exercise 7.2 Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	What intelligence prompted the US to launch its campaign in Guadalcanal?	
2	How long did the Guadalcanal campaign last?	
3	What was arguably the worst loss for the Japanese at Guadalcanal?	
4	What was the key strategic value of the US success at the Battle of Guadalcanal?	
5	Why could Guadalcanal be considered a turning point in the Pacific Conflict?	

⁶ See Chapter Eight.

6	What did both Japanese and allied troops share in the New Guinea campaign?	
7	What was the principal objective of the Japanese in New Guinea in 1942?	
8	What was the extent of the Kokoda Track?	
9	Why was the Milne Bay fighting of significance?	
10	When did Japanese action in New Guinea finally come to an end?	

What do the historians have to say about “Turning points in the war: Battle of the Coral Sea, Battle of Midway, Battle of Guadalcanal, New Guinea”?

1. Michael McKernan

McKernan makes the point that General Macarthur was unhappy with the Australian performance along the Kokoda Track. Macarthur said that all he heard was ‘retreat’ or ‘withdrawal’, and he believed, wrongly, that the Australians outnumbered the Japanese. Those close to Macarthur suggested that he was obsessed, and even feared his own recall if a victory was not forthcoming. Guadalcanal was dragging on at the same time. However, McKernan argues that such criticisms of the Australians were totally unjustified. The Australians had shown determined fighting and great leadership on the Track. As a result:

*“...They had slowed the Japanese advance and had coaxed them further along the track. If speed was the essence of the Japanese success in Malaya, this slow advance on the track was bringing the enemy undone...”*⁷

2. Malcolm Kennedy

Kennedy attempts to place Midway in the context of the time. Japan had control of Burma and Singapore, it had closed the Burma Road, had control of its oil supplies, controlled the Malacca Straits and effectively dominated the Indian Ocean. It had even been able to bomb the British fleet in Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

*“...(after Midway) Never again could the Japanese go where they liked and do what they liked. While, however, Midway marked the turning point of the war in the Pacific, the Japanese were still in a very strong position...”*⁸

⁷ McKernan, M, *The Strength of a Nation*, Allen and Unwin, Crow’s Nest, 2006, p 257

⁸ Kennedy, M, *A Short History of Japan*, Mentor Books, New York, 1963, p 281

Chapter Eight

Strategies used by allied forces against Japan 1942-45

Pearl Harbour had badly damaged US forces in the Pacific but it had not destroyed them. Most importantly, the US navy's four aircraft-carriers were not present at the time of the Japanese attack and so escaped damage. In an area the size of the Pacific Ocean, carriers were fundamental to any possible future success.

During the first six months of the war, ¹ Japan experienced unrivalled success:

- by late April it controlled Burma, Malaya, Singapore, the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies;
- though bogged down on the mainland, it controlled China's coastline;
- the neutrality agreement with the Soviet Union and that country's preoccupation with the German invasion of June 1941, meant that there was no threat from the north.

The Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway were to be fundamental to the long-term allied success: ²

- the Battle of the Coral Sea secured communications between the US and Australia (where General Macarthur was now based);
- the Battle of Midway ensured US superiority at sea and is justly viewed as the key turning point in the Pacific War;
- President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill agreed on a 'Europe first' strategy during the war, about 60% of the US war effort being directed to the European theatre of war.

After Midway and Guadalcanal, few doubted the eventual success of the allies and the defeat of Japan. It was a case of 'when and how', not 'if'. However, the Japanese fought tenaciously. Japan's soldiers, sailors and airmen were imbued with the notion of never surrendering. The expectation that one should 'die with honour' rather than give in ensured that all future campaigns would be long, drawn-out bloody affairs, even though allied victory was the probable outcome.

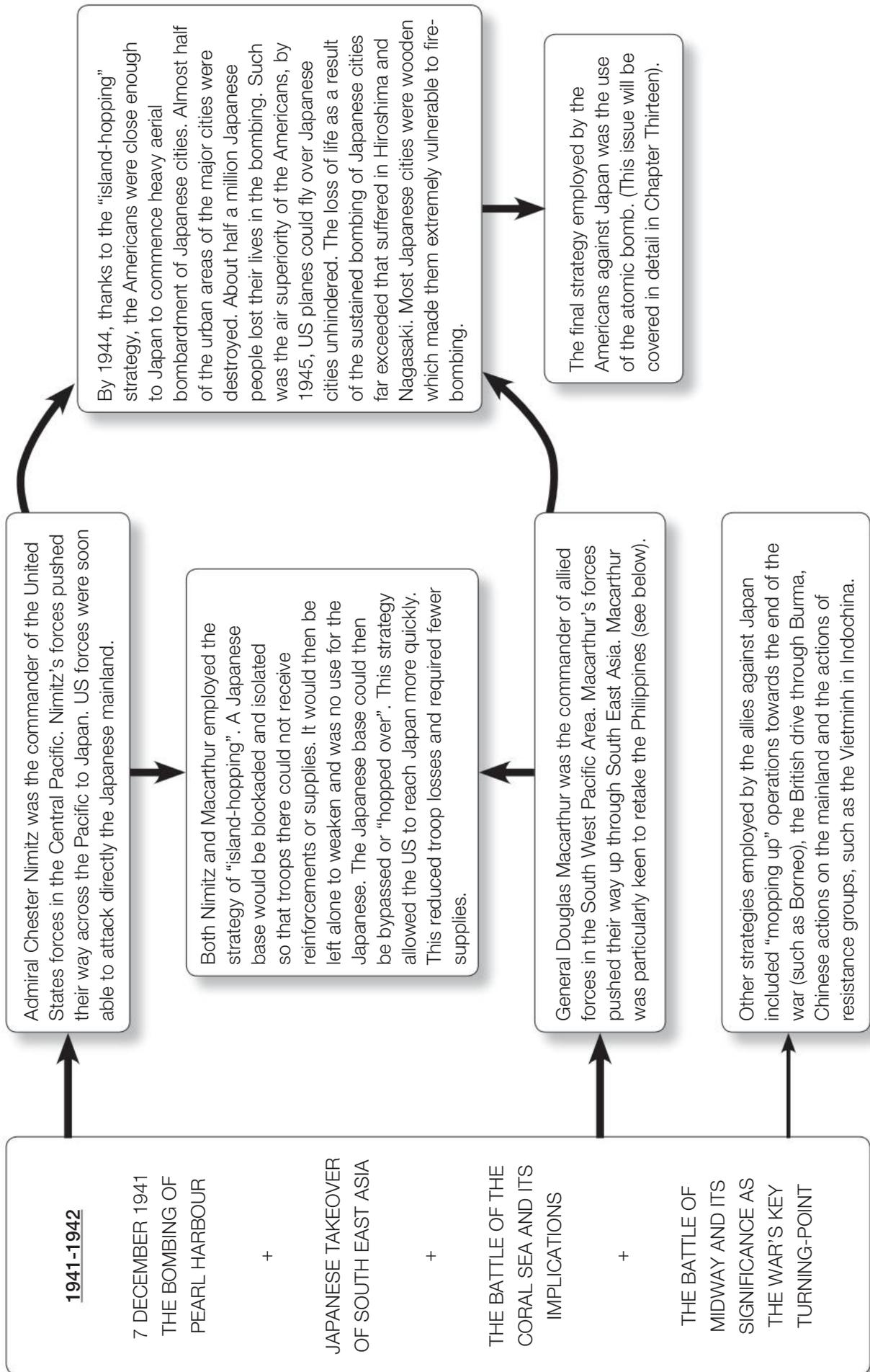
The essential aim of the allies was to prevent Japan from extending and strengthening its defensive perimeter and then squeezing its area of control, to the point that the Japanese mainland could be attacked directly.

By the later part of 1942, allied strategies were in place for taking the war to Japan. Figure 8.1 outlines the key strategies that were to be employed by allied forces against Japan between 1942 and 1945.

¹ See Chapter Six.

² See Chapter Seven.

Figure 8.1 Outline of the key strategies employed by allied forces against Japan between 1942 and 1945.



PUSHING THE JAPANESE BACK	
Nimitz's push through the Central Pacific	Macarthur's push through the South West Pacific
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Gilbert and Marshall Islands were captured between November 1943 and February 1944. ■ The island of Tarawa fell to the US between 20-23 November. This was part of Operation Galvanic. ■ Makin Atoll was captured and became a key air and naval base. ■ The Gilbert/ Marshalls campaign led to over 5000 US dead; the Japanese lost over 21 000. ■ The Truk base in the <u>Carolines</u> Islands was destroyed in February 1944. ■ Ulithi Atoll was taken in September 1944. It was to become a forward US base, even larger than Pearl Harbour ■ Yap and Ponape were “hopped over”. ■ The <u>Marianas</u> and Palau Island campaign, known as Operation Forager, lasted from June to November 1944. ■ The main islands of the Marianas are Saipan, Guam and Tinian. ■ <u>The Battle of Saipan</u> lasted from 15 June to 9 July 1944. US losses were over 3400; Japan lost 24 000 killed and 5000 who committed ritual suicide ■ A US airbase was established from which B29 bombers were able to raid the Japanese mainland. ■ <u>The Battle of Philippines Sea</u> took place from 19-20 June 1944 as part of the Marianas campaign. Japan lost three aircraft-carriers and hundreds of planes. US pilots referred to their ability to hit the Japanese in this battle as “the Great Marianas Tukey Shoot”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Macarthur's push began with the <u>Guadalcanal</u> Campaign (see Chapter 7) ■ By September 1943, the Japanese have been neutralised in <u>New Guinea</u> (see Chapter 7), though determined Japanese resistance would continue until the end of the war). ■ In New Guinea, Lae and Salamaua were finally taken in September 1943. ■ Macarthur had promised to “return” to <u>the Philippines</u> following his flight in 1942. (Some historians have argued that taking the Philippines was not necessary and that Macarthur insisted on “returning” out of personal vanity). ■ In October 1944, allied troops landed on the island of Leyte in the east central Philippines. ■ <u>The Battle of Leyte Gulf</u> which followed (23-26 October) has been described as the greatest naval battle in history. So great was the scale of the Japanese defeat that its naval and air power had been almost completely destroyed. ■ <u>Kamikaze</u> planes were used for the first time at Leyte Gulf. ■ US forces eventually enter Manila in February 1945. One result of the re-capture of the Philippines was that it cut Japan's direct links to the oil fields of the East Indies. ■ Macarthur declared the complete retaking of the Philippines on 28 June 1945.

- The battle for the island of Iwo Jima lasted from 19 February to 26 March 1945. Iwo Jima is only 900 miles from Tokyo which meant US air power would now be even more deadly. US losses were over 6000; all but 200 of Japan's 22 000 troops were killed. ³
- Between early April and mid-June 1945 US troops eventually captured the Japanese southern island of Okinawa. It was a bloody encounter: the US had over 50 000 casualties; the Japanese lost 110 000.

(A famous photograph of General MacArthur wading through the water on his return to Luzon aroused some controversy around him. The original photo was taken by photographer Carl Mydans and it appeared on the cover of Time Magazine. With a steely gaze he is pictured "returning" as he had promised. Critics said that MacArthur had the scene re-enacted to get a good picture. Mydans denied this but it has been an interesting discussion point, especially for those who like to denigrate MacArthur's reputation). ⁴

The other strategies employed by the allies 1942-45

- As US forces came closer to the Japanese mainland, Japanese cities were subjected to massive aerial bombardment:
 - in early March 1945, Tokyo was subjected to two nights of sustained firebombing;
 - over 100 000 people were killed;
 - other Japanese cities were heavily bombed in the remaining months of the war;
 - throughout July 1945, the US launched several 1000 bomber raids across the Japanese mainland.
- The Burma campaign comprised various battles fought between the allies (principally British Empire troops, Nationalist Chinese, backed by the United States) and the Japanese;
 - by mid-1942, the Japanese had successfully driven out British and Chinese forces, and had closed the Burma Road;
 - from late 1942 to early 1944 there was a series of failed allied attempts to push the Japanese back;
 - in 1944, Japanese forces attacked north eastern India but were defeated at Imphal and Kohima;
 - from late 1944 and into 1945, allied forces were able to reoccupy Burma.
 - in the final campaign of July 1945, General Slim's 14th Army killed and captured 11 500 Japanese for the loss of 96 killed.

"...The slaughter went on till August 4, and then no more Japanese came. There were none to come. The last battle of Burma was over..." ⁵

- Soviet leader Stalin had already promised allied leaders that the USSR would join the war against Japan three months after Germany's capitulation. This would be 8 August.

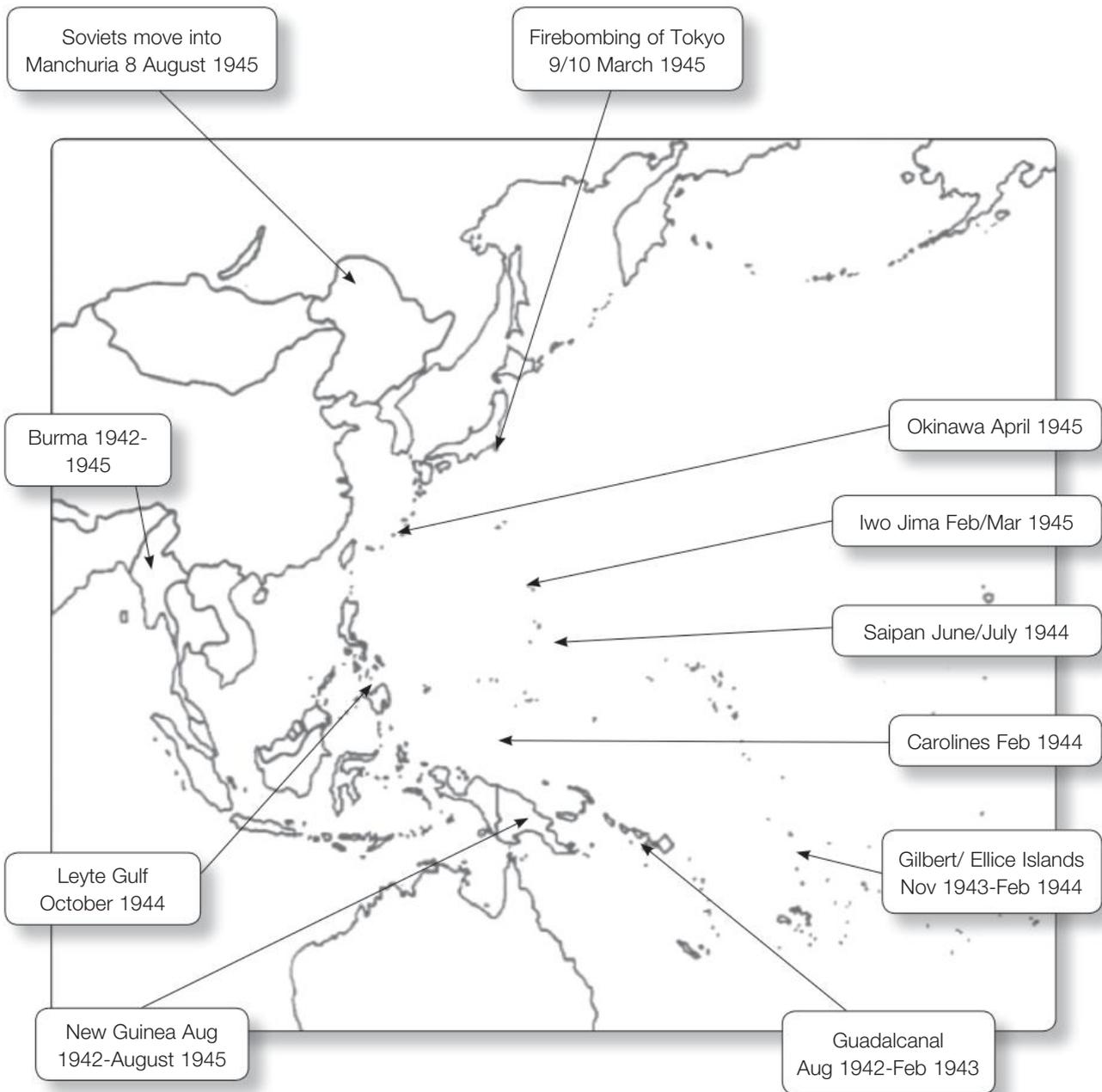
³ For those who have the time and interest, director Clint Eastwood's two films on Iwo Jima are worth watching. "Letters from Iwo Jima" (2007) tells the story from the Japanese side; "Flags of Our Fathers" (2006) from the US side.

⁴ The mini-series "American Caesar", based on William Manchester's biography of MacArthur, is valuable viewing for examining MacArthur's role in WWII (and during the Occupation of Japan after the war).

⁵ Swinson, A, Burma: The Last Battles, History of the Second World War, Purnell, London, 1968, Vol 6, p 2609

- At the Potsdam Conference of July 1945, ⁶ Japan was called upon to surrender “unconditionally” or face “prompt and utter destruction”.
- Japan’s fanatical militarists ignored the Potsdam Declaration.
- On 6 August, an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. ⁷
- On 8 August the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and it immediately proceeded to invade Manchuria.

Figure 8.2 The allies push Japan back: 1942-45



⁶ Germany had surrendered in May 1945. Allied leaders met at Potsdam outside of Berlin to discuss post-war arrangements, including the ongoing war against Japan.

⁷ See Chapter Thirteen.

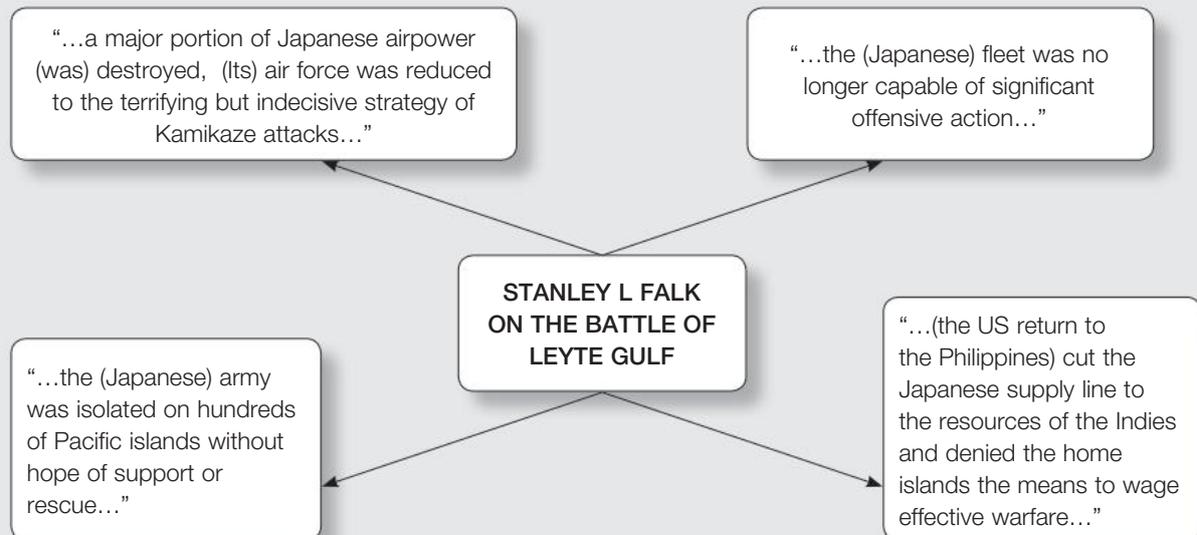
Exercise 8.1 Place the events on the right in the correct chronological order

1st event		Battle of Saipan
2nd event		Guadalcanal Campaign
3rd event		Soviet Union declares war on Japan
4th event		Macarthur departs the Philippines
5th event		Battle for Iwo Jima
6th event		Operation Galvanic
7th event		Completion of the taking of the Philippines
8th event		Battle for Okinawa
9th event		Battle of Leyte Gulf
10th event		Firebombing of Tokyo

What do the historians have to say about “Strategies used by allied forces against Japan 1942-45”?

1. Stanley L Falk

Falk makes the point that in some ways, the Battle of Leyte Gulf in fact disappointed the US command. Casualties were almost 20 000, it had taken longer than planned due to the elements and Leyte Island proved unsuitable as a major base the US strategists hoped it would. However, Falk concludes that Leyte Gulf was an utter disaster for Japan. The diagram below summarises his conclusions.



2. John Vader

From March 1945, Major-General Curtis LeMay directed a series of terrifying firebombing operations against Japan’s cities. On the night of 10 March 300 superfortresses (B-29s) were loaded with 1667 tons of cluster incendiary bombs. They took off from airfields in the Marianas, flying at 7000 feet and arrived over Tokyo just before dawn, allowing them the cover of darkness. Vader describes the impact of the operation.

*“...The fierce fires started by the incendiaries consumed so much air that strong thermal winds were sucked across the city, spreading the flames and making them burn more fiercely. The fire storm raged until nothing was left to burn... 100 000 people were killed and at least 100 000 injured...”*⁸

⁸ Vader, J, Fire Raids on Japan, History of the Second World War, Purnell, London, 1968, Vol 6, p 2540

Advice on Writing Essays

(These comments should be re-read when approaching the sections called ESSAYS 1, ESSAYS 2, and ESSAYS 3.)

Introduction to essay writing

People who have been marking the HSC for a few years can read an essay and with little hesitation can say “that’s a ‘B’ level answer, 16/ 25, or that’s a ‘mid-A’ range answer, 23/ 25, or this is a ‘D’ answer, 8/ 25. HSC markers do occasionally disagree about answers but once they share their disagreements, the value of the essay becomes clear. It is one of the comforting things about how Modern History is marked at the HSC, that the legendary level of accuracy is almost scientific.

The reason for this is that essay writing is both a literary and a scientific skill. There is no mystery in writing a good essay. Certainly, some people are better writers than others: they might have a wider vocabulary, they might know more, they might have a better turn of phrase, they might understand the issues more clearly. However, everyone can come to terms with the basics and write a reasonable essay.

So, what makes for a successful essay?

1. Answer the question. This sounds almost trite and an insult to the intelligence, but the majority of responses presented in the HSC which score poorly, do so because they do not answer the question. Failing to answer the question can be done in a variety of ways. In summary it can happen because:

a. A student fails to address the issues presented in the question, ie he or she decides to write about something else. For example in the essay:

To what extent can the Guadalcanal campaign be considered the turning point in the war in the Pacific?

A student decides to argue that:

- the Guadalcanal campaign was in no way a turning point in the war in the Pacific
- rather it was the Battle of Midway that should be seen as the turning point in the war in the Pacific as Japan was never able to recover from the losses inflicted there

A nice line of argument, but it is not answering the question. The student could argue ‘the Midway’ line, but first of all he needs to deal with the issue of the Guadalcanal campaign, even if it is to show that the Guadalcanal campaign was not an important factor.

He cannot simply ignore the focus of the question because he wants to write about something else:

- he could argue that yes, the Guadalcanal campaign was important in the war in the Pacific and show why this is so; however, as a turning point it pales in significance compared to the Battle of Midway, and then argue the case for the significance of Midway

- as a rule of thumb, if you are going to pursue this style of argument, ensure about half of your essay deals with the subject of the question, in this case 'the Guadalcanal campaign'
- to do otherwise is to risk suggesting to the marker that you have gone into the examination with a pre-prepared answer

b. A student writes about the issues presented in the question, but instead of providing an argument to answer the question, they simply 'narrate' or 'tell a story'. For example, in the essay:

To what extent can the Guadalcanal campaign be considered the turning point in the war in the Pacific?

A student fails to present an argument, instead they simply narrate:

- she might describe the background to the Guadalcanal campaign, maybe even going back to Pearl Harbour
- she then tells the story of the six-month campaign
- she might also describe some of the terrible conditions faced by both sides in the campaign

This is all relevant, factual detail but she is merely telling a story and not presenting an argument which is showing how the Guadalcanal campaign was (or was not) a turning point in the Pacific War.

c. A student does not really understand the question and has so little factual detail they are unable to sustain even a narrative response.

d. A student does understand the question and attempts an argument but has so little factual detail that the argument cannot be sustained.

