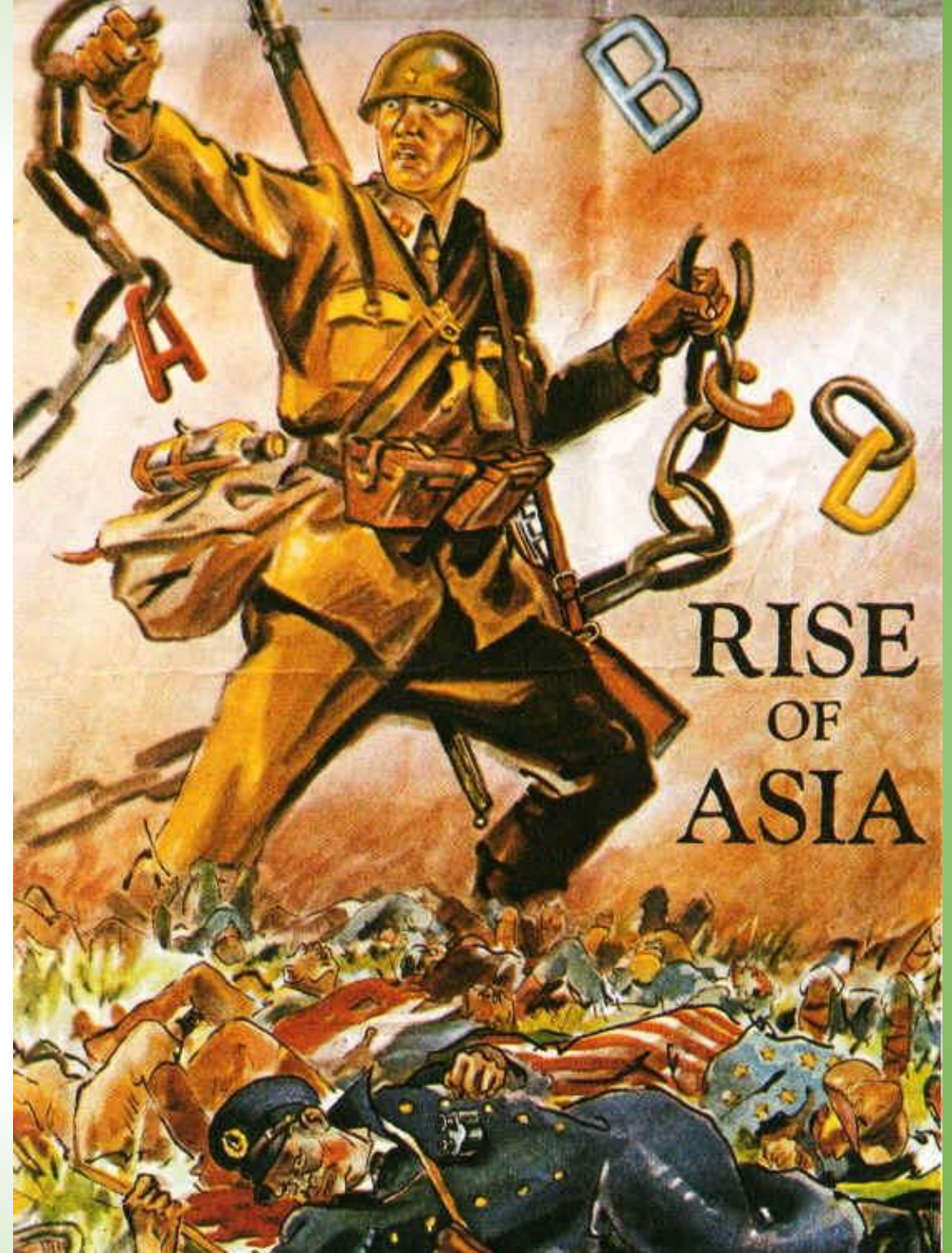


## SECTION 1.2

# Japanese Expansion in South-East Asia, 1931- 41

Causation, Change, Perspective



## Review:

- What led to opening up of Japan ?
- What would you say were the main reasons for growth of nationalism and militarism in Japan from 1860s to 1920s?
- How did Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 strengthen its position in Asia?
- What were the main reasons that Japanese nationalists were angered by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles?

....our first unit focused on Japan's rise as a modern nation state in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, through 1920's. Our next unit, focusing on Japanese Expansion in 1931-1941 will focus on nationalist and expansionist foreign policy that Japan pursued, which set the scene for the descent into global war (WWII). One of the skills emphasized in this unit is understanding historical perspectives, particularly, on why Japan ended up going to war with the USA.