'c' and 'd' can only be fixed up with solid work and revision on the part of the student; 'a' and 'b' can be learned.

2. Provide an argument in your introduction which will form the basis of the essay. The introduction is the most important paragraph of the essay; if it is written properly it should leave the marker in no doubt what is going to come up in the essay. So, what does a good introduction involve?

a. Avoid the dramatic 'setting the scene' method. For example, in the essay:

To what extent can the Guadalcanal campaign be considered the turning point in the war in the Pacific?

A student should avoid opening like this:

- The Guadalcanal campaign was a test of endurance and perseverance for both Japanese and American troops. They had to survive the island's steaming and fetid jungles. Torrential rain, thick mud, and incredible humidity took its toll on both sides. As well the dangers of battle, troops had to cope with the constant of tropical diseases such as malaria.

b. Avoid providing lots of factual detail in the introduction. Introduce the broad areas you will discuss, but leave the detail to the body of the essay. For example, in the essay:

To what extent can the Guadalcanal campaign be considered the turning point in the war in the Pacific?

This is not a good introduction:

- In June 1942, Japanese forces arrived on the island of Guadalcanal and began building an airfield at Lunga Point. When the Americans learned of this through their intelligence sources, as they had managed to decrypt some of the Japanese codes, an amphibious force was organised to deal with the threat. From 7 August 1942, 60 000 US troops landed on the island...

c. Be careful with length. Three lines is not an introduction, no argument can be properly introduced in such a small space. However, a page and a half is too long. With average sized writing, 6-8 lines should be enough to present the argument of the essay.

d. Instead try to present an argument in your introduction. There is no 'right' answer to a Modern History essay question; the right answer is the argument which you have presented, logically developed and backed up with detailed factual evidence. For example, for the essay:

To what extent can the Guadalcanal campaign be considered the turning point in the war in the Pacific?

A student might try to argue:

- The Guadalcanal campaign played a major role in the war in the Pacific. To some extent it can be considered as a key turning point in the war due to the impact it had on allied communications, the strategic advantage that control of Guadalcanal provided and the enormous losses experienced by the Japanese. However, important though the Guadalcanal campaign was, in terms of "a turning point in the war", it is the Battle of Midway which really merits this description due to the impact it had on the naval/ aerial balance of power and the opportunities it opened up for an island-hopping advance on Japan.

3. Provide your essay with a structure. Your introduction should show where the essay will lead, eg the above introduction might lead to the following structure:

- some points about the strategic significance of the Japanese defeat and how this was to affect future developments in the war
- the impact of Guadalcanal on the New Guinea campaign
- a discussion of relative losses
- a consideration of Japan's inability to make up losses compared to the US limitless supplies and manpower
- moving on to Midway as a stronger case to be considered as a turning point in the Pacific war
- a consideration of relative losses at Midway

- the strategic implications of the US success at Midway
- the impact on morale
- conclusion: The Guadalcanal campaign was of major importance in the Pacific war as a result its impact on allied communications, the scale and impact of Japanese losses and the impact on future US strategy. However, as a turning point, Midway should be seen as the true turning point in the war owing to its impact on the Pacific balance of power and future US strategic advantage.

(NB: this is only one of a hundred ways of dealing with this question)

4. Structure paragraphs carefully. There are some simple rules to obey:

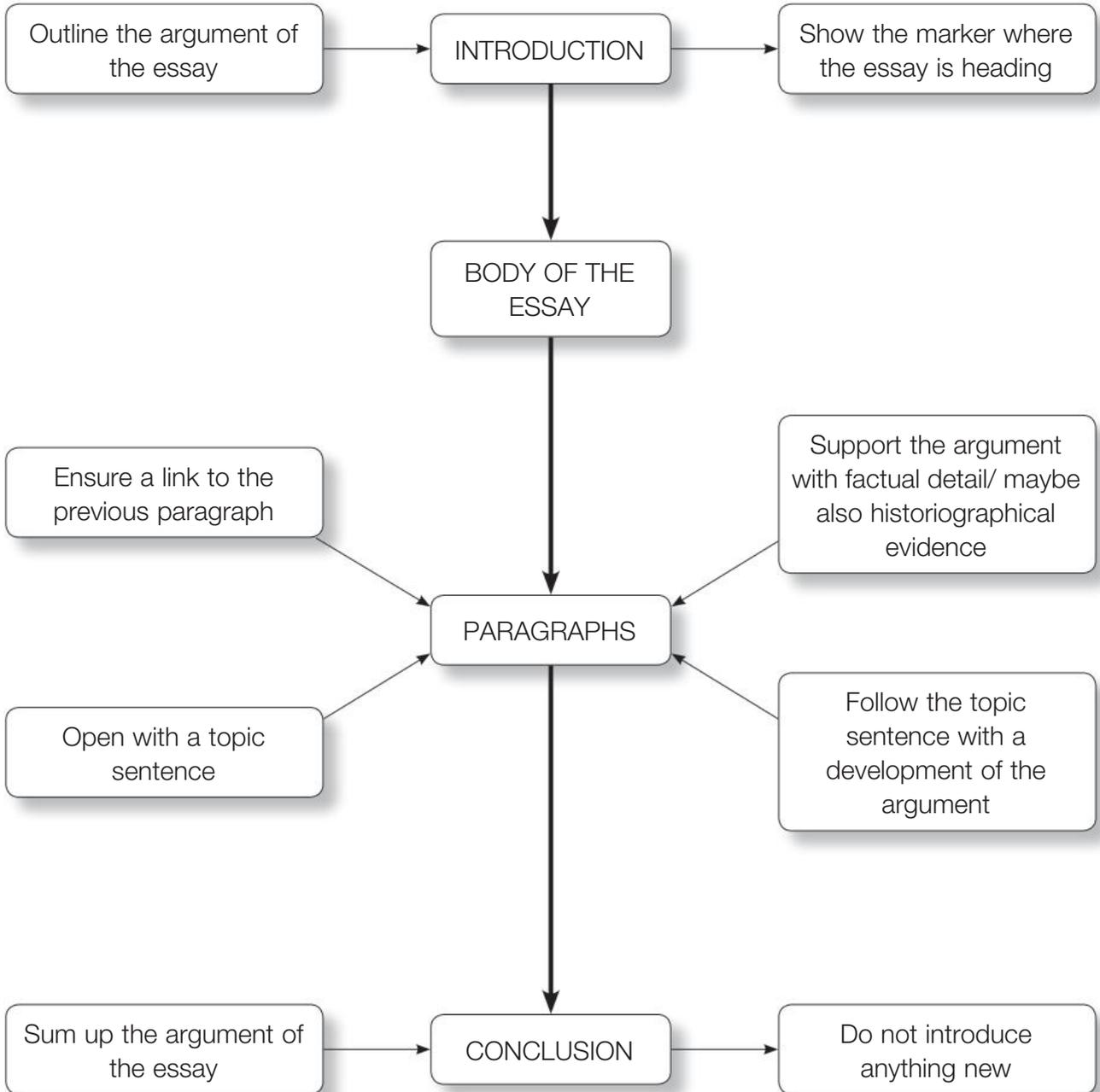
- open with a topic sentence which outlines what the paragraph is going to be about;
- develop the argument presented in the topic sentence;
- support the argument with specific factual detail;
- if appropriate, support the detail with historiographical evidence.
- link your paragraphs – this can be achieved easily with certain stock phrases, eg:
 - “not only was ‘x’ of significance but ‘y’ also had an impact....”
 - “in addition to “a and b”, “c and d” were also to benefit from.....”
 - “in contrast to “e”, “f” reacted quite differently....”

NB: Do not open paragraphs with historiography.

- The aim should be for the student to show the marker what he knows.
- Therefore, open with your ideas, back it up with factual detail and then, if appropriate, back up your idea with what a historian has said:
- argument>detail>(maybe) historians’ ideas;
- do not name drop for the sake of it – markers are not fooled or impressed by having lots of historians dropped into an essay when their books have almost certainly never been looked at;
- Fewer historians mentioned is better than lots.

NB: Do not quote, paraphrase! This shows that you understand what the historian is saying; giving a three-line quotation merely shows you have remembered a three-line quotation, whereas paraphrasing the historian’s view in your own words shows that you have understood what you are writing.

The following diagram sums up some of the main ideas the have been discussed in this section.



Notes

ESSAYS 1

Responding to HSC questions on *The outbreak and course of the Pacific War*

The purpose of this section is to provide some ideas for the type of questions which might be asked on the Focus of Study section of the syllabus, *The outbreak and course of the Pacific War*. These outlines are not presented as the 'be all and end all' responses to these questions. To provide a sense of reality to this section, what follows is a 'first draft response' to each question, ie what were the first ideas that came into the author's head as he thought about each question?

Essay No 1

"To what extent was Japan responsible for the outbreak of war in the Pacific in December 1941?"

"To what extent questions" often lead to one of three responses. Here are three possibilities for this question:

- a) Yes, Japan was totally to blame for the outbreak of war in the Pacific in December 1941.
- b) No, though Pearl Harbour suggests the finger can obviously be pointed at Japan, it was forced to act in that manner because of the policies and actions of the United States and the other western powers. This is what caused the war. (This approach is to be avoided as it is not dealing with the focus of the question.)
- c) Clearly, Japan has to take a major responsibility for the outbreak of war in the Pacific. However, it is too simplistic to place the entire blame on Japan's shoulders. Other factors also played a role.

For the purpose of this question, option c) will be considered.

- In a straightforward obvious way, clearly the responsibility for the outbreak of the Pacific war lies at the door of Japan:
 - It was Japan that took the aggressive action of bombing Pearl Harbour which left the US with no alternative but to declare war
 - Japanese duplicity could be examined here, ie negotiating while at the same time the attack fleet had already left Japan
 - Japan's record in the previous decade had been one long story of imperialist aggression
 - provide some detail about Japanese actions from Manchuria to Jehol to the invasion of China in 1937 and its moves into Indochina
 - exiting the League of Nations
 - establishing ties with the other Axis powers
 - Japanese politics had become fanatically nationalist which stimulated a desire for imperialist expansion

- Consideration of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere could be introduced here
- By 1941, the military were firmly in control and had every intention of expanding Japanese power even if it meant war
- Perhaps refer to historians who support these ideas
- However, though Japan's policies from 1931 certainly seem to present a story of aggressive expansion, nothing happens in a vacuum
 - Japan had been savaged by the depression and the policies of the western powers deliberately sought to exclude Japan from its markets
 - Japan was arguably left with no choice but to expand or starve
 - Japanese leaders could argue that what they were doing was no different to what the western powers had been doing for several centuries
 - American policies were clearly directed at breaking the economic power of Japan with the result that Japan could not support its military
 - provide evidence to show this, refer to US and western economic sanctions
 - The US oil embargo left Japan with only the choice of a humiliating backdown or war
 - consider the view that Roosevelt needed a Pearl Harbour to bring the US people around to his belief that the US had to be in the war
 - a consideration of Roosevelt deliberately bringing on Pearl Harbour could be discussed even if the idea is to be debunked

NB: Do not turn this into a discussion US/ British/ European foreign policy – the focus of the question is Japan's responsibility for the war.

- Make sure that it comprises at least 40-50% of your answer. Failure to do this will mean your answering your own question rather than the examiner's question.
- Also do not fall into the trap of simply narrating the course of Japanese foreign policy and giving a blow by blow account of Pearl Harbour

Essay No 2:

"To what extent did the aims and strategies of the Japanese Empire shape the course of the Pacific War?"

The great danger with this question is that there is a great temptation to simply narrate, ie students might fall into the trap of simply telling the story of the war in the Pacific from the bombing of Pearl Harbour to the dropping of the atomic bomb. Clearly, the narrative of the war is important and will form a key part of the answer. However, students need to establish an argument at the start, keep coming back to that argument and hopefully avoid the trap of simply telling the story.

- One could argue that for a period in the war, it was clearly the Japanese whose aims and strategies were shaping the course of the Pacific war:
 - Refer to Japan's long-term foreign policy goals which dictated an expansionist policy to which the allies were forced to react:

- Mention could be made of Japan's economic dilemma
- The desire to remove the west
- The idea of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere
- Japan's invasion of China in 1937 left the Chinese with no choice but to defend themselves:
 - Japanese actions and atrocities could be referred to which necessitated the Nationalists moving inland
 - Mention could be made of Japanese actions forcing cooperation between the Nationalists and the Communists (in the short term)
- French authorities in Indochina were left with little choice but to accede to Japanese demands
 - Refer to Japan's steady move into Indochina
 - Perhaps even taking things up to Japan's coup of March 1945
- Pearl Harbour obviously shaped the war as it gave the US no option but to declare war and throw itself into the Pacific conflict:
 - In the next five months it is Japan dictating the course of the war
 - Provide some narrative detail here – Malaya, Singapore, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines
- However, it can be strongly argued that from mid-1942, it is not Japan whose is shaping the course of the Pacific war
 - Refer to the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, and show how this effectively marked the end of Japanese expansion – the turning point argument could be used here – from now on Japan is reacting to allied initiatives not the other way around
 - New Guinea and Guadalcanal offer further evidence of the Japanese having to respond to allied actions
- It is the US which is shaping the course of the Pacific conflict from 1943 onwards
 - Refer to the dual push across the Pacific of Nimitz and Macarthur
 - The island-hopping strategy clearly shows that Japan is not shaping events but responding and that some of its forces become irrelevant
 - Japan's loss of control of shaping the course of the war is clearly brought out with events in Burma, the Philippines and the bombing of Japanese cities in 1945
- However, it could be argued, that Japanese stubbornness and refusal to surrender even when all was lost, forced the allies into the bloody actions of Iwo Jima, Tokyo and ultimately Hiroshima

NB: Reminder – avoid the temptation to simply tell the story of the war with lots of battle details. Markers are always looking for an argument which you then have to try and prove.

Possible HSC questions on “*The outbreak and course of the Pacific War*”

- a) To what extent was Japan’s decision to attack Pearl Harbour in December 1941 forced upon it?
- b) “Simply blaming Japan for the outbreak of the Pacific war in 1941 ignores the complexity of the pre-war situation in Asia and the Pacific”. To what extent is this a fair analysis of the reasons for the outbreak of war in the Pacific in 1941?
- c) To what extent did the Japanese achieve their aims in the attack in Pearl Harbour in December 1941?
- d) Why was the Japanese advance through South East Asia in 1941-42 so successful?
- e) Account for the failures of the allies in responding to the Japanese advance in South East Asia up to the middle of 1942.
- f) To what extent was the Battle of Coral Sea a turning point in the war?

For Question (f), ‘The Battle of the Coral Sea’ can be changed to ‘The Battle of Midway’, ‘The Battle of Guadalcanal’, or ‘The campaign in New Guinea’.

- g) How effective were the strategies used by the allied forces against Japan between 1942 and 1945?
- h) Why was Japan unable to respond effectively to the strategies used by the allied powers between 1942 and 1945?
- i) Why did the Pacific War drag on so long despite the overwhelming economic and military superiority of the allies?

NB: Questions (g), (h) and (i) would require additional information from the later sections of the syllabus. For example, a response to Question (h) would require information that relates to “the home front in Japan” and “reasons for the Japanese defeat”.

Section Three ■ Focus of Study (2): Civilians at war

Chapter Nine

Effects on civilians in occupied territories in South-East Asia

Chapters Nine and Ten deal with the Japanese occupation of territories that it had invaded during the war. To match the HSC syllabus, an attempt has been made to cover “Effects on civilians” in Chapter Nine, and “Life under occupation” in Chapter Ten. Obviously, there is not much difference in the two syllabus bullet points, and therefore, some overlapping of the material in these two chapters occurs.

Overview

Japan initially tried to convince the peoples of South-East Asia that the aim of the Japanese forces was to end western colonial rule. The home front was told that Japanese soldiers were welcomed as liberators. This was part of the propaganda centred around the notion of the ‘Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.’¹ The impact on civilians in the countries occupied by the Japanese during the war varied.

- Conflict between Thailand and Japan was brief and Thailand officially became a Japanese ally and so Japanese control was fairly benign.
- In Indochina, the Japanese military had the cooperation of the Vichy French authorities though the people of Indochina suffered greatly, experiencing mass famine by 1945.
- Japanese rule in the East Indies was harsh and loss of life was heavy but Indonesian nationalists eagerly took advantage of the end of Dutch rule.
- For much of the war Burmese figures cooperated with the Japanese.
- The people of the Philippines suffered enormously particularly in the latter stages of the war.
- Japanese rule in Malaya and Singapore resulted in mass deaths.

However, people in all South-East countries were subjected to the arbitrariness of Japanese rule which could be brutal in the extreme. Exploitation of resources was the order of the day. South-East Asian people could be forced into Japanese slave labour at any time. Hundreds of thousands of Asian women were forced to become the sex slaves of Japanese occupying forces.²

Though Japan lauded the ideals of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, few were taken in. Japan was an imperialist power, no different from any western nation, and the nation’s military and political leaders were imbued with a belief in racial superiority not vastly different than that felt by Germany’s leaders.

¹ See Chapter Two.

² Japanese authorities have always preferred to refer to these female sex slaves as “comfort women”.

The Japanese had promised their fellow Asians friendship, cooperation, autonomy and the benefits of 'co-prosperity'. However, they received brutal exploitation that far surpassed anything the Europeans had inflicted upon them. For the Japanese, South-East Asia was merely a commodity of war:

- resources were to be exploited for the benefits of the Japanese war machine;
- territory mattered in that it might have strategic value;
- the people of South-East Asia were immaterial, to be tolerated if they cooperated, to be savagely dealt with if they did not.

The impact of Japanese occupation on civilians

Japanese occupation had a clear impact on the economic life of the people of South-East Asia. As has been emphasised, the region was to serve as 'an economic mine' for the benefit of Japan.

- Oil was the principal economic resource sought by the Japanese. This was the principal value of the East Indies. The impact of Japanese rule can be seen in the occupation of Borneo:
 - former northern British part of Borneo was administered by the army;
 - navy administrators took control of the former Dutch territory in the south of the island;
 - the rich oil reserves in the south ensured that Borneo was to become a "permanent Japanese acquisition";
 - oil was important but the Japanese also took mercury and antimony;
 - monopolies were granted to zaibatsu; ³
- In terms of raw materials, Malaya was not particularly valuable for Japan:
 - Malaya's key pre-war exports were tin and rubber but now it was denied access to global markets these industries faded;
 - Japan itself did not need the massive amounts that Malaya could produce and apart from bauxite, Malaya economically was not of great value to Japan.

Food was a key resource sought by the Japan and its demand for food was to have a devastating effect on South-East Asian civilians.

- In **Borneo**, the authorities attempted to achieve 'economic autarky' and 'food self-sufficiency';
 - in pre-war times, Borneo was a non-food exporter and used income from its exports to bring in food;
 - the attempt to achieve autarky in Borneo created major rice shortages.
- The situation in **Indochina** was even worse:
 - the French Vichy authorities in Indochina had cooperated with the Japanese but this did not stop the Japanese military squeezing out all the food it could from Indochina;
 - by 1945 millions in Indochina were dying from famine (see historian 1);
- The devastating food situation in the **Philippines** was similar by 1945.

³ Large Japanese business conglomerates that appeared during the Meiji restoration period.

In the area of *social policy and education*, the occupying Japanese authorities pursued a vigorous policy of “Japanisation”.

- In schools, young people were taught the Japanese language (Nihon-go) and the virtues of Japanese culture:
 - attempts were made to indoctrinate children with a “Japanese-like spirit”;
 - there were special classes that taught the singing of Japanese songs;
 - each morning, school children had to ritually bow towards Tokyo
- Japanese values were pushed in the press, radio and cinema.

The main *political effect* on Japanese civilians of the occupation was the removal of western influence from South-East Asia. ⁴ During the 1930s, the chances of the indigenous nationalist groups being able to eject the west from their lands were extremely small.

- The **French** had firm control over Indochina:
 - the quick, brutal suppression of two soviets established at Ha Trinh and Nghe An in the early 1930s ensured the primacy of French rule;
 - by 1932, over 10 000 Vietnamese nationalists languished in prison.
- **Britain’s** control over Singapore and Malaya was unquestioned, as it was in Hong Kong and Burma.
 - Nationalism had been steadily growing in India but the British had begun tentative steps for greater Indian autonomy in the 1930s.
- The **Dutch** were in control in the East Indies and American rule in the Philippines was accepted, especially as the US was promising independence in the near future.

However, the success of the Japanese in sweeping away British, Dutch and American rule with such ease in 1941-42 was noted by nationalists across all of South-East Asia. Even though French Vichy authorities remained in administrative control in Indochina, the Vietnamese had no illusions about who was in charge. The political effect on the people of South-East Asia was to see an explosion of nationalist fervour after 1945.

- In **Vietnam**, Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnamese independence in September 1945 following Japan’s defeat:
 - this was to be snatched from him due to great power manoeuvring;
 - Ho’s nationalist Vietminh would fight French forces for eight years until victorious in 1954. ⁵
- **Burmese** nationalist leader, Ba Maw cooperated with the Japanese.
 - Aung San’s Burma National Army assisted the Japanese army but towards the end of the war the Burmese had turned against the Japanese, and began seizing positions of power as the Japanese were forced out;
 - after the war, Britain accepted Aung San’s strong position in the country; ⁶
 - Burma gained its independence in 1948.

⁴ The issues of collaboration with the Japanese and resistance movements will be covered in more detail in Chapter Ten.

⁵ Ho would receive only half his country in the 1954 Geneva Conference. It would take another war against the United States before Vietnam gained its unified independence.

⁶ India and Pakistan gained independence from Britain in 1947; Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1948.

- In the **Dutch East Indies**, Indonesian nationalist leader, Sukarno, declared his nation's independence in August 1945:
 - the Dutch unsuccessfully attempted to regain control;
 - Indonesia's independence was finally accepted by the Dutch in 1949.
- The **Philippines** gained its independence from the United States on 4 July 1946.
- **Thailand** was an ally of Japan throughout most of the war. The Thai government under Plaek Phibunsongkhram (Phibun) believed it would be beneficial for his country to cooperate with Japan:
 - Thailand kept control of its armed forces and internal administration;
 - opponents of Phibun formed the Free Thai Movement which engaged in guerrilla action against the Japanese;
 - Phibun was overthrown in 1944; after the war Thailand was let off lightly for its wartime activities under Phibun.
- **Malaya** would gain its independence in 1957.
- **Singapore** was granted increasing self-government after the war:
 - it merged with the Federation of Malaysia in 1963;
 - differences between Singapore and Malaysia led to Singapore breaking away to become independent in 1965.

Exercise 9.1 Use the terms in the box below to complete the following passage.

The Japanese notion of the _____ was meant to convince the people of South-East Asia that Japan's goal was to end _____ colonial rule. However, the _____ and _____ of Japanese rule soon brought home to the people the truth of Japanese intentions. Hundreds of thousands of Asian people became _____ labourers of the Japanese. Thousands of women were forced to become _____ slaves or _____ women as Japan preferred to call them. The key resource Japan sought was _____. The region's tin and _____ were in less demand. Due to food requisitioning, severe _____ affected the region under occupation, resulting in _____ particularly in _____ and _____. A policy of _____ was followed in each country. In schools, children were taught the _____ language. Politically, the key effect of occupation was to highlight the _____ of the west, and after Japan's defeat, _____ fervour grew in South-East Asia. By 1949, _____, the Philippines and _____ had gained independence.

VIETNAM – EXPLOITATION – BURMA – COMFORT – RUBBER – OIL – SEX –
NATIONALIST – BRUTALITY – FAMINE – INDONESIA – WESTERN –
GREATER EAST ASIA CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE – SHORTAGES – WEAKNESS –
JAPANISATION – SLAVE – JAPANESE – THE PHILIPPINES

What do the historians have to say about “Effects on civilians in occupied territories in South-East Asia”?

1. Fredrik Logevall

Logevall describes the impact of Japanese (and French) rice requisition policies in Indochina. Drought and insects in early 1944 had reduced the rice crop while later in the year flooding worsened the situation. Yet Japanese (and French) authorities continued to stockpile rice for their own use. By early 1945 famine was spreading across the country. Following the Japanese takeover of Indochina in March 1945, the Japanese seized French stocks. The situation for Indochina’s people became catastrophic:

*“...Some people, having consumed everything that could be eaten – bark, roots, leaves, dogs and rats – resorted to cannibalism, causing some parents to fear that their children would be stolen and eaten. Some parents sold their children for a few cups of rice...”*⁷

2. Lee Kuan Yew

Singapore’s future leader, Lee Kuan Yew, describes in his Memoirs his experiences under Japanese occupation during the war. He refers to the ever-present Japanese secret police, the Kempeitai and the fear that this created, shortages, the disappearance of motor transport and the importance of the ‘black market’. The lack of food was a constant issue for the people of Singapore.

*“...From the end of 1943, food became scarcer and scarcer... Reduced to eating old, mouldy, worm-eaten stocks mixed with Malayan-grown rice, we had to find substitutes... My mother like many others, stretched what little we could get... It was amazing how hungry my brothers and I became one hour after each meal...”*⁸

7 Logevall, F, *Embers of War*, Random House, New York, 2012, p 80

8 Lee, Kuan Yew, *The Singapore Story*, Singapore Press Holding, Singapore, 1998, pp 64-65

Chapter Ten

Life under occupation: collaboration, resistance, slave labour

Chapters Nine and Ten deal with the Japanese occupation of territories that it had invaded during the war. To match the HSC syllabus, an attempt has been made to cover “Effects on civilians” in Chapter Nine, and “Life under occupation” in Chapter Ten. Obviously, there is not much difference in the two syllabus bullet points, and therefore, some overlapping of the material in these two chapters occurs.

This chapter will focus on three specific elements of the Japanese occupation of South-East Asia: collaboration, resistance and slave labour.

- Japanese control of the region during the war was brutal and uncompromising but this does not mean that some South-East Asian people did not actively collaborate with the occupying forces. This would be done for a variety of reasons, which will be considered below.
- Many people resisted despite the grave dangers that this involved and the consequences that would follow if they were caught.
- Japanese brutality can be seen most clearly in its systematic use of slave labour. Men were enslaved to work for the Japanese war effort, while women were enslaved as “comfort women”.

Collaboration

The motivation behind collaboration could vary. For some people it was an opportunistic action, taking advantage of a situation for personal gain. For some it was an attempt to make the best of a bad situation and hopefully lessen the suffering to which one’s people might be subjected. For others it was done out of fear of the consequences of not collaborating.

The government of **Thailand** took a pragmatic approach and believed it was in the country’s interest to cooperate with the Japanese.

- The government of Plaek Phibunsongkhram (Phibun) saw Japan as an ally against western imperialism. It also had hopes of regaining territories which had been lost to France.
 - Thailand actually declared war on the US and Britain.
 - The Thai government kept control of its armed forces and its internal affairs.
 - Phibun’s cooperation with the Japanese brought some rewards with the return to Thai control of parts of Burma and Malaya.
- However, opposition to Japan’s presence inside the country grew as it made increasing demands on Thailand’s resources.
 - By 1944, Bangkok and other targets suffered from allied bombing; there were several thousand casualties.

- Phibun's military regime became unpopular and in June 1944, it was overthrown and replaced by a civilian government. (see below).

Japan occupied **Burma** from 1942 to 1945. At first, some in Burma hoped that with Japanese support they could expel the British and gain their independence.

- The Japanese helped to create the Burma Independence Army.
- In early August 1943, Japan announced that Burma had become independent of Britain as 'the State of Burma'.
 - The new state was run by a puppet government under Ba Maw.

Japan had quickly overcome **Malaya** and **Singapore** by mid-February 1942.

- Japan emphasised its anti-western stance in Malaya and would claim it was freeing Malays from British colonial rule.
- By promoting limited Malay nationalism, Japan earned some collaboration from the Malay Civil Service and intellectuals in the country.
- Most of Malaya's Sultans collaborated with the Japanese, though after the war they claimed this was done under duress.

Japanese rule in the **Philippines** was brutal and it is estimated that up to 320 000 Filipinos died during the occupation. However, collaboration occurred, though most Filipinos remained loyal to the US (see below).

- Soon after the invasion, the Japanese began to organise a new government structure for the country and a Council of State was formed which directed civil matters.
- In October 1943, the Philippines was declared "an independent republic", a Japanese puppet regime headed by Jose Laurel.
 - Most of the Philippine elite, with some exceptions, served under the Japanese.
 - Their motivation for doing varied, for the reasons explained at the start of this section.

At first, the **East Indies** welcomed the Japanese as liberators from Dutch colonial rule and the Indonesian nationalist movement was given a boost as the humiliation of the Europeans became apparent.

- The occupation gave Javanese and other Indonesians a chance to be part of politics and administration.
 - Following the invasion, over 170 000 Europeans were interned.
 - Japanese officers took the leading posts in administration but Indonesians were encouraged to fill the vacuum in the lower levels of administration.
 - Local elites such as the priyayi on Java were used by the Japanese to administer rural areas.
- Nationalist figures like Sukarno and Hatta agreed to work with the Japanese as they saw this as the best way to achieve independence.

The defeat of France in 1940 by Nazi Germany saw the establishment of the puppet Vichy regime. Vichy ordered the colonial regime in **Indochina** headed by Governor Decoux to cooperate with the Japanese forces who entered the country in 1940.

- By late 1941, Japan occupied the entire country but allowed the Vichy authorities to continue administration.
 - As a result, the French collaborated with the Japanese, though they had little alternative.
- Japan seized full political control of Indochina on 9 March 1945.
 - 'Emperor' Bao Dai declared Vietnam's independence on 11 March though in reality his was but a puppet regime.
- Throughout the occupation, the local population was treated harshly which stimulated Vietnamese nationalism.

Resistance

Japan had claimed that it was freeing the peoples of South-East Asia from western colonial rule but it soon became apparent that Japan was simply another imperial power, and a far more brutal one at that. Resistance to Japanese occupation took various forms. In some parts of South-East Asia it materialised immediately; in others it took longer to be realised.

In **Thailand**, the pro-Japanese regime of Phibun split. A 'Free Thai Movement' developed which eventually formed an anti-Japanese resistance force numbering almost 100 000.

- This group's partisan fighters helped the allies with intelligence work and carried out acts of sabotage.
- The Free Thai Movement received training from the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS).¹
- It helped bring down Phibun in June 1944.

In **Burma**, Aung San² (War Minister in the puppet regime), joined nationalist figures to form the Anti-Fascist Organisation in August 1944. By late 1944, it was working with the British to remove the Japanese from the country.

The Japanese saw the Chinese residents of **Malaya** as enemy aliens and predictably treated them extremely harshly.

- Over 80 000 Chinese in Malaya and Singapore were killed. Chinese businesses were taken over and Chinese schools were destroyed.
- It is no surprise, therefore, that the backbone of the anti-Japanese resistance in Malaya came from the Chinese.
- They formed the basis of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, and with British help became an extremely effective resistance force.

¹ The OSS was the precursor to the CIA – the Central Intelligence Agency.

² Aung San is the father of the Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi.

There were many rebel groups in the **Philippines** who fought against the Japanese from various jungle encampments.

- These included the communist guerrilla group, the Huks (Hukbalahap), under the leadership of Luis Taruc.
- The resistance groups received assistance from Americans who had escaped the Japanese to the mountains or were smuggled in.
- Filipino guerrilla activity was very effective and it is estimated that up to 260 000 people were involved.

Resistance to Japanese occupation in the **East Indies** was limited.

- As explained above, many Indonesians welcomed the Japanese as it marked the removal of the Dutch.
- Many Indonesians were allowed to participate in administration.
- There were some Muslim opposition groups.
- Resentment increased as the war was coming to an end, and there were incidents of collaborators being killed in some areas.

Resistance in **Indochina** centred on the activities of the Vietminh under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh.

- The Vietminh comprised nationalist groups opposed to the Japanese (and later the French) though it soon came to be dominated by the Communist Party.
- The Vietminh engaged in widespread guerrilla activity against the Japanese.
- They also assisted US pilots who had been shot down over the country and worked with the OSS in the later stages of the war.
- Following the defeat of the Japanese in August 1945, Ho declared the short-lived independence of Vietnam in September 1945.

Exercise 10.1 Match the person or group in the box with the country.

1	THAILAND		5	INDOCHINA	
2	BURMA		6	BURMA	
3	PHILIPPINES		7	PHILIPPINES	
4	INDONESIA		8	INDOCHINA	

DECOUX – PHIBUN – LUIS TARUC – BA MAW – SUKARNO -
 HO CHI MINH – AUNG SAN – JOSE LAUREL

Slave Labour

In wartime, no nation can claim that its troops have always acted with total honour and that no terrible deeds have been committed. However, such acts are usually the actions of individual soldiers or groups of soldiers, or a junior officer's lack of experience, often in extreme circumstances, acting under enormous stress.

During the occupation of South-East Asia between 1942 and 1945, the Japanese were guilty of countless acts of terrible atrocities committed against the local populations (and allied POWs).³ However, the difference here is that these actions were not the random misbehaviour of ill-disciplined troops but sanctioned by, and often ordered by the Japanese authorities. The "Rape of Nanking" in 1937 is but one early example.⁴

The Geneva Convention, established in the 1920s, laid down 'rules' which nations were supposed to abide by if they ever found themselves at war. These included the humane treatment of captured enemy troops. POWs are not supposed to be forced to work on war projects for their captors. However, during the occupation of South-East Asia, these rules were continuously ignored by the Japanese.

- Allied prisoners-of-war were forced to work in barbaric conditions on the Thai-Burma Railway. Conditions on the Thai-Burma railway were inhumane.
 - Hours were incredibly long and work was done in searing heat or torrential tropical rain.
 - Food was limited and of poor quality.
 - Medical assistance was often non-existent and the sick were forced to work until they dropped.
 - Sick labourers were often beaten, accused of malingering and not working hard enough.
- It is impossible to give precise figures of slave labourers on the railway.
 - In the region of 61 000 POWs and 270 000 Asian labourers were forced to work there.
 - 12 500 allied POWs died: 6318 British, 2815 Australian, 2490 Dutch, 356 American, many others unidentified.
 - tens of thousands of Asian workers died.
- By some estimates, up to ten million Indonesians were made to work on forced labour projects; up to one million died.
- 650 000 Koreans were forced to work in Japan; 60 000 died.

Thousands of women from all over the region were rounded up and forced to become sex slaves for the Japanese army.

- The main victims were Korean women though there were women from all occupied areas who would experience this, including some European women.
- The Japanese called them "comfort women" and claimed that the women had volunteered to do this.
- This is an issue which still has the ability to poison Korean-Japanese relations in the 21st century.

³ Many Japanese politicians still refuse to acknowledge what Japanese troops did in WWII. Japanese textbooks are not allowed to tell the dark side of Japanese behaviour during the war.

⁴ See Chapter Two.

Slave labour was just one aspect of Japanese behaviour towards POWs and the people of South-East Asia.

- Prisoners were sometimes sent on “death marches”.
 - The Bataan Death March was mentioned in Chapter Six.
 - The Sandakan Death March of 1945 saw only six men survive out of 1800 who began the march.
- In Unit 731 in Manchuria, medical experiments were carried out on POWs, principally Korean and Chinese prisoners.

Exercise 10.2 Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1	There were no groups or individuals in South-East Asia that were willing to collaborate with the Japanese forces.	TRUE/ FALSE
2	Burmese nationalists were happy to cooperate with the Japanese as they saw this as leading to the road to independence from colonial rule.	TRUE/ FALSE
3	The Jose Laurel headed Philippine Republic established in October 1943 had genuine independence.	TRUE/ FALSE
4	Local elites and nationalist figures in Indonesia were willing to work with the Japanese during the war.	TRUE/ FALSE
5	The Vichy colonial regime in French Indochina was the only western administration that maintained any form of control during the war years.	TRUE/ FALSE
6	The main resistance to the Japanese in Malaya was led by the Malay population.	TRUE/ FALSE
7	The pro-Japanese regime of Phibun, in Thailand, never faced any real opposition during the war years.	TRUE/ FALSE
8	Organised resistance opposition to Japanese control in the East Indies was very limited.	TRUE/ FALSE
9	Prisoners-of-war held in Japanese camps during the war were always treated under the terms of the Geneva Convention.	TRUE/ FALSE
10	During the years of Japanese occupation, thousands of Asian women were forced into a form of sexual slavery.	TRUE/ FALSE

What do the historians have to say about “Life under occupation: collaboration, resistance, slave labour”?

1. Edwin P Hoyt

Hoyt highlights how Japanese propaganda at the time attempted to show the world how well POWs were being treated. He quotes the Asahi Shimbun, Japan’s leading newspaper, which had an article based on interviews with allied POWs:

*“...Almost without a single exception, these prisoners are highly appreciative of the treatment extended by the Japanese authorities. They are also beginning to gasp in amazement at the great might of Japan and the solidarity of the Japanese people behind the guns. The Japanese authorities are not using them for propaganda but are permitting them to broadcast out of sympathy for the enemy... such sympathy as only the bushido spirit knows...”*⁵

2. The Taipei Times

In 2007, the Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, stated that his government did not believe that Japan had forced women into soldiers’ brothels. The Taipei Times newspaper reported that even sixty years after the war, his comments had the effect of reviving old animosities between Japan and its neighbours, whose memories of Japanese occupation were as strong as ever. The newspaper quoted a South Korean lawmaker, Yoo Ki-hong, who said at the time:

*“...We strongly ask the prime minister to pay attention to, and sincerely listen to the voice of the world... Abe, as the prime minister of Japan, should come face to face with the victims of sex slavery and see the historical truth...”*⁶

3. Fred Ransome Smith

Fred Ransome Smith arrived in Singapore in early 1942 as part of the 5th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment, 18th Division. Within a very short time he would become a prisoner of the Japanese, a fate he had to endure for the next three and a half years. In his book, he provides a range of illustrations that he miraculously managed to create and save during his captivity. Ransome Smith relates an incident in September 1942. Prisoners were told to sign a form promising to work and not try to escape. They refused to sign. He then relates how up to 15 000 POWs were marched into Selarang barracks:

*“...After three days with restricted food and water, and medical services, open cess pits, no cover from the sun, conditions became appalling. Then they threatened to move in all our sick... (they) ‘put a bullet up the spout’ and said sign to work and not escape or else...”*⁷

5 Hoyt, E P, *Japan’s War: The Great Pacific Conflict*, Guild Publishing, London, 1987, pp 256-7

6 The Taipei Times, 17 March 2007.

7 Ransome Smith, F, *Thai-Burma Railway of Death*, Mulqueen, Melbourne, 2002, p 10

Notes

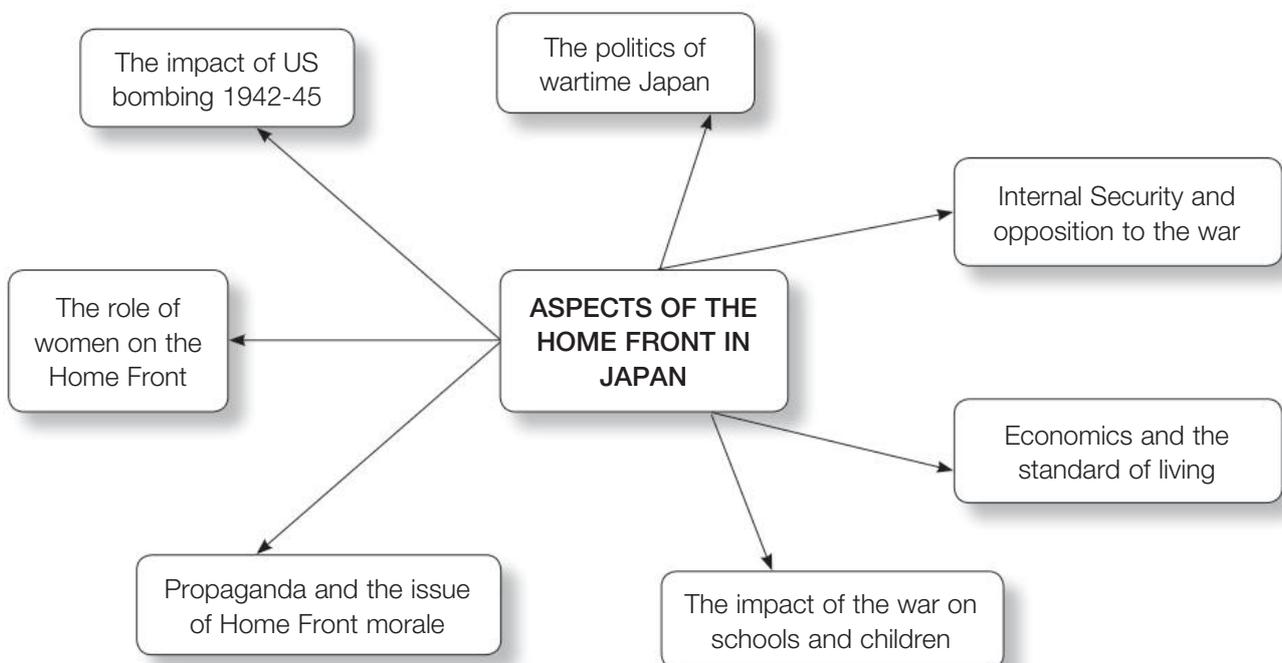
Chapter Eleven

The Home Front in Japan

Life on the home front in Japan began in a spirit of national pride and confidence. The attack on Pearl Harbour had come as a shock to the Japanese people but it was presented in the media as a great victory. As Japanese forces swept across South-East Asia in the first six months, ultimate victory seemed to be only a matter of time. However, the disaster of Midway (hidden from the Japanese people) and the enormous economic and military superiority of the United States presented the Home Front with the reality of war. By August 1945, Japan was on its knees and its cities had become smouldering ruins.

Figure 11.1 highlights the aspects of the Home Front in Japan which this chapter will examine.

Figure 11.1 Aspects of the Home Front in Japan



During the first few months of the war, the Japanese homeland was spared the impact of military conflict. Victory followed victory as Japanese forces pushed through South-East Asia and so the Japanese people were shielded and spared their “blitz” early on. ¹ However, **allied bombing** was to later bring death and destruction to the Home Front of Japan.

- The first indication that the Home Front could not escape reality of war came in April 1942 with the Doolittle Raid: ²
 - this action was symbolic and wrought minimum damage but it was a sign of what the Home Front might expect.

¹ The blitz was the term used to describe massive bombing of British cities by the German Luftwaffe.

² See Chapter Six.

- As American forces edged closer to the Japanese mainland, it came within range of US bombers:
 - from July 1944 following the Battle of Saipan, the US air force's massive B-29 super-fortresses were able to bomb Japan;
 - by mid-1945 this was done at will.
- Japan's wooden cities could not stand the onslaught. Tokyo was virtually destroyed in March 1945. Homes and factories were destroyed, hundreds of thousands died.

Internal security was rigid; **opposition to the war** on the Home Front was minimal.

- As the military had tight control over the people and the media, it is not possible to truly judge popular support for the war:
 - some intellectuals were opposed to the war, realising the absurdity and futility of taking on the United States in a modern war;
 - however, the evidence tends to suggest that the people remained supportive of their leaders and their soldiers;
 - Nationalist propaganda and inculcation of sacrifice to the Emperor had done its job.
- If support wavered, there was always the presence of the *kempeitei*, Japan's brutal secret police, to maintain obedience and support:
 - the *kempeitei's* reputation for excess was enough to keep the people cowed.
- The traditional 'neighbourhood associations', the *tonarigumi*, provided another element of control:
 - these associations handled matters such as fire-fighting, civil defence, rationing, volunteer labour and ensuring the call-up was abided by;
 - Japan lacked the technology and manpower to enforce control at the lowest levels of society;
 - the *tonarigumi* filled the gap; members were encouraged to inform on each other, and its members would probably find it socially unacceptable to betray or cheat on neighbours.

The **economy** and the people's **standard of living** suffered enormously. Though Japan was Asia's most developed economy, it was not well-suited to war, due to its lack of raw materials and reliance on imports.

- The Economic Mobilisation Law (1938) created a command economy over which military bureaucrats set production quotas:
 - profits and dividends were controlled;
 - consumer goods production was curtailed;
 - from 1941 there were virtually no textiles available for domestic consumption.
- Stringent rationing was introduced. The standard of living for most Japanese plummeted as the availability of everything from food to nails to bandages and cooking oil was strictly controlled.

- The availability of rice (a staple) fell dramatically:
 - between 1937 and 1945, domestic production fell by a 35%;
 - imports of rice fell by 85%.

Traditionally, **women** were expected to stay at home, and be dutiful and obedient wives and care for the family. It took some time for the role of women to change. However, after Pearl Harbour, women were mobilised.

- From the late 1930s, women were flocking to the Patriotic Women's Association and the National Women's Defence Association:
 - work included putting together care packages for soldiers at the front.
- Women were expected to be frugal and austere:
 - expensive kimonos were frowned upon;
 - women might be attacked for sporting western hairstyles and fashions.
- Women's volunteer labour groups were formed and by 1944 almost four million women were working in key industrial sectors such as munitions and pharmaceuticals;
 - however, it is estimated that there were still 600 000 women working as domestic servants.

Propaganda was forced on the Home Front to maintain morale and extol the virtues of Japan's brave and selfless men sacrificing themselves for the Emperor.

- Japan had a problem with propaganda which a country like Germany did not have. About 50% of the population was rural and of these only about 6% had radio sets. Many were so poor they could not afford newspapers:
 - many in rural areas had had only four to six years of education and thus had low levels of literacy.
- In 1937, the National Spiritual Mobilisation Campaign was launched to bring all the patriotic groups under one organisation:
 - this would ensure that the military could offer 'guidance' to these groups;
 - in 1940 the Cabinet Information Bureau was formed to control the flow of information.
 - the people were never told of military defeats, even of the scale of Midway.
- Mass rallies were often held to maintain morale. Examples included:
 - the "Crush America and Britain rally – 10 December 1941;
 - the "Strengthening Air Defence Spirit rally – 16 December 1941.
- When Saipan and Okinawa fell to the Americans, there were examples of mass civilian suicides:
 - the abrupt end of the war brought on by the atomic bomb meant that we would never know if this would have occurred across the entire country had the Americans invaded in late 1945.

Japanese **school children** were always taught to revere the Emperor and love their country, to the point of laying down their lives for it.

- In April 1941, elementary schools were renamed “National Schools”:
 - their purpose was to “restore and promote the Japanese spirit”.
- Schools took on a military feel:
 - summer vacations became training periods and children were expected to do voluntary labour;
 - many children were pulled out of school to provide basic labour in the factories.
- Younger school students were gradually evacuated from the cities to the countryside, along with their teachers as the bombing became more intensive:
 - by 1945, up to 90% of children had been evacuated.

Japanese **politics** defied any simple description. It was not fascist in the manner of Italy and it lacked any charismatic figure such as Hitler. It was not a democracy, though elements of a democratic structure existed. The only constant in Japanese political life was the Emperor to whom loyalty was unquestioned.

- By the mid-1930s, Japanese politics had become totally dominated by the military, and there were factions within the military: ³
 - factions would manoeuvre around the Emperor and vie for influence.
- In September 1940, the Imperial Rule Association was formed which brought together all political groups, trade unions and civil organisations.
- General Tojo’s accession to power in October 1941 pushed Japan to its decision to attack Pearl Harbour:
 - as the war situation deteriorated, Tojo was removed in July 1944;
 - he was replaced with General Koiso, perhaps in the hope he could gain a better post-war deal for Japan;
 - after the fall of Okinawa in April 1945, Koiso was replaced by Admiral Suzuki.

³ See Figure 1.4 in Chapter One.

Exercise 11.1 Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	Outline the impact of allied bombing of Japanese cities by mid-1945.	
2	What was the extent of domestic opposition to the war in Japan?	
3	What was the kempeitei?	
4	What were the tonarigumi?	
5	Describe the impact of the war on the Japanese standard of living.	
6	How was the traditional role of women affected by the progress of the war?	
7	How did the Japanese people react to the defeat at Midway in 1942?	
8	How was the education of Japanese children affected by the war?	
9	What was the one constant in Japanese political life?	
10	Who was Japan's dominant political figure during most of the war?	