## Japanese expansion in SE Asia – 1931-1941

Japan's foreign policy was defined by growing nationalism and growing power of the military, which led to deterioration of relationship in the West, intervention in China, and ultimately the attack on Pearl Harbour

- Different **perspectives** on why Japan and USA eventually went to war
  1. Argument that Japan aimed to dominate the region and so **war was inevitable**
  2. Japan wanted to expand its empire but would do so **through negotiation – war was avoidable**, but would be used by Japan if needed.
  3. Japan was **forced into war by USA and UK** who were determined to contain them in the region.



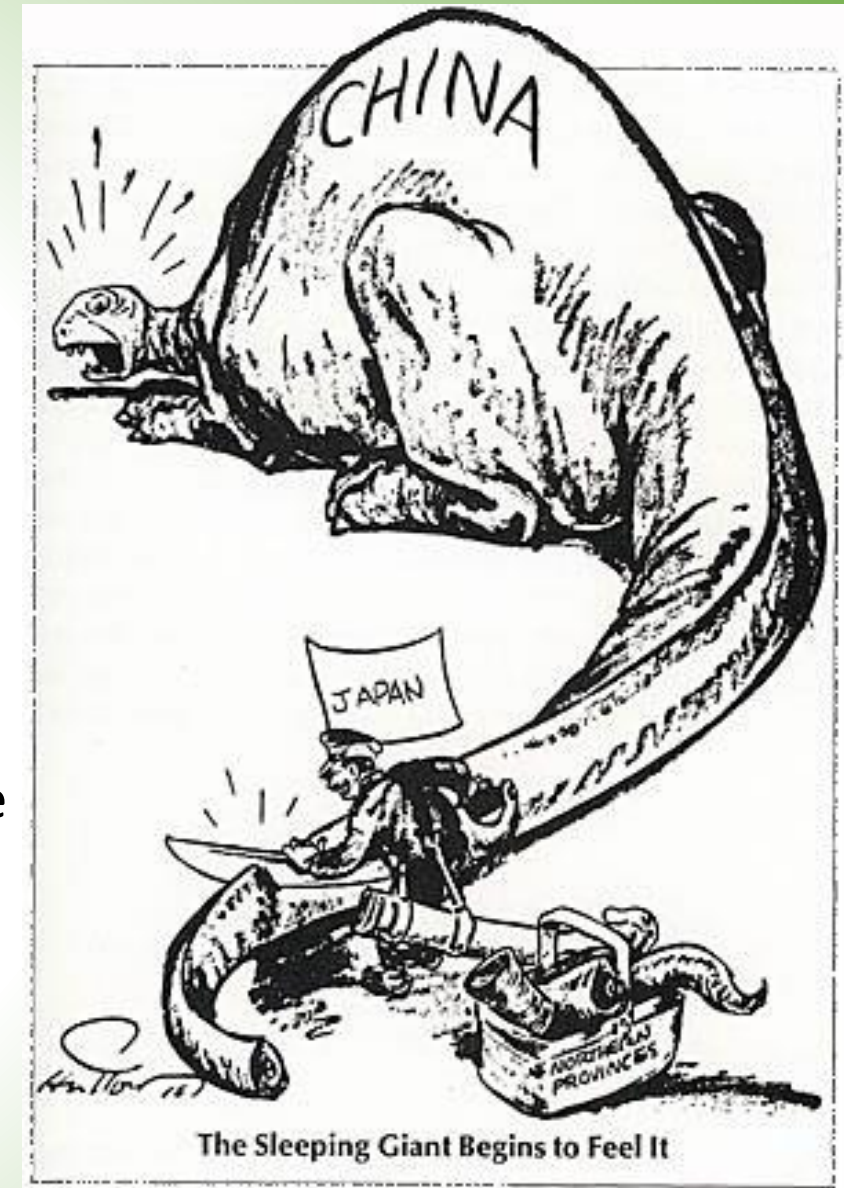
### Japanese Expansion Map Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Dk0nA5JCZE>

# Causes of Expansion

## 1. Political Instability in China:

- Instability in China made it appear as an easy option for Japanese expansion – since China’s “ability to resist” any external aggression was greatly reduced.
- In 1911 – **Nationalist Revolution in China** resulted in toppling down of the Manchu Dynasty, which was largely blamed for signing unequal treaties with Europeans and allowing them to dominate China.
- This resulted in creation of **Chinese Nationalist Party (GMD)** and eventual War Lord Period (1916 to 1928), during which military leaders fought for control of the country – this essentially meant collapse of central government
- Following WWI, in 1923, the newly established Communists and the GMD formed a **First United Front** – their goal was to unite China.
- In 1925, **Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek)** became the leader of the GMD – he decided to break the alliance with the communists, and turned this attention to “extermination campaign” to get rid of communist control in China
- Therefore, nationalists and communists **clashed in all-out civil war**, which from 1927 (war lasted until 1949) directed Jiang’s focus on fight against the communists rather than Japanese – this greatly impacted the actions of Japanese government and military.