Exercise 11.2

Locate the terms below in this 'find a word' relating to the Japan Home Front.

T	D	R	A	N	S	K	E	I	V
B	O	M	B	I	N	G	Z	E	B
H	O	K	I	N	A	W	A	K	I
S	L	I	Y	S	W	G	R	S	M
O	I	V	O	O	A	O	H	O	U
S	T	E	L	H	R	A	R	C	G
I	T	N	G	E	U	A	N	D	I
O	L	D	P	E	L	E	S	F	R
K	E	M	P	E	I	T	E	I	A
N	E	M	X	Z	A	Q	R	Y	N
P	W	G	K	W	L	T	O	J	O
G	N	I	N	O	I	T	A	R	T

BOMBING – OKINAWA – KEMPEITEI – RATIONING – KOISO – TOJO –
 EMPEROR – MORALE – TONARIGUMI – TOKYO

What do the historians have to say about “The Home Front in Japan”?

1. Alvin D Coox

Coox comments on the state of public morale in Japan by mid-1945. The Supreme War Direction Council had carried out surveys during the first six months of 1945, at a time when the allied air offensive was reaching a crescendo. The surveys revealed a people who, though inherently patriotic, were descending into despair and resignation. There was a great restlessness in the population, ‘peace-mongering’ and even evidence of revolutionary tendencies. The President of the Privy Council stated at an Imperial Conference, in a wonderfully understated manner that “*public morale had obviously been lowered*” and the people’s willingness to glorify the “*best traditions of their ancestors might suffer under ‘certain circumstance’*”. Coox makes the point:

*“...The Japanese military and civilian analysts reported evidence of declining civil morale, black-marketeering, corruption, growing distrust in the leadership and criticism of the military and the government...”*⁴

2. Franz H Michael and George E Taylor

Michael and Taylor describe the political moves that occurred inside Japan as the war was bringing death and destruction to the homeland. Tojo was removed in July 1944 as a first step towards peace and was replaced by Koiso. In August Koiso set up the six-member Supreme Council for the Direction of War, which included Emperor Hirohito. It decided to put out ‘peace feelers’ to the Soviet Union but this move failed. Koiso made approaches to (neutral) Sweden but again no progress was made. Following the US landing on Okinawa, the Koiso cabinet fell. He was replaced by Admiral Suzuki. Suzuki had had nothing to do with the move towards war and his appointment was meant to show Japan was serious about peace. The ‘peace group’ in cabinet argued that Japan no longer had the food or materials to resist, and that only surrender could save the monarchy. It faced opposition from the diehard army extremists.

*“...The diehards argued that the experience on Okinawa had shown that desperate Japanese resistance was so costly to the Americans that similar resistance on all Japanese islands would bring better terms than unconditional surrender...”*⁵

4 Coox, A D, Japan at the end of her tether, History of the Second World War, Purnell, London, 1968, Vol 6, p 2625

5 Michael, F H, and Taylor, G E, The Far East in the Modern World, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1964, p 581.

Notes

Chapter Twelve

The Home Front in Australia

Introduction

When Britain declared war on Germany on 3rd September 1939, Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies addressed the nation:

"...Fellow Australians. It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in consequence of the persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war on her, and that as a result, Australia is also at war..."

There was no discussion about the government's decision. It was taken for granted that Australia would immediately support the 'mother country' as it had in 1914.

However, in 1939, the mood was different.

- In 1914, the overriding feeling in the country was one of excitement, loyalty to empire and young men felt a desire to 'be in it' as they believed it might 'all be over by Xmas'.
- In 1939, there was more a feeling of resignation, a sense that one had to do one's duty but there was little enthusiasm.
 - Memories of the horrors of the previous war were strong;
 - and there was a residue of bad feeling between Australia and Britain as a result of events of the 1930s, ranging from Britain's treatment of Australia during the depression to the Bodyline test cricket series.

For the first two years of the war, Australian servicemen fought with the British in various theatres of war, far from Australian shores:

- from 1940 to 1942, they fought in North Africa:
 - they fought against Axis forces at Bardia and Benghazi;
 - they were some of the 'rats of Tobruk' during that town's siege in 1941;
 - in late 1942, Australian fought with the British 8th Army at El Alamein;
- Australian troops fought against Vichy-French forces in Syria;
 - 1500 Australians died in Syria;
- Australians served in the RAF during the Battle of Britain and the bombing campaigns over Germany, and in naval operations in the Mediterranean.

By 1942, Japanese forces were heading towards Australia and for the next three years Australian troops would confront them in New Guinea and Borneo. ¹ After the fall of Singapore, 15 000 Australian troops would become POWs. ²

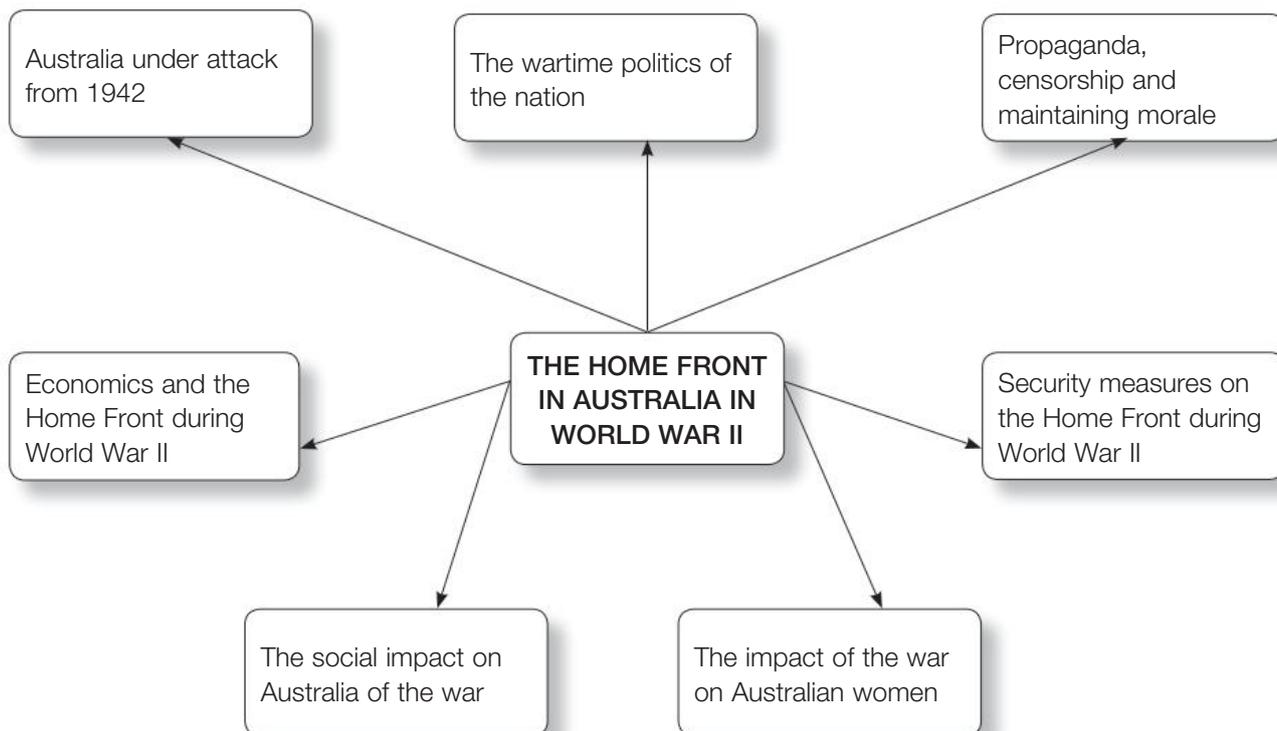
The focus of this chapter is the impact of the war on the Home Front in Australia, particularly the period from late 1941 to the end of the war in August 1945.

¹ See Chapters Seven and Eight.

² See Chapter Ten.

Figure 12.1 outlines the areas which will be covered in this examination Home Front Australia during World War II.

Figure 12.1 Aspects of the Home Front in Australia during World War II



Australia under attack

Singapore fell to the Japanese on 15 February 1942; four days later, on 19th, Darwin was attacked by Japanese planes. It was a significant attack. After the second Japanese raid that day, eight ships had been sunk, 23 planes destroyed, the main RAAF airfield damaged and 243 Australians were dead. Darwin would be hit a further 64 times during the war. Japanese planes would later attack several northern Australian locations including Katherine, Broome, Derby and Wyndham.

There were also random attacks on towns on the east coast. These attacks did little damage but they brought home the reality of war to the Australian people. In May 1942, three Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour. One of the submarines managed to hit the Australian ship, the *Kuttabul*. Twenty-one sailors died in the attack, nineteen Australian, two British.

- One of the midget submarines blew itself up to avoid capture; another was sunk by RAN vessels in Taylor Bay.
- The third escaped Sydney Harbour; its remains were eventually discovered off northern Sydney in 2007.

From late 1943, attacks in the Australian mainland ceased.

Did Japan ever have plans to invade Australia? This was discussed in Chapter Six. Japan might have had long-term plans to incorporate Australia in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity

Sphere. In the short term its main intentions regarding Australia would seem to have been to cut it off from communications with the US.

On 14 May 1943, the Australian Hospital Ship (AHS) *Centaur* was attacked by a Japanese submarine off Moreton Island. It was travelling from Sydney to Cairns. The *Centaur* was clearly marked as a hospital ship, with a thick green band around its white hull, punctuated by a series of prominent red crosses. Of the 332 people on board, only 64 survived. The Australian War Memorial website describes the impact of the sinking of the *Centaur* on the Australian people: *“The loss of the Centaur deeply shocked Australia, and for many Australians she became a symbol of the determination to win the war. The attack on a clearly marked and illuminated hospital ship was taken as further proof that Australia was fighting against a brutal enemy.”*³

Wartime politics

At the outbreak of war in 1939, Robert Menzies was Prime Minister at the head of a United Australian Party (UAP) government. Menzies' growing unpopularity, including claims that he preferred to be in London rather than Australia, led him to offer his resignation on 28 August 1941. Arthur (Artie) Fadden of the Country Party succeeded him. On 2 October, two independents in the House of Representatives, Arthur Coles and Alexander Wilson, declared their intention to vote against the government. Labour leader, John Curtin, called for a vote of no-confidence in Fadden's government. Following the vote, Curtin became Australian Prime Minister.

John Curtin proved to be an outstanding wartime leader, and over time he received plaudits from all sides of politics.

- Following Pearl Harbour, Curtin declared war on Japan on 8 December 'in the name of Australia'.
- On 27 December 1941, he spoke of Australia's need to look to the US rather than Britain *“free of any pangs as to our traditional links of kinship with the United Kingdom.”* (see Historian 1).
- US General MacArthur based himself in Australia following his evacuation from the Philippines. He arrived in Melbourne on 21 March 1942. Curtin and MacArthur established a good working relationship. Australian troops came under the command of MacArthur in his position as Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in SWPA (South West Pacific Area).
- Curtin's relationship with Churchill was more difficult. When Japan attacked Australia, Curtin demanded that Australian troops (6th and 7th Divisions of the AIF) return home to defend their country. Churchill attempted to send them to Burma. After several terse exchanges, Curtin got his own way.⁴

Curtin had opposed conscription during WWI. Conscription was introduced without fanfare when war broke out in 1939. The army was divided into the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) which comprised volunteers, and the Australian Military Force (AMF) which comprised conscripts. Conscripts could not be made to serve outside Australian territory.⁵ In February 1943, Curtin changed the law so that conscripts could be sent to fight anywhere in the SWPA.

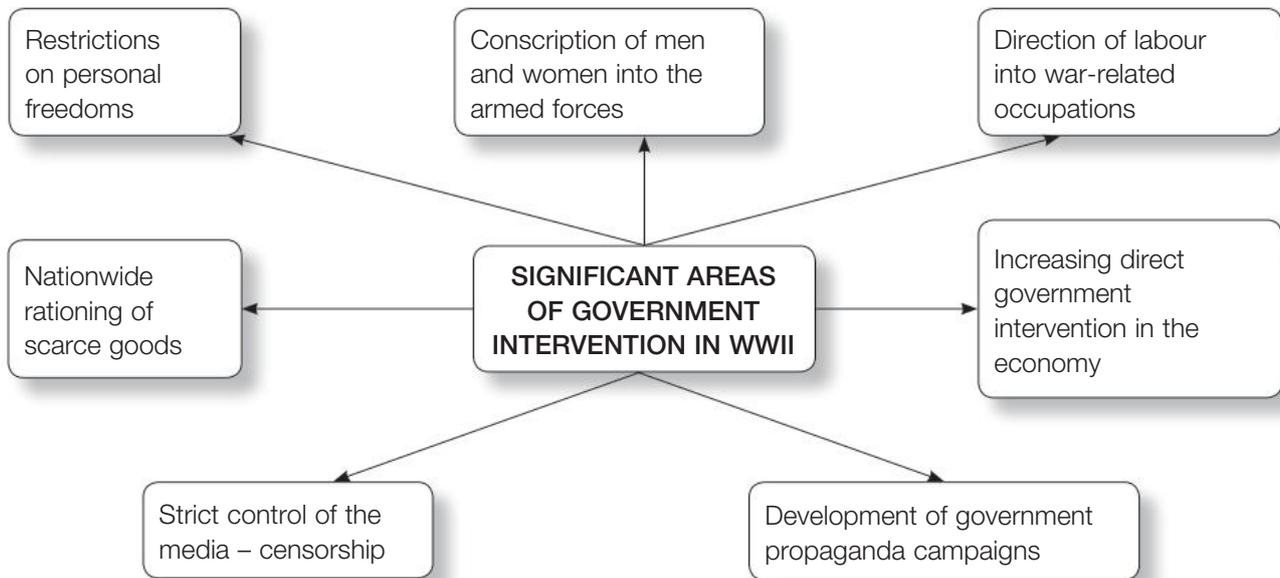
³ <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/the-sinking-of-the-centaur>

⁴ There is a classic cartoon from the Daily Telegraph that illustrates Curtin's position. See <http://john.curtin.edu.au/shapingthenation/essay/leader.html>

⁵ Australian territory included New Guinea which is why AMF (militia) troops fought on the Kokoda Track.

Under John Curtin, the Federal Government greatly expanded its role in Australian life during the war. This development is summarised in Figure 12.1.

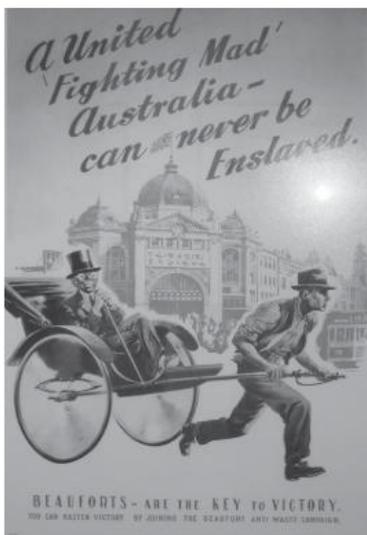
Figure 12.2 The growing role of government during WWII



John Curtin died on 5 July 1945; he would never see the final defeat of Japan. Frank Forde assumed the position of Prime Minister for eight days. Following a Labour Party vote on the leadership, Ben Chifley became Prime Minister.

Propaganda, censorship, maintaining morale

The National Security Act of 1939 introduced widespread censorship into the Australian media. The motives were twofold: firstly, to prevent sensitive information reaching the enemy; secondly, to shield the public from bad war news so as not to lessen morale. Only the basic facts surrounding the bombing of Darwin were ever given to the public. The panic that followed the bombing was hidden.



“The roads leading out of Darwin were clogged with refugees, some of whom were deserting soldiers... many people burnt their houses and sheds to deny the Japanese any succour, and the mood was very grim”⁶

The government controlled the print media, radio and cinema. Soldiers’ letters were censored. People were encouraged not “to gossip”; the sexist nature of the times aimed this request at women. Racist stereotypes of Japanese people were used to encourage the war effort. The Curtin government played up the fear of invasion, even when it was sure invasion would not happen, in order to promote support for the war effort. A Newcastle Jehovah’s Witness radio station, 2HD, was closed down due to its pacifist views.

⁶ FitzSimons, P, Kokoda, Hodder, Sydney, 2004, p 84

Exercise 12.1 Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

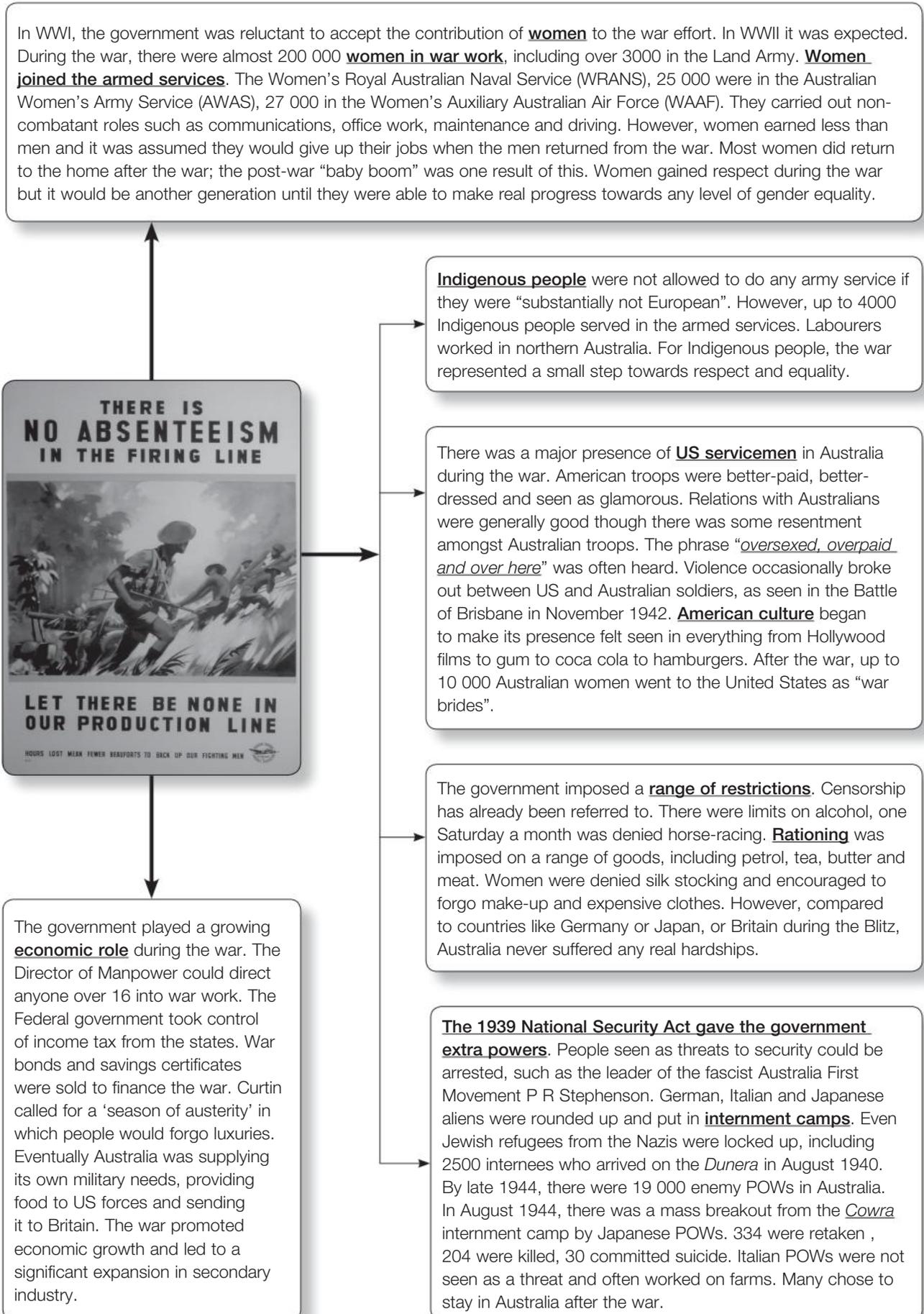
1	Australians were enthusiastic about becoming involved in the war in 1939 as they had been in 1914.	TRUE/ FALSE
2	During WWII, Australian military action was restricted to the Pacific area in regions such as New Guinea.	TRUE/ FALSE
3	The Australian mainland came under direct Japanese attack on numerous occasions during the war.	TRUE/ FALSE
4	John Curtin's decision to see the US rather than Britain as its main ally was welcomed by both Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt.	TRUE/ FALSE
5	Under Curtin, the decision was made that conscripts in the Australian army could be forced to fight beyond Australian territory.	TRUE/ FALSE
6	Throughout WWII, the Australian government greatly expanded its involvement in many areas of Australian social and economic life.	TRUE/ FALSE
7	The National Security Act of 1939 allowed the government to impose tight censorship on the Australian media.	TRUE/ FALSE
8	When Darwin was bombed in 1942, the Australian government was very keen to ensure that the public received the full facts of what had happened.	TRUE/ FALSE
9	The Australian media was extremely reluctant to use racist stereotypes of Japanese people in its propaganda as it did not want to offend Asian people.	TRUE/ FALSE
10	Prime Minister John Curtin established a good working relationship with General Macarthur but never lived to share the moment of victory with him.	TRUE/ FALSE

As well as increased government involvement in Australian life, the war had other major effects on Australian life.

- Security measures were greatly tightened:
 - this included the internment of enemy aliens, people of German and Italian descent;
 - Japanese POWs were held in Australia.
- There were significant social changes:
 - the war had a major impact on the lives of Australian women;
 - hundreds of thousands of US servicemen were based in Australia and this affected society in many ways.
- Economically, the war greatly boosted the Australian economy, largely the result of government intervention.

These various impacts are outlined in Figure 12.3.

Figure 12.3 Impact of war on Australia



Exercise 12.2

Indicate whether each of the following statements is a fact or an opinion.

1	Prime Minister Menzies followed the correct course by immediately taking Australian into the war following Britain's declaration of war on Germany in 1939.	FACT/ OPINION
2	Australia's Home Front suffered far less than some other nations during the war, in particular Japan and Germany.	FACT/ OPINION
3	John Curtin believed that AMF troops, as well as those in the AIF, should be expected to serve in the SWPA.	FACT/ OPINION
4	The Australian government was correct to deny the people the full truth about events during the war.	FACT/ OPINION
5	John Curtin is quite clearly the greatest Prime Minister that Australia has ever had.	FACT/ OPINION
6	There was a general expectation in Australian society that women would return to the home and domestic duties once the war was over.	FACT/ OPINION
7	Women contributed to the war effort in war-related work and the armed services, allowing men to be freed up for combat duties.	FACT/ OPINION
8	US servicemen deserved the resentment they received due to their arrogance, flamboyance and because they were throwing their money around.	FACT/ OPINION
9	Many of the restrictions imposed by the government during the war were petty and imposed just for the sake of it.	FACT/ OPINION
10	During the war years, the Australian economy experienced major growth, especially in secondary industry.	FACT/ OPINION

What do the historians have to say about "The Home Front in Australia"?

1. Andrew Roberts

Neither Churchill nor Roosevelt were happy with John Curtin's speech of 27 December 1941, in which the Australian Prime Minister said that Australia now looked to the United States. Lord Moran, Churchill's doctor, claimed that Churchill's response to Curtin's announcement was that Australians came from "bad stock".⁷ Roberts notes the significance and the wisdom of Curtin's decision.

⁷ This cannot be verified as Moran's diaries, published much later, were denounced as false by many of Churchill's entourage.

*“...Curtin’s statement did mark the beginning of the movement of Australia from the orbit of Britain, which could not protect her effectively, to the United States, which soon could... Australia had chosen the stronger protector, and there was little Churchill could do about it...”*⁸

2. Kate Darian-Smith

Sporadic brawls between US and Australian troops occurred, often fuelled by alcohol and competition over women. Darian-Smith explains that there was also a racial issue related the arrival of so many US troops in Australia. At first, the Curtin government rejected the inclusion of African-American troops. However, the US authorities said they were essential to the America’s racially-segregated army, in areas such as engineering and support groups. Agreement was reached that African-American troops would not be stationed in the southern cities.

*“...Riots erupted in Brisbane between white and African American soldiers on leave, resulting in the introduction of racially segregated zones and amenities in Brisbane and other northern towns...”*⁹

3. Michael McKernan

McKernan comments on the leadership of John Curtin. Curtin suffered from ill health through most of the war. His ailments including psoriasis, pneumonia, gastritis, high blood pressure and a heart attack. However, McKernan points to stress as the main component for Curtin’s awful health record. He refers to the occasion that Curtin had demanded the return home of the 7th Australian Division after his stoush with Churchill. On Curtin’s direct orders, they returned home across the Indian Ocean, with no escort. If attacked, Curtin would bear full responsibility. He told the clerk of the House of Representatives at the time:

“How can I sleep when I know that our men are out there on transports on the Indian Ocean, with all those Japanese submarines looking for them.”

Hundreds of Australians wrote to Curtin during the war.

“As a national leader Curtin had projected himself as a father of his people in a way that others had not. Australians had taken Curtin into their homes and into their hearts.”

Curtin’s death in July 1945 shocked the nation and he was genuinely mourned by all classes of people, “who recognised that he had given his all for the country he had loved so well. Bob Menzies, now opposition leader, said that while he had attacked Curtin politically, ‘it was impossible and unthinkable to attack (Curtin’s) probity, his honesty of purpose, the man himself’.”¹⁰

8 Roberts, A, Churchill, Penguin, 2019, p 704

9 Darian-Smith, K, World War 2 and post-war reconstruction, 1939-49, in The Cambridge History of Australia, Vol 2, CUP, Port Melbourne, 2013, p 102

10 McKernan, M, The Strength of a Nation, Allen and Unwin, Crow’s Nest, 2006, pp 393, 396, 397

ESSAYS 2

Responding to HSC questions on *Civilians at war*

The purpose of this section is to provide some ideas for the type of questions which might be asked on the Focus of Study section of the syllabus, *Civilians at war*. These outlines are not presented as the 'be all and end all' responses to these questions. To provide a sense of reality to this section, what follows is a 'first draft response' to each question, ie what were the first ideas that came into the author's head as he thought about each question?

Essay No 1

"To what extent was Australia changed by the impact of the war on the Home Front in World War II?"

This "to what extent question" offers three main possible types of response.

- a) Yes, Australia was changed fundamentally as a result of the impact of the war on the Home Front.
- b) No, though the war came to Australia, particularly after Pearl Harbour, the country remained more or less as it had been before the outbreak of war.
- c) Clearly, Australia underwent significant change as a result of the impact of the war on the Home Front. However, in some areas it could be argued that change had been minimal.

For the purpose of this question, option c) will be considered.

This question also raises another issue. What is meant by "Australia changed?" Is the question suggesting that after 1945 Australia had changed because of the impact of the war? Examiners would probably not be expecting a response of this type, as Australia 1945-1951 is not part of the syllabus. However, such a response would not be wrong.

Instead, the term "Australia changed" will focus primarily (though not entirely) on the war years of 1939-41, and in particular 1941-45.

- The impact of the war on the Home Front clearly affected Australia, in that the experience of the Australian people during the war years was quite different to what had been the case before 1939:
 - there was the immediate impact of military attack and the defence measures that this necessitated – give examples;
 - the introduction of widespread censorship;
 - the impact of propaganda;
 - tightening of security – refer to government legislation;
 - comment on internment of aliens;

- enemy POWs and their experience.
- Refer to the impact on women:
 - briefly compare WWII with WWI;
 - provide examples of female involvement: munitions, replacing men, the Land Army;
 - comment on women in the armed services – provide examples and numbers.
- The arrival of large numbers of US troops changed Australia:
 - in the short term it caused tensions – give examples
 - American culture began to affect Australia – give examples;
 - up to 10 000 women left for the US as war brides.
- The economic impact:
 - immediately there was tightening up: rationing, austerity, lack of luxuries;
 - increase in female involvement in the work force;
 - government now was playing a much bigger role – eg income tax powers;
 - in the longer-term the war boosted the economy and promoted secondary industry;
- Politically there was change:
 - refer briefly to the narrative: Menzies to Fadden to Curtin;
 - role of Curtin –relationship with Macarthur, his ‘turn’ to the US.
- However, in many ways, things remained the same:
 - women gained respect but their ‘liberation’ was at least a generation away and most obediently obeyed the call to return to the home after 1945 – the baby boomer generation was a key result of this;
 - Indigenous people played their role but their inferior status in society would remain largely untouched for decades;
 - many Italian POWs stayed in Australia but Australia’s white-Anglo culture remained largely untouched for some many years to come.

NB: Be careful not to simply narrate events from 1939 (1941) to 1945. Also, avoid the temptation to simply provide a mass of description about what happened in Australia. Keep the focus of the question in mind, keep coming back to it: how had Australia “been changed or not” as a result of the impact of the war on the Home Front.

Essay No 2:

“Evaluate the impact on civilians of Japanese occupation in South-East Asia during World War II?”

The key term in this question is ‘evaluate’. The question is not simply asking for a lengthy description of what happened to civilians in the occupied territories, though the factual detail will be expected. An evaluation will hopefully provide some nuance in your answer. Was Japanese occupation simply a matter of horror and terror? Did it have any positive features? Also, was the impact on civilians the same in all of the occupied territories?

- It is not difficult to argue that the impact of Japanese occupation on civilians in South-East Asia was the story of almost four years of terror, brutality and severe deprivation:
 - refer to the military aspect – provide examples of aerial bombardment, denial of food and resources to civilians;
 - mention is needed of Malaya/ Singapore/ Burma/ the East Indies and the Philippines but avoid simply telling the story of conquest;
 - however, not all of South-East Asia suffered from invasion in the same way – refer to Thailand, French Indochina;
 - however, even in a compliant Indochina, the local population were to suffer famine due to Japanese diversion of food and other resources to their war effort.
- Japan's occupation affected civilians differently depending on the attitude of those civilians:
 - those who chose to collaborate obviously had a less arduous experience;
 - refer to the French in Indochina, Thailand and figures who chose to work the Japanese as a part of pro-Japanese regimes– provide examples;
 - those who chose to resist the Japanese suffered the full fury of the occupation;
 - provide examples of resistance, eg the Vietminh, guerrilla groups in the Philippines.
- Japanese occupying forces had no hesitation in ignoring the Geneva Convention and making use of slave labour, whether those slave labourers were POWs, members of conquered territories, men or women:
 - refer to the use the Japanese made of slave labour in projects such as the Thai-Burma railway;
 - who was forced to work there – refer to maltreatment, loss of life;
 - (but be careful not to fall into the trap of getting too carried away in giving a list of Japanese wartime atrocities);
 - civilian women in the occupied territories suffered – refer to the issue of Japanese sexual slavery (“comfort women”).
- The story of the impact of the Japanese occupation on civilians in South-East Asia is a brutal and shameful one. However, it can be argued that it brought some benefits to the people of the region:
 - Japanese victories in 1941-42 proved that the west was not invincible;
 - the west had been humiliated – Asians were as powerful, if not more powerful, than the former colonial powers;
 - provide examples of western humiliation: Singapore, the Philippines;
 - nationalist movements in South East Asia were sometimes willing to work with the Japanese – refer to Burma, East Indies;
 - those that resisted gained popular support for that resistance – refer to nationalist groups in Indochina, the Philippines.

Possible HSC questions on “*Civilians at war*”

- a) Assess the social, political and economic effect of the Japanese occupation on civilians in South-East Asia.
- b) How were the lives of civilians in South-East Asia affected by the Japanese occupation? In your answer refer specifically to the issues of collaboration, resistance and slave labour.

For Question (b), instead of three issues, a question might seek a discussion of only two issues out of collaboration, resistance and slave labour. Students would be most unlucky (and unlikely) to be asked to discuss only one issue.

- c) To what extent did the experience of civilians in South-East Asia under the Japanese occupation vary depending on where they lived?
- d) To what extent might civilians under the Japanese occupation of South East have been able to see their experiences in a positive light?
- e) Assess the impact of the war on the Japanese Home Front by 1945.
- f) Account for the ability of the Japanese Home Front to survive until 1945.
- g) Assess the impact of the war on the Australian Home Front by 1945.
- h) Why was the Home Front experience of Japanese civilians so different to that of Australian civilians?
- i) To what extent was Australia’s social, economic and political life affected by the impact of the war on the Home Front?

Chapter Thirteen

Reasons for the use of the A-bomb

The Manhattan Project

Fear that Nazi Germany's scientists were working on weapon development using nuclear technology was a key factor behind the "Manhattan Project" – the code name for the US-led effort to develop a working atomic weapon during World War II.

- Some of the world's leading scientists, working with the US military, were to spend several years at Los Alamos in New Mexico on the top-secret project.
- The scientific team was led by J Robert Oppenheimer.
- The first successful testing of an atomic device, a plutonium bomb, took place at the Trinity test site at Alamogordo in New Mexico on 16 July 1945.

Hiroshima: 6 August 1945

The city of Hiroshima is located about 675 kms south west of Tokyo. It was a major manufacturing centre with a population of 350 000. The dropping of the atomic bomb on the city was codenamed "Operation Centerboard 1".

A 9000-pound uranium-235 bomb was taken to the island of Tinian, in the northern Mariana island group. It was boarded on to a modified B-29 bomber, called the 'Enola Gay', named after the mother of the plane's pilot, Paul Tibbets. After travelling over 2500 kms, the bomb, referred to as "Little Boy", was dropped by parachute over Hiroshima at 8.15 am on 6 August 1945. It exploded about 2000 feet above the city, producing a blast equal to about 15 000 tons of TNT.

- The explosion destroyed up to 90% of the city.
- 80 000 people were killed immediately by the bomb.
- In the years that followed tens of thousands of people were to die from the effects of exposure to radiation, burns, sickness and cancer.

Nagasaki: 9 August 1945

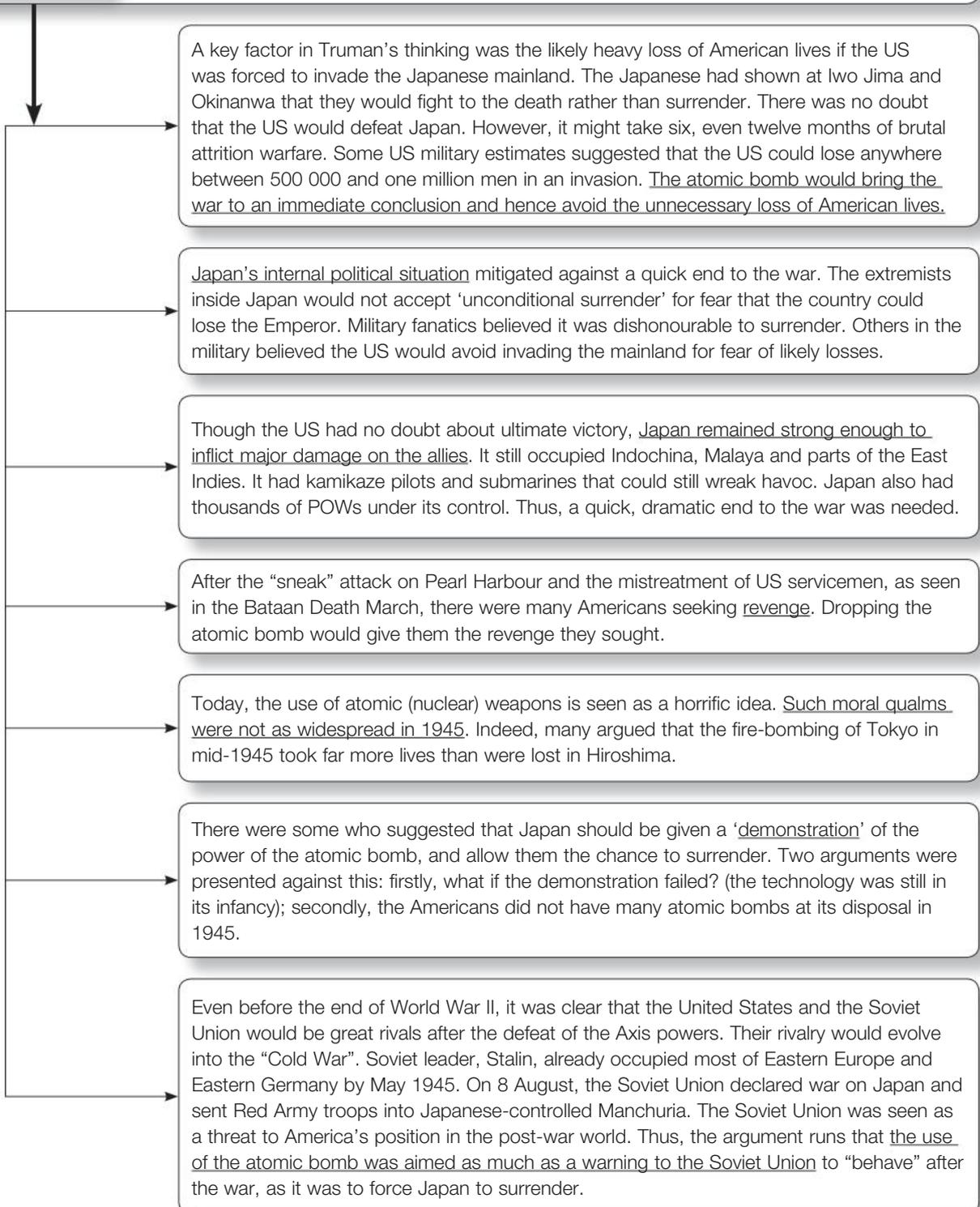
Nagasaki is located about 320 kms south west of Hiroshima. On 9 August, another B-29 known as 'Bockscar', and piloted by Major Charles Sweeney, took off from the island of Tinian. At 11.02am on 9 August 1945, a 21-kiloton plutonium bomb, weighing 10 000 pounds, was dropped on the city, exploding at an altitude of 1650 feet. This bomb was referred to as "Fat Boy".

- It is estimated that from 40-70 000 people were killed in the explosion.
- Tens of thousands would later die from the effects of the blast.
- Nagasaki is situated in a narrow valley between mountains. This reduced the area of destruction to 2.6 square miles.

Figure 13.1 Why did the United States use the atomic bomb?



Franklin Roosevelt died on 12 April 1945. It fell to his successor, Harry S Truman to make the decision to drop atomic bombs in Japan. Over time, Truman's motivation has been closely examined. Figure 13.1 outlines some of the reasons that have been suggested for the decision to use the atomic bombs. Historians' view will be considered later.



It is impossible to single out any one reason for the US decision to use the atomic bomb in 1945. All of the above factors would have been 'in the air'.

What do the historians have to say about “Reasons for the use of the A-bomb”?

1. Richard B Frank ¹

Frank wrote following the declassification of documents relating to the end of the war. He argues that America’s leaders in the summer of 1945 had discovered that their plans to invade Japan had been shattered by the massive Japanese build-up on the island of Kyushu.

- The goal of the Japanese was to inflict casualties so great, that the US would be willing to compromise.
- Intercepted Japanese diplomatic documents had revealed that the chances of negotiation were very small.
- Frank also provides evidence that Japan’s leaders were willing to risk total annihilation to maintain the nation’s existing order.

2. Douglas J MacEachin ²

MacEachin makes the point that the decision to use the atomic bomb had been made before President Truman reached Potsdam. ³ (for the July 1945 post-war conference with Stalin, Churchill and later Attlee). MacEachin points to three factors that led to the decision to use the atomic bomb:

- firstly, to avoid unnecessary US casualties that a land invasion would have involved;
- secondly, to provide leverage against the Soviet Union in the new post-war world;
- thirdly, to avoid having to negotiate compromise concessions with the Japanese.

MacEachin, unlike Frank, does not believe the Japanese build-up on Kyushu was the reason for using the bomb. Rather it was a factor that strongly reinforced that decision.

3. President Harry S Truman ⁴

The US magazine, *The Atlantic* published a piece in 2018 about a letter Truman had sent to it. In December 1946, Truman wrote to the US magazine, *The Atlantic*, in response to an article written by Karl T Compton, in the December 1946 edition of *The Atlantic*. In his article, Compton had argued that all war is inhuman, without the bomb the Japanese would have fought on and on, and that it was the use of the bomb that finally brought about the Japanese surrender. In his brief letter, Truman concurred with Compton’s conclusions, saying:

“The Japanese were given fair warning, and were offered the terms which they finally accepted, well in advance of the dropping of the bomb. I imagine the bomb caused them to accept the terms.”

1 Frank, R B, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire*, Penguin, New York, 1999

2 MacEachin, D J, *The Final Months of the War with Japan: Signals Intelligence, US Invasion Planning and the A-bomb decision*, Center the Study of Intelligence, Library of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1998

3 Potsdam, just outside Berlin, was the site of the Great Powers conference in July 1945 between Truman, Stalin and Churchill (later replaced by Attlee, after the 1945 British election).

4 *The Atlantic*, Harry Truman explains why he dropped the bomb, 23 June 2018

4. David Horowitz ⁵

Horowitz argues that the reason Truman chose to use the atomic bomb was his desire to keep the Russians out of any involvement in the post-war arrangements for Japan.

- This, says Horowitz, explains the US haste to use the bomb without waiting to see what effect Russia's entry into the war against Japan might have had.
- It also explains the haste with which the second bomb was used, only one day after Soviet troops entered Manchuria.

5. Charles L. Mee Jr

Mee argues that by the end of July 1945, the US knew that it was not necessary to use the atomic bomb against Japan. Truman had been told as much by some of his advisors, such as Eisenhower and LeMay.

- LeMay was later to say that the bomb shortened the war by only two weeks.
- Churchill later wrote that Japan's defeat was certain even before the first bomb was dropped.
- Mee argues that the bomb was dropped for the psychological effect it would have on Russia.

"...The psychological effect on Stalin was twofold: the Americans had not only used a doomsday machine: they had used it when, as Stalin knew, it was militarily unnecessary. It was this last chilling fact that doubtless made the greatest impression on the Russians..." ⁶

⁵ Horowitz, D, From Yalta to Vietnam, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967

⁶ Mee Jr, C L, Meeting at Potsdam, Dell, New York, 1975, p 204

Exercise 13.1

Complete the following passage, using the terms in the box below.

During the war, the _____ project had been undertaken to produce a workable _____ bomb. Following the death of President _____ in April 1945, it fell to the new President, _____, to authorise its use against _____. The first bomb, called _____, was dropped on _____ on _____, 1945. Up to _____ people were killed in the blast. Thousands would later die of various sicknesses, in particular due to _____. On _____, a second bomb, called _____, was dropped on _____. The main reason given for using the atomic bomb was to shorten the war, as it was clear that the _____ would not surrender quickly if a _____ invasion took place. The build-up on _____ gave credence to this idea. However, other reasons have been presented, such as a desire for _____ after Pearl Harbour. Some historians have suggested the bomb was used to demonstrate American power to _____, the leader of the Soviet Union. In the post-war world, the US and the _____ were to become major rivals in the developing _____.

REVENGE – RADIATION – ROOSEVELT – COLD WAR – NAGASAKI – JAPANESE –
MANHATTAN – LITTLE BOY – STALIN – TRUMAN – ATOMIC – 6 AUGUST –
KYUSHU – JAPAN – 6 AUGUST – FAT BOY – HIROSHIMA – SOVIET UNION –
LAND – 80 000

Chapter Fourteen

Reasons for the Japanese defeat

The surrender of Japan

Japan was a beaten power well before the dropping of the atomic bomb. Throughout 1945, US bomber aircraft faced virtually no resistance as they pounded Japan's wooden cities. More people died in the fire-bombing of Tokyo than on 6 August in Hiroshima. The US had in place a plan to invade the Japanese mainland in November. It was called 'Operation Olympic' and was to be led by General Macarthur. Events in August would determine that 'Operation Olympic' was never implemented.

6 August	The atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima. However, Japan's leaders decide to fight on. The majority of the Supreme War Council rejects the US call for 'unconditional surrender'.
8 August	Russia enters the war against Japan and moves its troops into Japanese-occupied Manchuria.
9 August	A second bomb is dropped on Nagasaki. Emperor Hirohito agrees to Prime Minister Suzuki's proposal to accept the Potsdam Declaration, and thus unconditional surrender.
10 August	A message is sent to the US about the 9 August decision, <i>"with the understanding that said Declaration does not compromise any demand that prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as the sovereign ruler"</i> .
12 August	The US responds saying that the position of the Emperor was subject to the decision of the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers.
14 August	Hirohito orders his government to prepare a declaration accepting Japan's surrender.
15 August	Extremists in the armed forces who are opposed to surrender attempt a coup. They burn down Prime Minister Suzuki's house in the process. The coup fails. Emperor Hirohito speaks to his people on national radio for the time announcing Japan's surrender to the US. He told the people: <i>"We have resolved to pave the way for a grand peace for all the generations to come by enduring the unendurable and suffering what is insufferable."</i> The United States accepts Japan's surrender.

The formal surrender document was signed just after 9.00 am, 2 September 1945 on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, in which over 250 allied ships were anchored. It was signed by General Macarthur, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu for the Japanese government and General Yoshijiro for the Japanese military. Other signatures were added representing China, Britain, the Soviet Union, Australia, Canada, France, the Netherlands, and New Zealand. Admiral Nimitz signed for the United States.

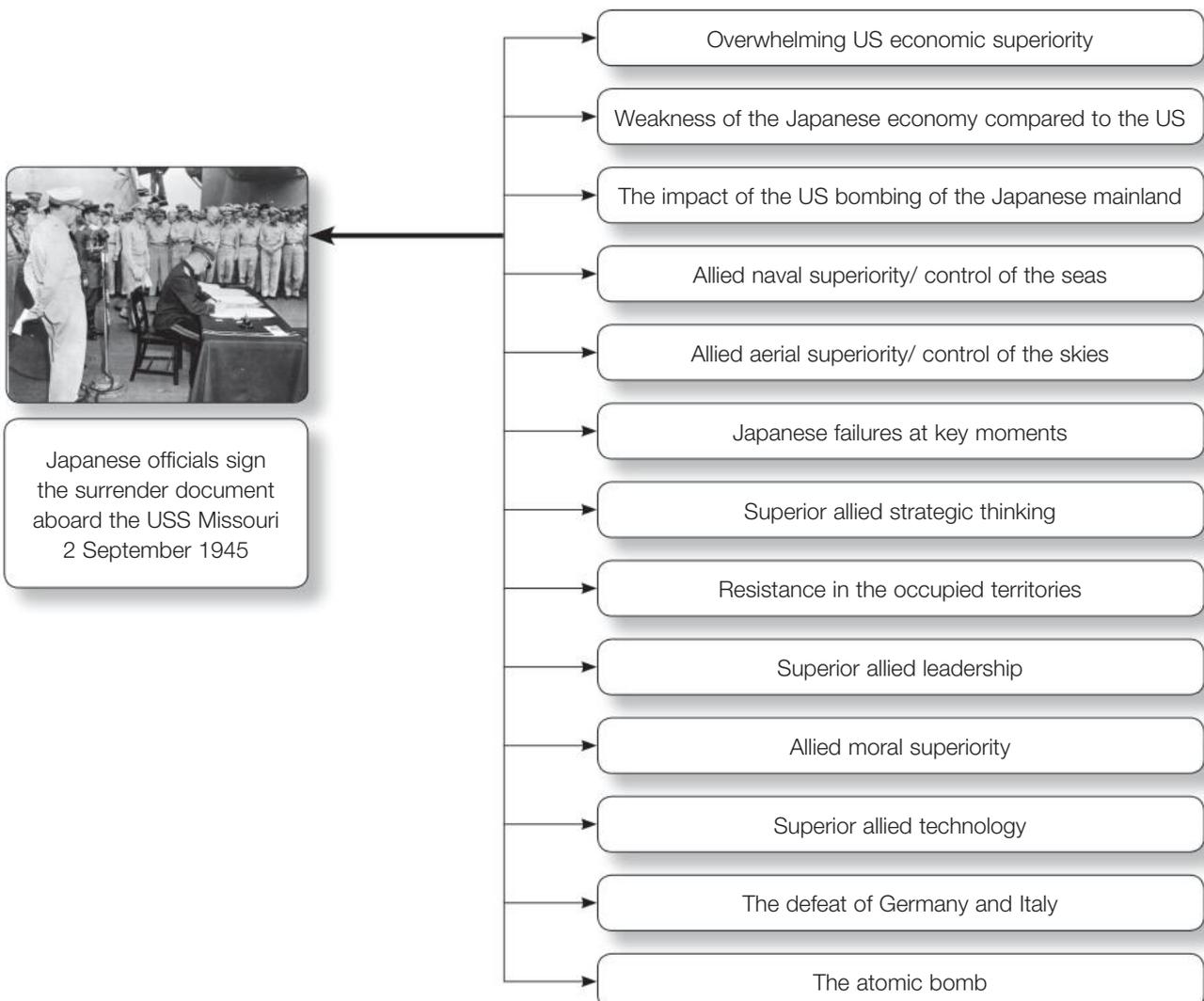
Why did Japan lose the war?

Nothing in history is inevitable. However, once Japan had awoken “the sleeping giant” of the United States, few doubted that its eventual defeat was only a matter of time. Japan’s hope had been to create a wide-enough defensive perimeter across the western Pacific that might have made the US think twice about engaging in a lengthy war to dislodge it. However, it was highly unlikely any US leader could have allowed Pearl Harbour to go unchallenged. Japan’s failure to hit US aircraft-carriers at Pearl Harbour and its major defeat at Midway in June 1942 effectively sealed its fate. It was to take three long bloody years to bring about the defeat of Japan. However, few on the allied side, at least, doubted that that defeat would come.

Many factors brought about the defeat of Japan, and these are outlined in Figure 14.1 below. However, in essence, the eventual defeat of Japan was the result of two factors: economics and strategy:

- Japan could simply never match the gigantic strength of the American economy to produce unlimited amounts of war material;
- with limited resources, Japan was too overstretched, and consequently in the long run, it could not counter allied strategy.

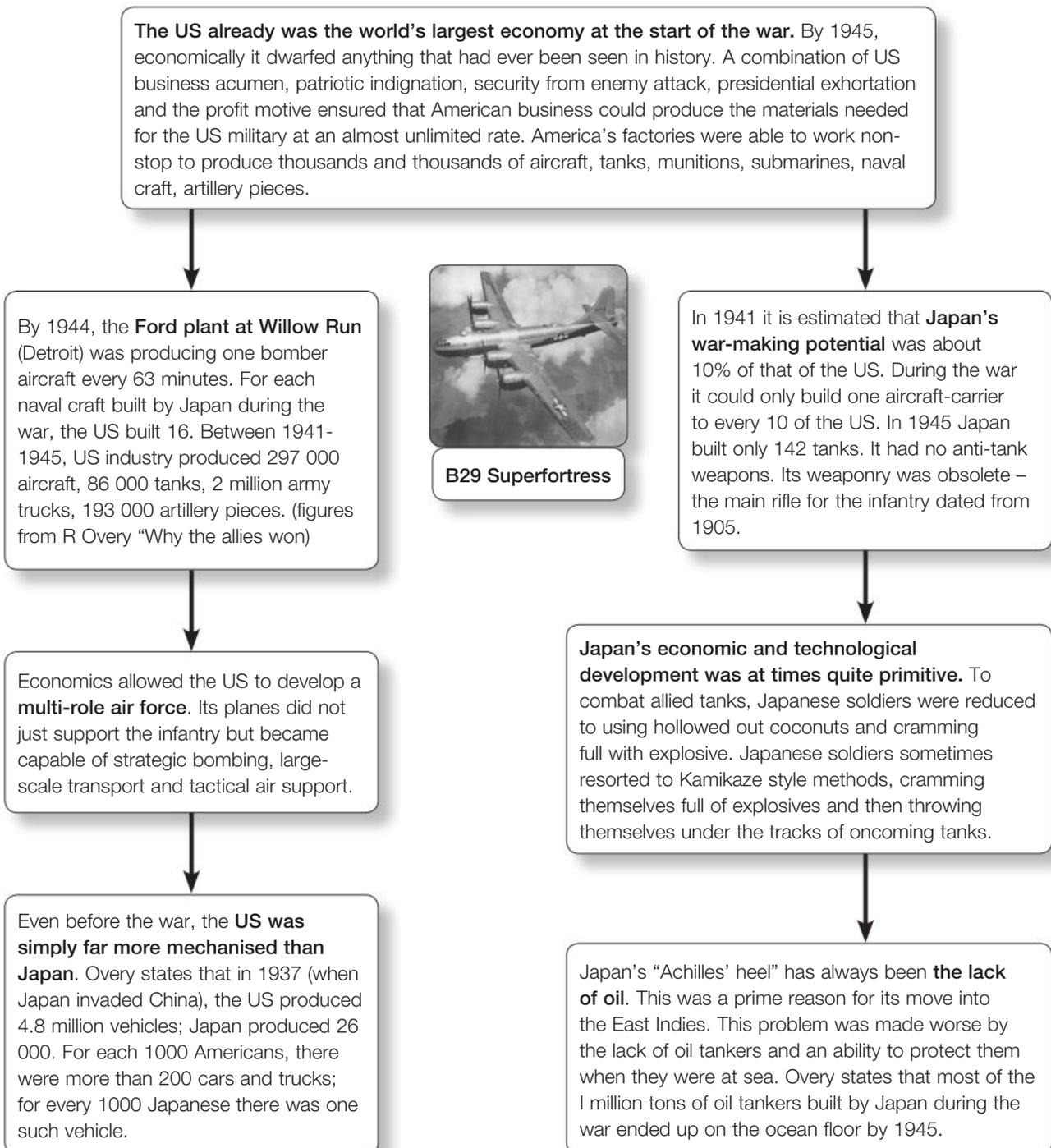
Figure 14.1 Outline of factors leading to Japan’s defeat



Economics

The fundamental reason for Japan's defeat in World War II was economic. This is explained in Figure 14.2.

Figure 14.2 The role of economics in Japan's defeat



In the historians section at the end of this chapter, specific references are made to Overy's analysis of Japanese weaknesses in economics and technology. ¹

¹ Overy, R, Why the allies won, Jonathan Cape, London, 1995

Other reasons for the defeat of Japan

- Once the US had established air and naval superiority, it was able to interrupt the flow of essential war materials to the Japanese mainland, in particular oil:
 - it has been estimated that by 1945 less than 10% of oil headed to Japan from South-East Asia reached its destination.
- Naval and air superiority also meant the US was able to inflict massive, heavy, destructive bombing on Japan's cities;
 - once the US had control of the Marianas, Iwo Jima and eventually Okinawa, hundreds of B-29 bombers could fly over Japan with impunity rain down destruction on the country.
 - apart from the heavy loss of life, Japanese industry became paralysed.
- Technologically, the US far more advanced than Japan. This point has been mentioned but it extended beyond the economic and weapons sphere:
 - they were far superior than Japan in the development of radar;
 - US intelligence had been able to crack Japanese codes from the early days of the war.
- The allies had a 'moral' advantage over the Japanese. Japan had a long record of military aggression and brutality that encouraged resistance and handed the allies 'the moral high ground':
 - Japanese aggression stretched from Manchuria (1931) to China (1937) and then across South-East Asia;
 - Japan's lists of atrocities from 'The Rape of Nanking' to the 'Bataan Death March' to 'comfort women' to 'Unit 731'.²
 - The allies were also blessed with able leadership during the war:
 - President Roosevelt proved to be an able and inspirational leader;
 - Roosevelt handled his military effectively and proved a good judge of military commanders (though at times some had doubts about MacArthur);
 - Roosevelt was also able to work effectively with other allied leaders such as Churchill and Stalin.
- Strategically, the US proved superior to the Japanese:
 - Japan had overstretched itself by late 1942 and was always going to have problems holding on to territory and supplying its troops;
 - the twin-pronged drive across the central Pacific (Nimitz) and the South West Pacific (MacArthur) proved effective;
 - Japan's failure in the Battle of the Coral Sea (May 1942) kept open lines of communication between the US and Australia, thus enabling Australia to continue as a base for MacArthur and US troops;
 - Japan's failure at Midway (June 1942) marked the real turning point of the war against Japan;
 - the Battle of Leyte Gulf (October 1944) ended effective Japanese air and naval power;
 - the success of the island-hopping campaign left many Japanese troops stranded and made possible the bombing campaign on the Japanese mainland.

² This was the unit in Manchuria where the Japanese carried out biological and chemical warfare experiments on POWs.

- Though there was some collaboration with the Japanese in the occupied territories, resistance proved to be an irritating thorn in the side of Japan:
 - the Vietminh in Indochina carried on guerrilla attacks against Japanese units and often were able to rescue downed US pilots flying supplies into China;
 - guerrilla forces in the Philippines continued their resistance;
 - Burmese nationalist forces eventually turned on the Japanese.
- Japan's Axis allies, Germany and Italy, never played a role in the Pacific War:
 - it can only be speculated what might have been the effect had Hitler and Mussolini been victorious in Europe and North Africa.
 - Germany surrendered to the allies on 8 May 1945
- The use of atomic weapons in 1945 finally brought the war to an end. By then, Japan was already on its knees. One can only speculate on what might have happened if the US had been forced to launch "Operation Olympic" at the end of 1945.

Exercise 14.1 Place the events on the right in the correct chronological order

1st event		Atomic bombing of Nagasaki
2nd event		Battle of the Coral Sea
3rd event		Surrender of Nazi Germany
4th event		Emperor Hirohito's address to the nation
5th event		Atomic bombing of Hiroshima
6th event		Battle of Midway
7th event		Soviet Union enters the war against Japan
8th event		Formal surrender of Japan
9th event		Battle of Leyte Gulf
10th event		Firebombing of Tokyo

What do the historians have to say about “Reasons for the Japanese defeat”?

1. Richard Overy

Overy makes the point that such was the economic and technological superiority of the US, Japan continually suffered *exceptional levels of attrition*. Japan was soon lacking adequate air cover, equipment and fuel. Overy refers to the demodernisation of Japanese forces which meant that Japan had to rely on the only thing it had left: the endurance and commitment of its troops. Overy argues that the weakness of the economy, and the frequent interruptions to its supply lines by US submarines and aircraft:

*“...made it impossible to reverse the cycle of attrition, and condemned Japan to fight an old-fashioned war against an enemy whose technology and fighting power constantly expanded...”*³

Overy further points to the fact that Japan remained in many ways a backward army. An average army division would use 3000 horses but have fewer than 300 vehicles. He says that for there was one truck for each 49 Japanese soldiers overseas; for US troops overseas, it was one truck per 13 soldiers.

*“...Japan made no attempt to embrace new developments...(Tanks) were poor by wartime standards. Armour was so thin that it could be penetrated by small-arms fire...”*⁴

2. Edwin P Hoyt

Hoyt uses Prime Minister Suzuki’s survey of May 1945, presented to the cabinet, to highlight the state that Japan had reached. Its fundamental economic and military weakness could not be hidden, no matter how the fanatical extremists tried to. At this time the kempetei were seeking out any who were showing signs of defeatism. However, Suzuki showed what had happened to Japan’s war potential. Steel production was below a third of what was needed, the B-29 bombing raids had shattered aircraft production; oil fuel stocks for shipping was so low that the navy was being forced to mix soybean oil with petroleum. Hoyt describe Suzuki’s conclusion re-the allied bombing:

*“...At the rate of destruction of the cities by the B-29s, by the end of September every city of 30 000 or more would have been burned out. On 29 May, 500 B-29s bombed Yokohama, killing more thousands of people and reducing a third of the city to rubble...”*⁵

3 Overy, R, Why the allies won, Jonathan Cape, London, 1995, p 223

4 Overy, R, Why the allies won, Jonathan Cape, London, 1995, p 221

5 Hoyt, E P, Japan’s War: The Great Pacific Conflict, Guild Publishing, London, 1987, p 398

Chapter Fifteen

War Crimes Tribunals and the status of the Emperor

Introduction

In the past, wars had most often come to an end with representatives of both the victorious and defeated sides coming together to discuss treaty arrangements. This had been the practice up until the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. The Paris Peace Conference was different; the defeated side was not allowed the opportunity to negotiate the terms of the post-war settlement. Instead, Germany was presented with the treaty terms and told to “sign or else”.

However, in 1919, despite the allied belief that Germany and its allies were to blame for the war in 1914,¹ its leaders were not placed on trial and punished for what had happened during the war (though some in the allied nations did seek this).

World War II was brought to a conclusion by placing the leaders of the defeated powers on trial for crimes associated with their conduct of the war.² Thousands of people in the defeated nations were to be tried for two new defined categories of international crime:

- crimes against peace;
- crimes against humanity.

This decision came out of the Potsdam Conference of July 1945. The victorious allied powers meeting at Potsdam declared:

“There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world... We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners.”

The War Crimes Tribunals

On 19 January 1946, General Macarthur declared the establishment of *“The International Military Tribunal for the Far East”* (IMFTE). Over the next few weeks, a series of names were presented to him, and from these eleven judges were selected to sit on the *“Allied Far Eastern Commission”*. The principal International Military Tribunal was to sit from 3 May 1946 to 4 November 1948. There was to be one chief prosecutor, the American Joseph B Keenan. The presiding judge was the Australian, William Flood Webb.³

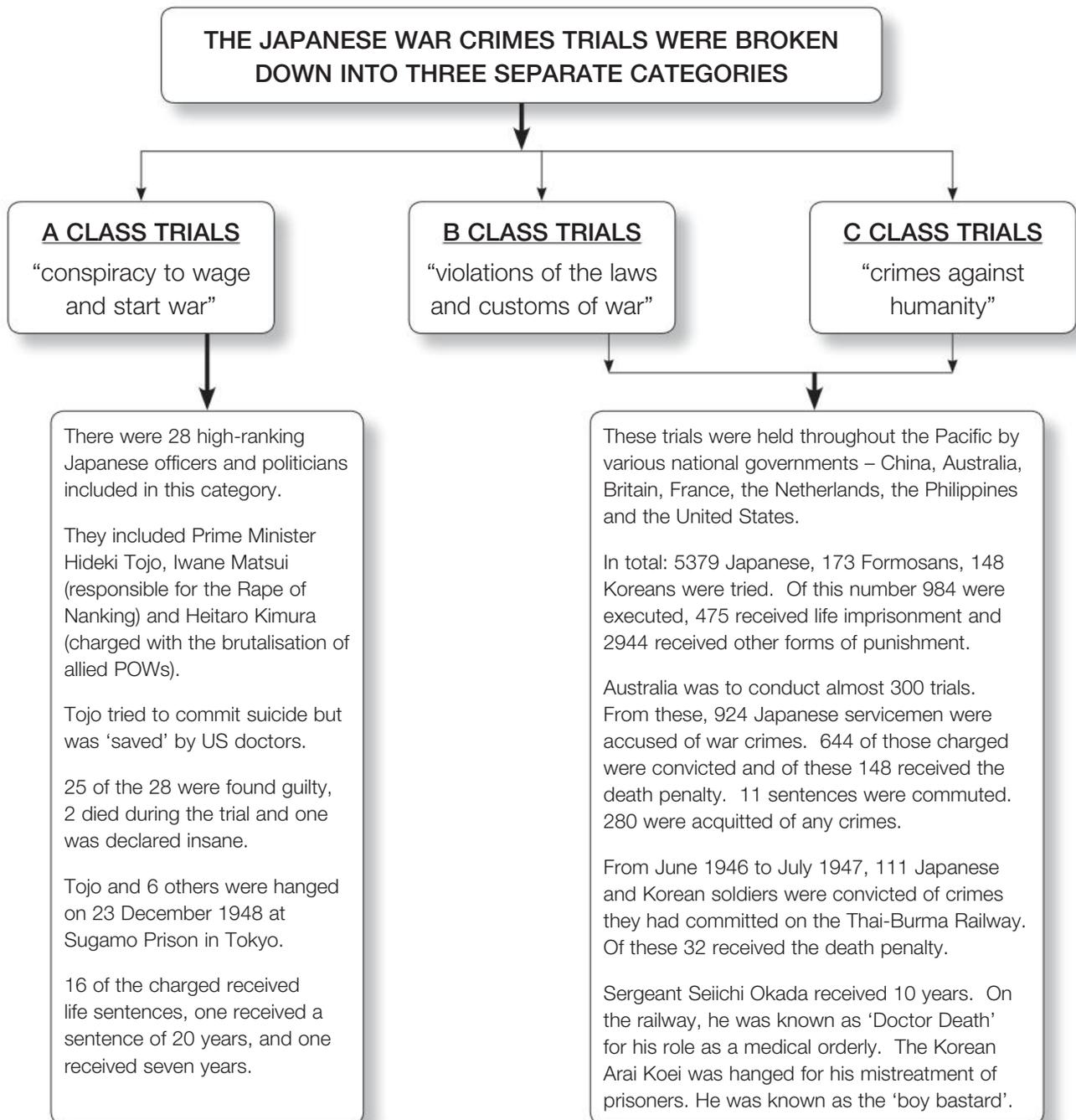
¹ Clause 231 of The Treaty of Versailles, the “war guilt clause”, stated that Germany and its allies were responsible the war.

² Leading Nazi figures faced trial at Nuremberg in 1946. Many more associated with Nazi crimes and atrocities would face trials for decades to come.

³ At Nuremberg, there had been four judges: American, British, French and Soviet.

Figure 15.1 outlines the nature of the trials that were to take place over the next few years.

Figure 15.1 The Japanese War Crimes Trials



Criticisms of the War Crimes Tribunals

At the time, few in the victorious nations doubted the justice of their actions in placing Japanese “war criminals” on trial in light of the atrocities that had been committed in the name of Japan. However, then, and later, criticisms were raised against the procedures. These criticisms are outlined in Table 15.1

Table 15.1: Criticisms of the War Crimes Tribunals

<i>Some of the critics argued that the tribunals did not go far enough</i>	<i>Other critics of the tribunals approached the issue from a Japanese perspective</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the choice of those charged seemed ‘selective’ as it did not include members of the notorious Japanese secret police, the <i>kempeitai</i>; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – this organisation was responsible for countless acts of brutality and torture. ■ leading figures of the ultra-nationalist organisations were not indicted; ■ major industrialists, who profited from Japanese aggression, were omitted; ■ the forced recruitment of Koreans and Formosans into slave work was not listed as a crime against humanity;⁴ ■ no Japanese at the time were indicted for the enforced sexual slavery of the so-called ‘comfort women’; ■ the use of chemical warfare in China was seriously pursued; ■ those Japanese guilty of carrying out chemical and biological experiments on POWs in Unit 731 were given immunity from prosecution; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – (this was done because they were willing to share the results of their “research” with the Americans.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the trials were seen as “victors’ justice”; ■ there were “procedural” objections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ evidence was used from witnesses, such as POWs, but these witnesses were not able to be cross-examined; □ evidence that was prejudicial to a defendant, but not relevant to a specific charge, was allowed to be introduced; ■ some argue that Japan was acting defensively in the face of western pressure; ■ had Japan deliberately conspired to bring on the war? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ some historians would argue that Japan “had stumbled” into the war;

There was also the later accusation that the victorious allies were acting in a totally hypocritical manner. Japan was being accused of ‘aggressive imperialism’ for attacking ‘western colonies’. After all, how had nations such as France, Britain, the Netherlands and the US obtained those colonies in the first place?

⁴ Korea and Formosa (Taiwan) were Japanese colonies before the war.

Exercise 15.1 Match the description on the left with the term on the right

1	Post-World War II Conference location		IWANE MATSUI
2	Chief prosecutor at the War Crimes Tribunals		SUGAMO
3	Presiding judge at the War Crimes Tribunals		B CLASS
4	Trials dealing with 'conspiracy to wage and start war'		POTSDAM
5	Trials dealing with 'violations of laws and customs of war'		C CLASS
6	Trials dealing with 'crimes against humanity'		ARAI KOEI
7	Accused of the responsibility for the Rape of Nanking		WILLIAM FLOOD WEBB
8	Execution site for the leading war criminals		A CLASS
9	The Korean 'boy bastard'		JOSEPH KEENANA
10	Doctor Death on the Thai-Burma railway		SEIICHI OKADA

The status of the Emperor

At the end of the war, many within the victorious allied nations argued that Emperor Hirohito should be placed on trial, along with his military and political leaders. Debate then (and now) raged about the Emperor:

- some argued that Emperor Hirohito was as guilty as his generals because he had been keenly involved in the Japanese decision-making process before and during the war;
 - he had not intervened to prevent Japanese imperialist aggression;
 - he had not used his prestige to rein in his officials and thus he was as guilty as them;
- others argue that Emperor Hirohito was merely a harmless figurehead who had no control over his military and political leaders.



It was very much MacArthur's views that prevailed regarding the fate of Emperor Hirohito. MacArthur believed that the Emperor was needed after the war.

- He argued that there would be massive unrest in post-war occupied Japan if the Emperor was put on trial, and even worse executed.
- Hirohito was a symbol of unity.
- The nation had surrendered in August 1945 as a direct result of Hirohito's intervention.
- MacArthur said that Hirohito should be shielded. He could become the focus of a post-war, democratic Japan as head of a constitutional monarchy.

What do the historians have to say about “War Crimes Tribunals and the status of the Emperor”?

1. Richard Storry

Storry's description of Japan's reaction to the War Crimes Tribunal is an odd one. He argues that though the trials have been of great interest to historians, they did not make a great impact on the Japanese. Tojo's stocks had lowered after his failed suicide bid but once he said in court that he accepted full responsibility for starting the Pacific War (and by implication exonerating the Emperor), his reputation was enhanced.

*“...People felt sorry for Tojo and the others in the dock, but they did not make martyrs or heroes of them. On the whole, the Japanese reaction to the Tokyo Trial was one of boredom...”*⁵

Controversy continues to surround the **Yasukuni Shrine**, a Japanese Shinto shrine to the country's war dead. Just under two and a half million names are included in the Shrine's “Book of Souls”. Of these, 1068 are convicted war criminals, and 14 of these are “Class A” war criminals. The Shrine manages to arouse anger in Asian countries when Japanese politicians visit it to pay homage the country's war dead. For neighbouring Asian nations, such visits reflect an unapologetic attitude amongst contemporary Japanese leaders for the death and destruction the country wrought during World War II. The issue of “comfort women” also still manages to cause anger amongst Asian nations, in particular South Korea.

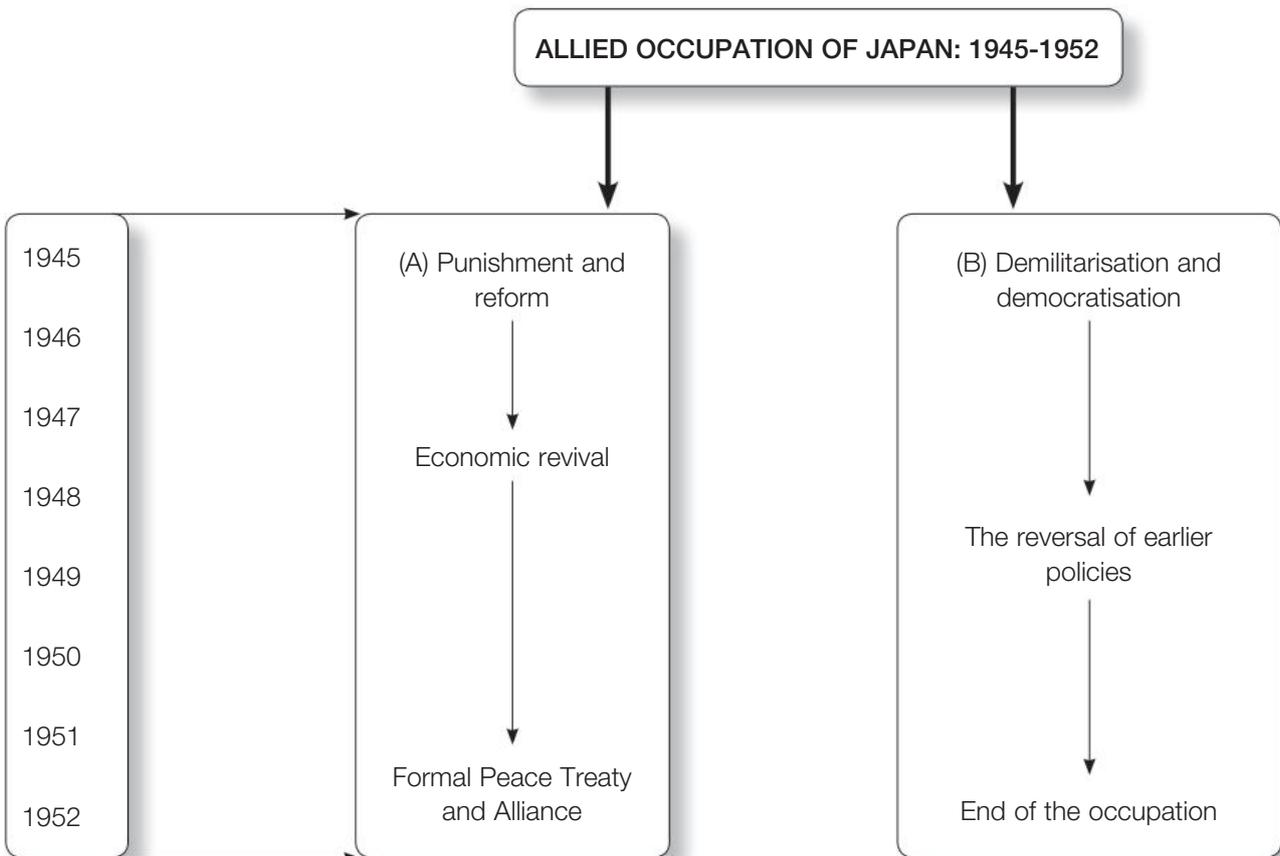
⁵ Storry, R, A History of Modern Japan, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, p 249

Chapter Sixteen

Allied occupation of Japan

The defeat of Japan in 1945 was followed by an allied occupation of the country which lasted until April 1952. Figure 16.1 suggests two ways in which the period of the allied occupation can be considered: (A) suggests an ongoing process; (B) suggest a significant change in the process from about 1948. An explanation for the 'change' idea will be presented below.

Figure 16.1 The Allied Occupation of Japan



SCAP

General Douglas MacArthur took charge of the operation as Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP).¹

- Officially, several powers had a role in SCAP but it was clear that the final word in decision-making rested with MacArthur, and that it was the will of the United States that mattered.
- MacArthur had about 5500 non-Japanese bureaucrats working under him.
- Due to language issues, and the complex nature of the situation facing SCAP, a significant number of Japanese ministries were kept in place to run the country. Many Japanese bureaucrats increased their powers at this time.

¹ The term SCAP came to be used to refer to the entire occupation administration.

There was also an element of 'purging'. Up to 200 000 leading Japanese military, political and business figures were banned from public life. Purged also were those who criticised SCAP rule and later Japanese Communist Party members who supported violent protests against SCAP rule.

The position of the Emperor and the new constitution

Following behind the scenes work by US officials, a new constitution was adopted for Japan in 1947. It represented a major change from Japan's 1889 constitution.

- Emperor Hirohito had not been placed on trial as were other Japanese military and political leaders: ² The Emperor now had a new constitutional position:
 - the Emperor's status was no longer divine;
 - he was now merely the figurehead of the nation;
 - Hirohito retained the nation's respect, but the position of the Emperor was now symbolic with no real political authority;
 - Hirohito reinforced this in his speech of 1 January 1946 and in tours he took around the country establishing himself as 'human', not 'sacred'.
- Sovereignty rested with the people:
 - Japan was to have a British-style Prime Minister system and political authority resided in the lower house the parliament, or 'Diet';
 - parliament was bi-cameral, ie it had an upper and a lower house;
 - its members were freely elected by the people;
 - women were given equal rights, including the right to vote;
 - Article 14 ended the hereditary peerage and outlawed discrimination based on race, gender, social origin;
 - local government was strengthened to allow some 'grass-roots' involvement of the people at the expense of an overweening central government;
 - the constitution included basic freedoms, considered essential for a democratic form of government, such as freedom of speech;
 - police powers were weakened and regulated.
- Article 9 related to the armed forces:
 - this Article claimed to: "renounce war as a sovereign right of a nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes";
 - it also said: "land, sea and air forces, as well as war potential, will never be maintained";
 - this Article would come under close scrutiny in the future:
 - can a nation be denied the right to self-defence?
 - should Japan be expected to play its role in peace-keeping operations?

² The reasons for this are explained in Chapter 15.

Economic reform

Political and constitutional democratisation meant little unless there was also economic change.

- A Land Reform program was introduced:
 - before the war almost 70% of farmers rented land from distant landlords – often paying up to 50% of the crops they grew in rent;
 - land was bought from landlords at low ‘real’ prices (due to inflation) and it was distributed amongst tenant farmers;
 - in a short time about 90% of Japanese owned most of the land on which they worked.
- A Labour Union Act was introduced:
 - trade unions laws came in, similar to those of the New Deal in 1930s America;
 - workers were now allowed to strike;
 - union membership soon grew to almost five million workers;
 - however, there were limits, for example in February 1947, MacArthur outlawed a planned general strike as it would hurt the Japanese economy which was trying get back on its feet;
 - later laws forbade civil servants from striking.
- SCAP also attempted to break up the powerful industrial conglomerations called Zaibatsu:
 - a stock market was established to widen the ownership of major companies;
 - a favourable exchange rate of 360 yen to the US dollar was introduced in order to stimulate Japanese exports;
 - the attempt to break up the Zaibatsu was halted as it was felt this would hinder the speed of economic recovery;

Education and the family

If Japan was to maintain a democratic society, the education system had to be changed significantly, as did laws regulating family relationships.

- Various reforms in education were brought in:
 - “moral training”, a feature of pre-war schools was ended and replaced with instruction on democratic ideas and thinking;
 - control of education and censorship of textbooks was taken from the central government and passed to local authorities;³
 - schools became co-educational;
 - compulsory schooling increased from six to nine years;
 - universities were increased in number and expected to spend more time on general education.

³ In the long term, this reform did not last. Even in the 21st century, Japan is often criticised for its History textbooks which cover up or sanitise its aggression in the 1930s, its treatment of POWs, the issue of ‘comfort women’ and topics such as Unit 731.

- Family laws were introduced:
 - laws that gave the head of the family total control over each family member were changed;
 - the aim was to make each family member equal which it was hoped would further strengthen democratic values.

Exercise 16.1 Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1	Macarthur's powers were strictly limited and he had little freedom to act as he wanted to as SCAP.	TRUE/ FALSE
2	The Emperor was allowed to remain as head of state but his status was no longer to be seen as divine.	TRUE/ FALSE
3	Despite attempts at democratisation, women continued to have a second-class status, as seen in their denial of the vote.	TRUE/ FALSE
4	The prime purpose of Article 9 of the constitution was to ensure the demilitarisation of Japanese society.	TRUE/ FALSE
5	Before the war, most Japanese farmers were having to pay up to 50% of the crops they grew in rent.	TRUE/ FALSE
6	Despite attempts at land reform during the occupation, there was little change in the nature of land ownership in Japan.	TRUE/ FALSE
7	No attempts were made at labour reform and trade unions remained as weak as in the pre-war period.	TRUE/ FALSE
8	Despite attempts to limit their power, the Zaibatsu were to remain very powerful inside Japan.	TRUE/ FALSE
9	The prime motivation of education reform was to normalise democratic thinking and ideas.	TRUE/ FALSE
10	Family law changes ensured that the head of the family retained the traditional control he had always had over each member of the family.	TRUE/ FALSE

The “reversal” of policies from 1948

From about 1948, there was a noticeable change in the policies of SCAP. In 1945 and 1946, Japan was viewed as a defeated enemy. There was no bitter element of revenge, the Japanese were treated humanely, and relations between the occupying forces and the local Japanese were quite good, considering what had been happening in the previous few years.⁴ However, the Japanese were left in no doubt that their society had to change. This was seen in:

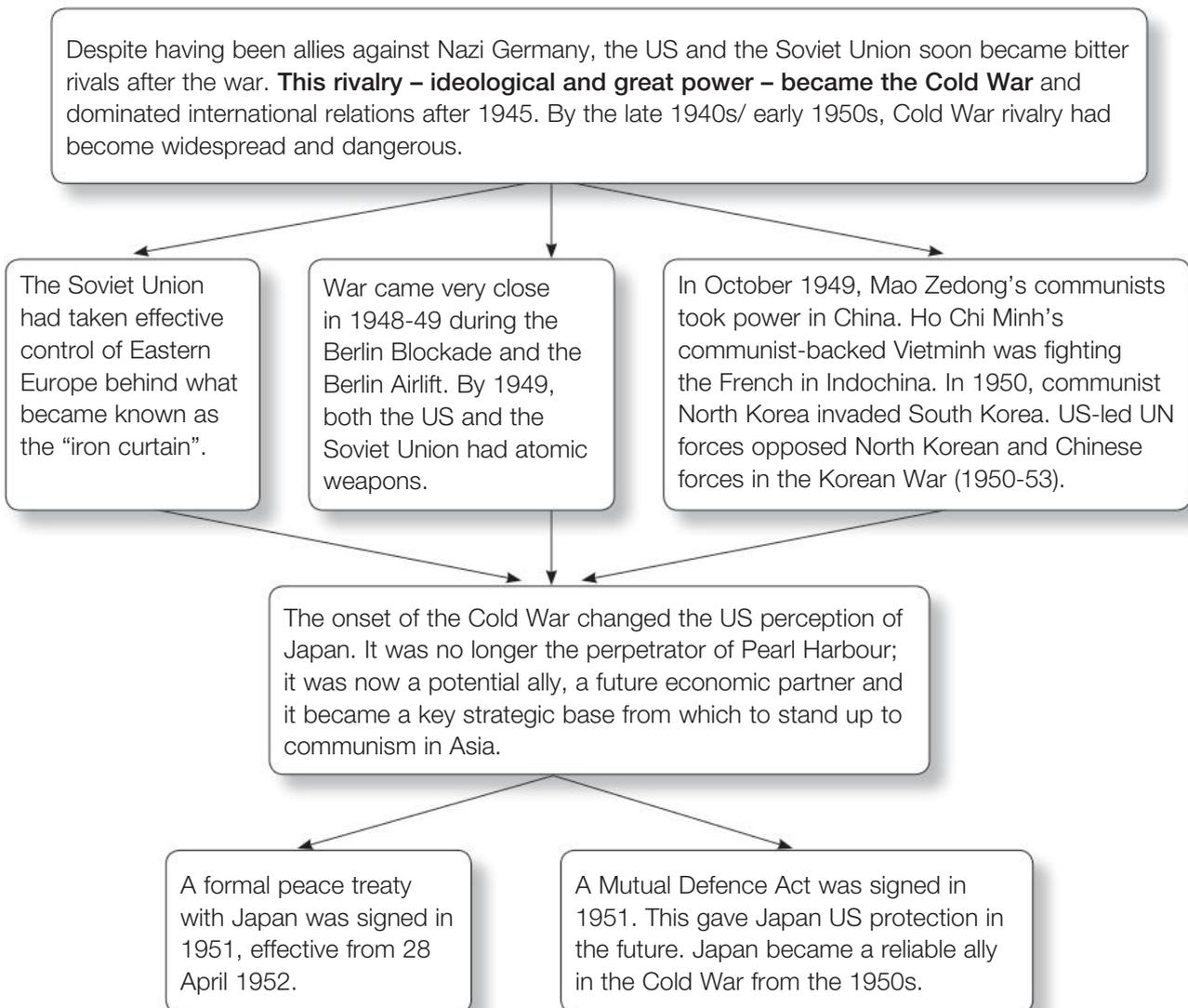
- the democratisation of the political system;

⁴ One indication of this could be the fact that 376 occupying Australian troops took Japanese brides who were allowed to come to Australia (despite the existence of the White Australia Policy).

- the process of demilitarisation;
- attempts to reduce Zaibatsu power;
- the encouragement of trade unions;
- reforms to education.

However, by 1948, the world was now experiencing the “Cold War”. Figure 16.2 explains this development and how it was to affect the situation inside Japan.

Figure 16.2 The impact of the Cold War on occupation policies



An assessment of the post-war allied occupation of Japan

The allied occupation of Japan after the war was not perfect, and it had its problems. However, it could also point to many long-term successes. Table 16.1 compares the positive and negative results of the occupation.

Table 16.1 The balance sheet of the allied occupation

A positive view of the occupation	A negative view of the occupation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Despite some major early problems, life did improve. The people became accustomed to democratic freedoms, lack of censorship and the occupying troops treated the defeated Japanese correctly. ■ In 1951, President Truman sacked MacArthur from his position leading UN forces in the Korean War. This example of civilian control over the military was noted in Japan. ■ In the seventy years since the end of the occupation, Japan has never invaded another country. ■ It has remained a close ally of the US. ■ It has maintained the democratic structures that were put in place by the SCAP. ■ From the late 1950s, Japan's economy was to become one of the strongest in the world after the United States. ■ Names like Mitsubishi and Sanyo became bywords for quality. ■ Japan did develop a Self Defence Force but Article 9 remained intact. ■ Land reform and union rights continued. ■ Women had greater freedom, even if it was less than what western women would soon be experiencing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In the short term, life was incredibly hard for the Japanese under the occupation. Two and half million had died in the war, six million returned from overseas and about a third of national wealth had been destroyed. ■ Food shortages were common, the black market flourished, criminal gangs held sway in some areas, there was violent labour unrest and many women were forced into prostitution. ■ Recovery was slow as the US paid more attention to Germany's economic recovery than Japan. ■ The Zaibatsu soon resumed their position in Japanese society and formed new business relationships (keiretsu) after the occupation which strengthened their position even further. ■ Despite constitutional guarantees, the deep-seated prejudice against Koreans resident in Japan, and the special group of Japanese "untouchables", the <i>Burakumin</i>, remained. ■ School textbooks, even today, often play down Japan's 1930s aggression and ignore issues such as the mistreatment of POWs and the issue of the wartime sexual slavery of women (comfort women).

What do the historians have to say about “Allied occupation of Japan”?

1. Richard Storry

Storry suggests that the allied occupation of Japan was notable for the harmonious manner in which it was conducted. He argues that after 1945, the Japanese people were weary and dazed, and too concerned about basic survival to harbour deep resentment against those who had defeated them. Indeed, he says, the resentment the Japanese had was primarily for the nation’s leaders who had taken them into such a hopeless and disastrous war. Commenting on the early phase of the occupation, Storry concludes:

*“...from September 1945 to about the end of 1947, Japan experienced the full force of a bloodless social and cultural revolution inspired and supervised by General Headquarters, SCAP...”*⁵

2. Paul Manning

Manning spends time describing the relationship between Macarthur and Hirohito. Macarthur always remained circumspect in his dealings with the Emperor, not even allowing the US ambassador to see him. They met frequently, and even if deep affection did not develop, mutual respect was in evidence. SCAP had brought great change to the country; the two men had worked well together. Manning comments:

*“...Macarthur had moved this nation from despair to hope, and with Hirohito as the guiding mentor of his people, the future indeed held great promise for Japan. Two allies now walked the road to peace and freedom. Japan had found its freedom under Macarthur, but Hirohito had found a personal freedom – as a democratic monarch...”*⁶

5 Storry, R, A History of Modern Japan, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968, p 245

6 Manning, P, Hirohito: The War Years, Bantam Books, New York, 1989, pp 217-18

Notes

ESSAYS 3

Responding to HSC questions on *End of the conflict*

The purpose of this section is to provide some ideas for the type of questions which might be asked on the Focus of Study section of the syllabus, *End of the Conflict*. These outlines are not presented as the 'be all and end all' responses to these questions. To provide a sense of reality to this section, what follows is a 'first draft response' to each question, ie what were the first ideas that came into the author's head as he thought about each question?

Essay No 1

"To what extent was the Japanese defeat in World War II the result of economic factors?"

This "to what extent question" offers three main possible types of response.

- a) Yes, Japan's defeat in World War II was completely the result of economic factors.
- b) No, economic factors played no real part in Japan's defeat. Instead it was the result of other factors (such as) strategic decisions and over-confidence on the part of Japan. (Avoid this approach because it is not addressing the issue in the question).
- c) Clearly, economic factors played a major role in the defeat of Japan. However, other issues also played a part in the result, (such as) strategic decisions and nationalist resistance to Japanese occupation.

For the purpose of this question, option c) will be considered.

Even at the beginning of the war, commentators could not see Japan being ultimately successful against the US.

- The US economy was the world's largest:
 - it was well-resourced and had a large population:
 - once US business know-how moved into gear, motivated by both patriotism and the profit motive, Japan would simply never be able to match the power of the US.
- Refer to the enormous strength of the US economy and its unlimited capacity for producing war materials:
 - provide figures for aircraft, naval and artillery construction;
 - comment on the rate of production – give examples;
 - compare the mechanised nature of the US economy even before WWII, compared to Japan's;
 - the US was well ahead of Japan in terms of technology;
 - all this meant that even when the US did suffer losses of naval vessels and aircraft, it was able to replace them quickly.

- In contrast the Japanese economy was relatively much weaker:
 - its war-making potential was only about 10% that of the US;
 - provide figures to support this statement;
 - refer to Japan's more primitive technology;
 - Japan was not resource-rich and this hindered its economic strength – explain the oil situation
 - all this meant that even when Japan suffered losses of naval vessels and aircraft, it was eventually simply not able to replace them.
- However, important though economics was to Japan's ultimate defeat there were other key factors that worked to bring Japan down. Important amongst these were strategic issues:
 - refer to Japan's failure at Pearl Harbour;
 - the significance of failure at the Battle of the Coral Sea;
 - the turning point that was Midway;
 - the impact of failure in New Guinea;
 - the fact that Japan's early successes meant its forces were too overstretched.
- Other factors that contributed to Japan's defeat included:
 - the impact of allied strategies, such as island-hopping;
 - the significance of the allied capture of places such as the Marianas and Okinawa;
 - the intensity of US conventional bombing and the impact of this on the Japanese people and economy;
 - nationalist resistance in occupied areas, give examples;
 - ultimately, make reference to the atomic bomb.

NB: Be careful not to simply narrate events from 1941 to 1945. Giving a descriptive blow by blow account of a whole series of campaigns is not a good idea. It is important to present an argument at the beginning of the response, that is addressing the issue in the question, and then proceeding to prove that argument. Use the narrative detail to back up the argument.

Essay No 2:

“To what extent were the War Crimes Tribunals at the end of the Pacific Conflict justified?”

This is a difficult question. Some might argue that it is not even appropriate as a Modern History question – perhaps more suited to Legal Studies. However, students need to be aware that a question can be asked on whatever is on the syllabus, and this topic is part of the Focus of Study. If a question on this topic is set, it could be a tricky one in the style that is presented above.

The justification, or otherwise, of the War Crimes Tribunals could be tackled from various angles.

- Should any defeated nation be put on trial after a war, as any attempt at a legal process would be controlled by the “victors”?

- Perhaps the behaviour of the Japanese was so abominable, so exceptional, that the perpetrators had to be dealt with as an example to future generations.
- Perhaps the justice of the War Crimes Tribunals could be questioned on the ground of poor legal procedure and inconsistency.

Be careful not to fall into the trap of simply describing the trials, and providing nothing more than the charges, information on those on trial and listing the various punishments. Having said that, some of this information will have to make its way into the response.

Does any side in a war have the right to stand in judgment on a defeated party? Isn't one person's war crime simply another person's legitimate action of war?

- Japan's actions in Nanking, Bataan and on the Thai-Burma railway could be singled out.
- However, had Japan won, past western imperialism would have been presented as a crime.
- Some might argue that the firebombing of Tokyo and the dropping of the atomic bomb were war crimes?

However, perhaps Japanese behaviour during the war went beyond the bounds of "civilised" warfare?

- Consider its refusal to abide by the Geneva Convention.
- Provide examples of Japanese behaviour – treatment of POWs, death marches, sexual slavery (comfort women), Unit 731.
- Perhaps such actions on the part of the Japanese were so extreme they necessitated War Crimes Tribunals?

It might be argued that the War Crimes Tribunals were not justified on other grounds:

- Refer to objections made of the trials that reference poor legal procedure.
- Some of the worst perpetrators of alleged war crimes, like the *kempeitei* did not face justice.
- It could be argued that if anyone had to face justice, Emperor Hirohito should have.

Though this is a difficult question, it does lend itself to analysis. It would be difficult to simply narrate or describe the trials. The raising of the issues that have been mentioned above, would force students to "argue" rather than "narrate".

In examinations there is always a temptation to select what seems to be the straightforward question. However, students should not always shy away from seemingly more difficult questions, if they have the confidence to analyse issues.

Possible HSC questions on “End of the conflict.”

- a) Why did the United States decide to use the atomic bomb in August 1945?
- b) To what extent was the use of the atomic bomb in August 1945 as much about US fears of future Soviet behaviour as a desire to quickly end the war with Japan?
- c) Assess the role of the use of the atomic bomb in bringing about the defeat of Japan in 1945.
- d) To what extent was superior allied strategy the key factor in bringing about the defeat of Japan in 1945?
- e) Why did Japan eventually lose the Conflict in the Pacific?
- f) Evaluate the view that Japan’s ultimate defeat was primarily the result of its early overwhelming success.
- g) To what extent did the allied occupation of Japan reach the aims that it set out to achieve?
- h) How important were the principles of democratisation and demilitarisation in the allied occupation of Japan from 1945-1952?
- i) To what extent could it be argued that the allied occupation of Japan after World War II was a success?
- j) How important was the international climate between 1945 and 1952 in determining the nature of the allied occupation of Japan?

Chapter Seventeen

“Tora, Tora, Tora”

Introduction

The film *Tora, Tora, Tora* was released in 1970.

- The film was directed by Richard Fleischer, with the Japanese sequences directed by Kinji Fukasaku and Toshio Masuda.
- The screenplay was by Larry Forrester, Hideo Oguni and Ryuzo Kikushima.
- The screenplay followed books written by Gordon W Prange, “*Tora, Tora, Tora*” and Ladislav Farago, “*The Broken Seal*”.

The film has a joint American-Japanese cast, including Martin Balsam as Admiral Kimmel, So Yamamura as Admiral Yamamoto, Jason Robards as General Short and Tatsuya Mihashi as Commander Genda.

The great value of this film is that it is a real attempt to deal with the events leading up to Pearl Harbour, the attack itself and its immediate aftermath in a very even-handed way. It does not seek to glorify the Americans, as most Hollywood WWII films do, and neither does it seek to present an apologia for the Japanese. The writers went to extraordinary lengths to present the story in as a historically accurate manner as is possible within the confines of a Hollywood movie.

The word “tora” was the two-syllable Japanese codeword that was to be used to announce that surprise had been achieved in the attack on Pearl Harbour. It is a coincidence that in Japanese ‘tora’ means ‘tiger’.

The film deals with many of the issues that are relevant for the early part of the “*Conflict in the Pacific 1937-1951*” HSC topic. These include:

- rivalries within the Japanese military;
- Japanese political thinking at the time;
- pre-Pearl Harbour diplomatic dealings;
- US concerns about Pearl Harbour’s situation;
- discussions of tactics in the Pacific;
- planning, tactics of the attack;
- differences within the US military and political circles;
- the United States unpreparedness and casual attitudes at the time;
- the nature of the attack on Pearl Harbour;
- the results of the attack.



The film works on several levels. It is a Hollywood movie, made for entertainment. It achieves this goal and was a moderate box office success.

Technically, *Tora, Tora, Tora* was recognised at the time as a top-rate film. It received five Oscar nominations, winning one for "Best Visual Effects". Its focus is very much on telling the story of what led to Pearl Harbour, and examining the roles of the key players.

*As Hollywood movies on historical subjects go, it can lay claim to significant historical accuracy.*¹

Advice to teachers

- The film has an "PG" rating, and so there should be no problem showing it at school, though teachers may check to get clearance to show the film.
 - Any violence in the film relates only to the actual attack on Pearl Harbour.
- It is not a good idea to start the topic "Conflict in the Pacific 1937-1951" by showing the film. Indeed, it is not a good idea to show it before the sections "*Strategic and political reasons for the bombing of Pearl Harbour*" has been studied. The film is complex and students will only truly gain from a viewing if they already have good background knowledge.
- It may not be a good idea to show the film in one go. It is about two and a half hours long. It might be better to show it in three or four segments. Teachers may decide to show only certain sections of the film. However, teachers know their classes and can judge how to view the film.
- The following **study guide** is broken down into specific scenes and might assist teachers in planning their lessons on this topic. The study guide is fairly detailed.
 - For some teachers it may be too detailed. They may choose to use only part of it. Alternatively, it can be a useful revision tool.
 - Teachers might divide their class up and allocate certain scenes to certain students for each part of the viewing.
 - Another strategy for using the film would be to debrief with the class after each part of the viewing to discuss the various questions.

Advice to students

- Encourage your teacher to show the film in class.
- If you cannot watch it in class, watch it at home but not until you are well into the topic.
 - The DVD can be easily obtained from online stores and it might be available on a streaming service such as Netflix.

¹ For those interested in checking the historical accuracy and errors of the film, a useful website to check is: <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/reviews/tora-tora-tora-2.html>

STUDY GUIDE:**Early discussions amongst Japanese military figures:**

1. Who are Yamamoto and Yoshida? What posts are they now to hold?

2. During the early discussions between the various Japanese commanders, what do we learn about decision-making and Japanese politics in the period before Pearl Harbour?

3. What is "the navy's view" of a possible Japanese-German alliance?

4. Japanese Foreign Minister Konoye: What choice does he suggest Japan has to make?

5. What is Minister of War, Tojo's, view of the situation facing Japan?

6. What happened in Berlin?

What is happening in Washington?

7. Who are Cordell Hull and Henry Stimson? What is their view of the negotiations taking place with the Japanese ambassador?

8. What was "Operation Magic"? Why was it so important? Who, surprisingly, was not given access to what it revealed?

Japanese strategic and tactical thinking:

9. What is Yamamoto's view of what has to happen?

10. Why does Kurojima (the hermit) think Genda's plan is so good?

11. The Japanese army has moved into French Indochina: What is the navy view of this action? How does the US react?

12. The scene where Japanese navy commanders are bickering relates to naval tactics. This relates to the use of battleships and aircraft carriers. Why is it considered so important for the strike force to have six aircraft carriers?

Back in Pearl Harbour:

13. Why does General Short decide to put all Pearl Harbour's aircraft together in a central location? Why do his colleagues think this is a bad idea?

14. When the two young navy men are told to test the radar, they are told that if they see anything, head to the gasoline station and make a phone call. Comment on significance of this comment.

Japanese thinking on events:

15. Back in Japan: What appears to be the Emperor's view of a possible war? What is being suggested in this scene about the Emperor's 'real power'?

16. When asked about Japan's chances against the US, what likely outcomes does the naval commander offer?

17. What appears to be the Japanese ambassador's reaction to instructions received from Tokyo about US compromise proposals? Why is a second ambassador, Kuruzu, sent over?

18. Why does Yamamoto not underestimate the Americans in the same way that so many other Japanese do?

US decision-making:

19. What intelligence reports does Colonel Bratton examine? What mistaken conclusion does he come to?

20. Admiral Kimmel receives intelligence that Japanese naval forces are heading towards Borneo and the Philippines. What decision does he make regarding the aircraft-carriers at Pearl Harbour? Why is this important?

21. The latest Japanese secret messages were in 14 parts. What decision did US authorities make regarding this? Why was this decision significant?

Countdown to Pearl Harbour:

22. The Japanese diplomatic personnel in Washington were told to deliver their message at precisely 1.00 pm Washington time, and to destroy all codes and documents. What was the significance of these two instructions?

23. In the lead-up to the attack on Pearl Harbour, the film reveals a series of US mistakes, poor decisions and a casual attitude. List some of these.

24. Why was the Japanese ambassador slow in delivering his message to Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State?

25. What is Cordell Hull's reaction on receiving the final message from the Japanese ambassador? How do you account for his reaction?

26. How successful was the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour?

27. What reason did the Japanese fleet commander give for not sending the second wave of planes, and instead returning to Japan?

28. What did Yamamoto say at the end which predicted what was now going to happen in the Pacific Conflict?

Timeline

1931	Japanese invasion of Manchuria
1935-37	Neutrality Acts in the US
1936	Japan signs the Anti-Comintern Pact
1937	July: Japanese invasion of China October: Roosevelt's Quarantine Speech
1938-39	Soviet-Japanese clashes in the Far East
1939	August: Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact September: outbreak of war in Europe Australia at war with Germany National Security Act in Australia
1940	September: Japan signs the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy September: Japan moves troops into northern Indochina
1941	March: The Lend-Lease Act April: Japan and the Soviet Union sign a Neutrality Pact July: Japan moves troops into southern Indochina July: US embargo on oil exports to Japan October: General Tojo becomes Prime Minister of Japan October: John Curtin becomes Australian Prime Minister 7 December: Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour 8 December: US declares war on Japan 10 December: sinking of HMS The Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales
1942	15 February: The fall of Singapore 19 February: The first bombing of Darwin March: Japanese takeover of the East Indies March: General MacArthur arrives in Australia April: The Doolittle Raid April: The Bataan Death March May: Japanese conquest of the Philippines May: The Battle of the Coral Sea May: Japanese midget-submarine attack on Sydney Harbour June: The Battle of Midway August-February 1943: The Battle of Guadalcanal June-January 1943: The Kokoda campaign From 1942 slave work on the Thai-Burma railway

- 1943 November: The US take Tarawa
- 1944 February: The Carolines campaign
 June-July: The Battle of Saipan
 June: The Battle of the Philippines Sea
 October: The Battle of Leyte Gulf
- 1945 March: The Battle of Iwo Jima
 March: The Sandakan Death March
 March-July: Heavy bombing of mainland Japan
 April: Death of Franklin Roosevelt; Harry Truman becomes President
 June: The Philippines are retaken by US forces
 June: The US capture Okinawa
 July: Death of Curtin; followed by Forde and then Ben Chifley
 July: Burma is recaptured by the allies
 6 August: Atomic bombing of Hiroshima
 9 August: Atomic bombing of Nagasaki
 15 August: Surrender of Japan
 September: Japan signs the formal document of surrender
 September 1945-April 1951: Allied occupation of Japan
- 1946 May 1946-November 1948: War Crimes Tribunals
- 1947 New constitution adopted in Japan
- 1949 Mao Zedong's Communists take power in China
- 1950-53 The Korean War
- 1951 Formal Peace Treaty between the US and Japan
 Mutual Defence Act between the US and Japan

Glossary

Aikokusha	Japanese radical patriotic/ militarist group
AWAS	Australian Women's Army Service
Axis powers	Japan, Italy and Germany
bakufu	military dictatorship of the Shogun in Japan
Centaur	hospital ship sunk by Japanese submarines May 1943
Cold War	post-WWII rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union
comfort women	Japanese euphemism for women who had been forced to become sex slaves of the Japanese
diet	lower house of the post-1945 Japanese parliament
Doolittle Raid	symbolic US bombing raid on Japanese cities April 1941
Dunera	ship bringing Jewish refugees to Australia 1940
Enola Gay	Paul Tibbets' plane he flew over Hiroshima, named after his mother
Fat Boy	name given to the bomb dropped on Nagasaki
Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere	Japanese idea of Asia for the Asians, a cover for Japanese imperialism
Guomindang	governing party of China in the 1930s
Huks	the Hukbalahap, communist resistance guerrilla which fought the Japanese in the Philippines
Hull Note	US demands handed to Japan 25 November 1941
island-hopping	US strategy to reach Japanese mainland avoiding action on every island occupied by Japanese forces
isolationism	US foreign policy to avoid entanglements with other nations
Kellogg-Briand Pact	1929 agreement that attempted to outlaw war
kempeitei	Japanese secret police
Kodo-ha	faction of the Japanese military
League of Nations	post-WWI organisation created to maintain peace
Lend-Lease Act	US law enabling supplies to be sent to Britain during WWII
Little Boy	name given to the bomb dropped on Hiroshima
Magic	US navy code-breaking operation 1941
Manhattan Project	secret development of an atomic bomb in wartime America
Manifest Destiny	American belief in its right to occupy the American continent
Meiji Restoration	term referring to the rule of Emperor Meiji 1867-1912
Nuremberg Trials	trials of Nazi war criminals in 1946
open city	a city that in wartime announces it is not intending to defend itself
Open Door	US policy regarding China to keep it free of foreign control

Panay	US ship bombed by Japanese forces 1938
Quarantine Speech	Roosevelt's October 1937 speech arguing for US international involvement
SCAP	Supreme Commander of Allied Powers
Seclusion Decrees	laws passed by Japan in 1638 to ensure its isolation
Shidehara policy	moderate Japanese foreign policy of the 1920s
Shogun	military dictator of Japan before the Meiji Restoration
Stimson Doctrine	US policy of not recognising Japanese gains after the Manchurian invasion
superfortress	American B-29 bomber
SWPA	South West Pacific Area
territorial integrity	term denoting a nation's accepted territorial limits
tonarigumi	traditional Japanese neighbourhood associations
Tosei-ha	faction of the Japanese military
Tripartite Pact	agreement between Japan, Italy and Germany, September 1940
UAP	United Australia Party
Vichy	pro-German, puppet French government established in 1940
Vietminh	Vietnamese resistance to the Japanese in WWII
WAAAF	Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force
WRANS	Women's Royal Australian Naval Service
yasukuni Shrine	Japanese shrine to the country's war dead
zaibatsu	Large Japanese business conglomerates
Zimmerman Telegram	German-Mexican secret communication 1917

Dramatis Personae

Adachi, General	Japanese commander in New Guinea campaign
Aung San	Burmese nationalist leader
Ba Maw	Burmese nationalist leader
Chifley, Ben	Australian Prime Minister 1945-1949
Churchill, Winston	Prime Minister of Britain, 1940-1945
Curtin, John	Australian Prime Minister 1941-1945
Decoux, Jean	French governor of Indochina during WWII
Doolittle, Lt Colonel James	leader of the Doolittle Raid on Japan, April 1942
Doorman, Rear Admiral Karel	Dutch commander of ABDA fleet at the Battle of the Java Sea
Fadden, Arthur	Australian Prime Minister August-October 1941
Grew, Joseph	US ambassador to Tokyo before WWII
Harding, Warren	US President 1921-1923
Hay, John	US Secretary of State 1899, author of the Open Door Policy
Hearst, Randolph	Newspaper publisher, supporter of the America First Committee
Hirohito, Emperor	Japanese Emperor 1926-89
Hitler, Adolf	Fuhrer of Germany 1933-1945
Ho Chi Minh	Vietnamese nationalist leader of the Vietminh
Homma Masaharu, General	Japanese general responsible, and later executed for the Bataan Death March
Hull, Cordell	US Secretary of State 1933-1944
Jiang Jieshi	leader of the Guomindang
Keenan, Joseph	chief prosecutor at Japanese war crime trials
Kellog, Frank	US Secretary of State 1925-1929
Kimura, Heitaro	charged with brutalisation of POWs at the war crime trials
King Jr, General	US commander at the Battle of Bataan
Koei, Arai	hanged for mistreatment of POWs
Koiso, General	Japanese Prime Minister July 1944-April 1945
Konoye, Fuminaro	Japanese Prime Minister, 1937-39, 1940-41
Kurusu, Saburo	Japanese negotiator in Washington November 1941
Laurel, Jose	leader of pro-Japanese puppet government in the Philippines from October 1943
Lee Kuan Yew	Prime Minister of Singapore 1959-1990
LeMay, Major-General Curtis	US air force commander responsible for bombing of Japan in 1945
MacArthur, General Douglas	US commander of South West Pacific in WWII; commander of the post-war occupation of Japan
Matsui, Iwane	responsible for the Rape of Nanking
Matsuoka	Japanese Foreign Minister 1941
Meiji	Emperor of Japan 1867-1912

Menzies, Robert	Australian Prime Minister 1939-1941
Minseito	moderate Japanese Prime Minister, 1920s
Mitsuhito	Emperor of Japan 1867-1912
Monroe, James	US President 1817-1825
Mussolini, Benito	leader of Italy, 1922-1945
Nagumo, Admiral	commander of Japanese task force that attacked Pearl Harbour
Nimitz, Admiral Chester	Commander of US Pacific Fleet
Nomura, Admiral	Japanese ambassador to Washington, 1941
Nye, Senator Gerald	Chairman of the 1936 Nye Committee
Okada, Seiichi	"Doctor Death" on the Thai-Burma railway
Oppenheimer, J Robert	head of the Manhattan Project
Patch, General Alexander	US commander at Battle of Guadalcanal
Percival, General Arthur	British commander who surrendered British forces to Japan at Singapore
Perry, Commodore	US naval officers whose ships visited Japan in 1853
Phibun	Thailand leader in WWII to 1944
Pu Yi	former Chinese Emperor, puppet ruler of Manchukuo
Roosevelt, Franklin D	US President 1933-1945
Shidehara	moderate Japanese Foreign Minister, 1920s
Shigenobu, Okuma	Japanese Prime Minister who issued the 21 Demands
Slim, General William	British commander of the 14th Army in Burma
Stalin, Josef	Soviet leader 1928-1953
Stimson, Henry	US Secretary of State, author of the Stimson Doctrine
Sukarno	Indonesian nationalist leader, first Indonesian President
Suzuki, Admiral	Japanese Prime Minister April 1945-August 1945
Takeo Takagi, Rear Admiral	Japanese commander at the Battle of the Java Sea
Taruc, Luis	leader of the Huks in the Philippines
Tibbets, Paul	pilot of the Enola Gay that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima
Tojo, Hideki	Japanese Minister of War and then Prime Minister 1941-44
Truman, Harry S	US President 1945-1953
Wainwright, General	US commander at the Battle of Corregidor
Wakatsuki	Japanese Prime Minister at the time of Manchurian invasion
Wang Ching Wei	leader of pro-Japanese puppet government in China from 1940
Washington, George	US President 1789-1797
Webb, William Flood	Presiding judge at Japanese war crime trials
White, W A	Newspaper publisher, supporter of the Committee to defend America by Aiding the Allies
Wilson, Woodrow	US President 1913-1921
Yamamoto, Admiral	overall planner of the Pearl Harbour attack
Yamashita, Tomoyuki	Japanese commander who masterminded the conquest of Malaya and Singapore

Answers to Revision Questions

Exercise 1.1

1st – The Seclusion Decrees; 2nd – Arrival of Commodore Perry; 3rd – Start of Meiji Restoration; 4th – The 21 Demands; 5th – Paris Peace Conference; 6th – Washington Conference; 7th – The Shidehara Policy; 8th – Wall St Crash; 9th – Invasion of Manchuria; 10th – Establishment of Manchukuo

Exercise 1.2

1 – Manifest Destiny; 2 – it ended slavery in the United States; 3 – the Philippines, Hawaii, Midway Island; 4 – it opposed it while still establishing its own empire; 5 – maintain Chinese territorial integrity, allow for open trade for all with China; 6 – it opposed it; 7 – Germany's Unrestricted Submarine Warfare policy; 8 – the US did not recognise Japanese territorial gains following the invasion of Manchuria; 9 – they wanted to avoid becoming involved; 10 – passing Neutrality Acts

Exercise 1.3

1 – MITSUHIITO, the Emperor Meiji 1867-1912; 2 – PERRY, US Commodore who visited Japan in 1853; 3 – SHIDEHARA, moderate Japanese Foreign Minister 1920s; 4 – MINSEITO, moderate Japanese Prime Minister 1920s; 5 – WASHINGTON, first US President, formulated isolationist policy; 6 – HAY, US Secretary of State, author of Open Door Policy; 7 – WILSON, US President during WWI and at the Paris Peace Conference; 8 – STIMSON, US Secretary of State, author of The Stimson Doctrine, opposing Japanese gains from the Manchurian invasion.

Exercise 2.1

1 – true; 2 – false; 3 – true; 4 – false; 5 – false; 6 – true; 7 – false; 8 – true; 9 – true; 10 – false

Exercise 2.2

1 – Guomindang; 2 – Neutrality Pact; 3 – Decoux; 4 – The Axis Powers; 5 – Changkufeng; 6 – Vichy; 7 – Vietnam; 8 – Jiang Jieshi; 9 – Tripartite Pact; 10 – Wang Ching Wei

Exercise 3.1

1 – false; 2 – true; 3 – true; 4 – false; 5 – false; 6 – true; 7 – false; 8 – false; 9 – true; 10 – true

Exercise 3.2

1 – Jiang Jieshi; 2 – W A White; 3 – Premier Konoye; 4 – Senator Nye; 5 – Cordell Hull; 6 – Randolph Hearst; 7 – Stimson; 8 – Franklin Roosevelt; 9 – Winston Churchill; 10 – Kellogg

Exercise 4.1

1st – US aviation fuel embargo; 2nd – Lend-Lease Act; 3rd – Nomura-Hull negotiations begin; 4th – US oil embargo; 5th – Minister of War Tojo's war plan submitted; 6th – Tojo becomes Prime Minister; 7th – Saburo Kurusu joins the Washington talks; 8th – The Hull Note; 9th – Japan takes the final decision for war; 10th – Attack on Pearl Harbour

Exercise 4.2

In 1937, Japan invaded mainland China. Three years later it was still bogged down in that conflict. Throughout 1940 and 1941, it then proceeded to station its troops in French Indochina. The US was not willing to accept Japanese aggression. Neither would it accept Japan's plan for reordering East Asia and the Pacific. Talks between Secretary of State Hull and Ambassador Nomura began in April 1941. However, by August the US had imposed an oil embargo on Japan. It became clear that Japan would soon face a choice between a humiliating withdrawal or war. In October Tojo became Prime Minister. He pushed for war and a decision was finally made to launch an attack on the US. On 7 December, Japan attacked Pearl Harbour

Exercise 5.1

conspiratorial – provoked – reject – constitution – Congress – war – Germany – infamy – dastardly – unanimously – dissenting – united – enthusiasm – isolationism

Exercise 6.1

1st – Bombing of Pearl Harbour; 2nd – sinking of HMS Prince of Wales; 3rd – Japan captures Guam; 4th – Japan captures Wake Island; 5th – Japan captures Hong Kong; 6th – Japan captures Manila; 7th – Battle of Bataan; 8th – Bataan Death March; 9th – The Doolittle Raid; 10th – Battle of Corregidor

Exercise 6.2

1 – Percival: British commander who surrendered to Japan in Singapore; 2 – Doorman: Dutch commander of ABDA fleet at the Battle of Java Sea; 3 – Homma: Japanese general responsible for the Bataan Death March; 4 – Takagi: Japanese naval commander at the Battle of Java Sea; 5 – Macarthur: US Philippines commander evacuated to Australia; 6 – Yamashita: Japanese commander who led the invasion of Singapore; 7 – Wainwright: US commander at the Battle of Corregidor; 8 – Bennett: Australian commander who escaped Singapore in February 1942; 9 – King: US commander at the Battle of Bataan; 10 – US air force commander who led the Doolittle Raid in April 1942.

Exercise 7.1

1 – false; 2 – true; 3 – true; 4 – true; 5 – false; 6 – true; 7 – false; 8 – false; 9 – true; 10 – false

Exercise 7.2

1 – Japanese plans to build an airfield at Lunga Point; 2 – six months, August 1942 to February 1943; 3 – their elite pilots; 4 – prevented Japanese being able to stop communications between US and Australia; 5 – Japanese now on the defensive/ made possible US advance north; 6 – extremely difficult climatic conditions/ terrible terrain/ disease; 7 – the capture of Port Moresby; 8 – 200 kms, from Port Moresby to Gona/ Buna; 9 – first Japanese defeat on land; 10 – August 1945

Exercise 8.1

1st – Macarthur departs the Philippines; 2nd – Guadalcanal campaign; 3rd – Operation Galvanic; 4th – Battle of Saipan; 5th – Battle of Leyte Gulf; 6th – Battle for Iwo Jima; 7th – Firebombing of Tokyo; 8th – Battle for Okinawa; 9th – Completion of the taking of the Philippines; 10th – Soviet Union declares war on Japan

Exercise 9.1

Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere – western – exploitation – brutality – slave – sex – comfort – oil – rubber – shortages – famine – Vietnam – the Philippines – Japanisation – Japanese – weakness – nationalist – Indonesia – Burma

Exercise 10.1

1 – Phibin; 2 – Ba Maw or Aung San; 3 – Jose Laurel or Luis Taruc; 4 – Sukarno; 5 – Decoux or Ho Chi Minh; 6 – Aung San or Ba Maw; 7 – Luis Tacruc or Jose Laurel; 8 – Ho Chi Minh or Decoux

Exercise 10.2

1 – false; 2 – true; 3 – false; 4 – true; 5 – true; 6 – false; 7 – false; 8 – true; 9 – false; 10 – true

Exercise 11.1

1 – wooden cities in flames/ destruction of homes/ factories/ hundreds of thousands dead; 2 – majority of people remained loyal to the Emperor and their troops; 3 – Japan’s brutal secret police; 4 – traditional neighbourhood associations; 5 – sharp fall, strict rationing, major food shortages by 1945; 6 – traditional role was to stay home/ dutiful wife/ now encouraged into factories and other war work; 7 – they were never told; 8 – subjected to nationalist propaganda/ many forced into war work/ younger ones evacuated; 9 – loyalty to the Emperor; 10 – General Tojo

Exercise 11.2

T	D	R	A	N	S	K	E	I	V
B	O	M	B	I	N	G	Z	E	B
H	O	K	I	N	A	W	A	K	I
S	L	I	Y	S	W	G	R	S	M
O	I	V	O	O	A	O	H	O	U
S	T	E	L	H	R	A	R	C	G
I	T	N	G	E	U	A	N	D	I
O	L	D	P	E	L	E	S	F	R
K	E	M	P	E	I	T	E	I	A
N	E	M	X	Z	A	Q	R	Y	N
P	W	G	K	W	L	T	O	J	O
G	N	I	N	O	I	T	A	R	T

Exercise 12.1

1 – false; 2 – false; 3 – true; 4 – false; 5 – true; 6 – true; 7 – true; 8 – false; 9 – false; 10 – true

Exercise 12.2

1 – opinion; 2 – fact; 3 – fact; 4 – opinion; 5 – opinion; 6 – fact; 7 – fact; 8 – opinion; 9 – opinion; 10 – fact

Exercise 13.1

Manhattan – atomic – Roosevelt – Truman – Japan – Little Boy – Hiroshima – 6 August – 80 000 – radiation – 9 August – Fat Boy – Nagasaki – Japanese – land – Kyushu – revenge – Stalin – Soviet Union – Cold War

Exercise 14.1

1st – Battle of the Coral Sea; 2nd – Battle of Midway; 3rd – Battle of Leyte Gulf; 4th – firebombing of Tokyo; 5th – surrender of Nazi Germany; 6th – Atomic bombing of Hiroshima; 7th – Soviet Union enters the war against Japan; 8th – Atomic bombing of Nagasaki; 9th – Hirohito's address to the nation; 10th – formal surrender of Japan

Exercise 15.1

1 – Potsdam; 2 – Joseph Keenan; 3 – William Flood Webb; 4 – A Class; 5 – B Class; 6 – C Class; 7 – Iwane Matsui; 8 – Sugamo; 9 – Arai Koei; 10 – Seiichi Okada

Exercise 16.1

1 – false; 2 – true; 3 – false; 4 – true; 5 – true; 6 – false; 7 – false; 8 – true; 9 – true; 10 – false