- Jiang earned a mandate to rule by unifying China

# Causes of expansion

## 2. Japanese domestic issues before 1932: Political crises and the growth of the military:

- Chinese Northern Expedition was of concern to Japanese since they backed a warlord in Manchuria **Zhang Zoulin (Chang Tso-lin)**, who could have been defeated by Jiang. If Jiang defeated Zhang, this could impede Japanese interests in Manchuria.
- Japanese government wanted to use **Kwantung Army** (Japanese Army in Manchuria) to disarm Zhang, however some Kwantung Army leaders acted on their own and captured and assassinated Zhang in 1928
- Emperor ordered **Prime Minister Tanaka** to discipline the army, however, General Staff was unwilling to punish the perpetrators as they claimed it **would weaken the prestige of the army**. In July 1929, **Tanaka was forced to resign**. This proved that **the army could ignore the government with impunity, and this further undermined the democracy in Japan**
- Next PM, **Hamaguchi Yuko**, was elected upon the promise to end corruption, establish good relations with China, and disarmament – however events following the **Great Depression** weakened the government. Hamaguchi had to cut civilian and military salaries and he agreed to decisions made at **London Naval Disarmament conference to limit naval growth**. Military strongly disliked this; **in Nov. 1930, he was assassinated by a right wing radical**.



PM Hamaguchi

and

PM Tanaka



Osachi Hamaguchi (27<sup>th</sup> PM of Japan – survived assassination by ultra nationalists but died a few months later – 14 April 1931)





# Causes of expansion

## 3. Japanese domestic issues: Economic Crisis

- 1929 caused chaos in Japan - USA became protectionist and the **Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act** by Hoover increased the duties on Japanese goods by up to 200%, this reduced Japanese exports
- A reliance on silk as a cash crop hurt Japan as it fell in value by 80% - **this resulted in high unemployment and poverty**
- Expansion to Manchuria became the **'lifeline' and 'our only means of survival'**. Yosuke Matsuoko (foreign minister in 1940)
- Kwantung army wanted to take over Manchuria entirely. Despite an attempt to stop the Kwantung army plan to arrange a reason for takeover, they went through with their plan – undermining the Emperor – this led to Manchurian Incident (Mukden Incident) in 1931.



# Paper 1 Practice

- Saburo Ienaga, a Japanese historian, in an academic book *The Pacific War (Taiheiyo Senso) 1931-45*, page 129 (1968)

The imperial Army's march into Manchuria was presented as an act of self-defense to guard "Japan's lifeline", which had been acquired at great cost in blood and treasure in the Sino-Japanese and Russo Japanese wars. Next, north China and Inner Mongolia had to be controlled to guard Manchuria. Protecting these areas required further advances into the heartland of China. This pattern of ever-expanding military operations confirmed a truism about international conflict: once started, a war escalates uncontrollably in the quest for elusive victory. How could China be brought to its knees? That was an intractable problem.

## **First question, part a - 3 marks**

What points are made by Ienaga regarding the impact of Japan's takeover of Manchuria?

## **Second question – 4 marks**

With reference to its origin, purpose and content, assess the values and limitations of this source for historians studying the Manchurian crisis.



- **Commanding officer of the Kawantung Army General Honjo Shigeru called Manchuria 'Japans lifeline'. He also argued to the Lytton commission that **Japan was defending a weak area of China from a potential invasion by the USSR.****

# Events in Manchuria, 1931



# Manchurian incident- also known as the Mukden Incident

- **Manchuria** – was over four times the size of Japan, had low population and abundance of natural resources
- **18 September 1931** – a bomb exploded on the South Manchurian Railway (SMR) outside the leading city of Manchuria, Mukden. It was a minor incident – it did not even prevent trains from passing;
- The **Kwantung army claimed that Chinese blew up the railway**, this explosion created an excuse to attack Chinese forces in Manchuria and occupy all of Manchuria.
- **PM Wakatsuki's** government was trying to regain control and stop Kwantung's expansion into China, but Kwantung army did not follow orders from Tokyo, and expanded further.

# Why did they invade?

- Manchuria was China's Industrial Center— (90% of China's oil, 70% of its iron, 55% of its gold and 33% of its trade.)
- Japan's leaders were concerned about the chaos in China and sought to ensure their investment.





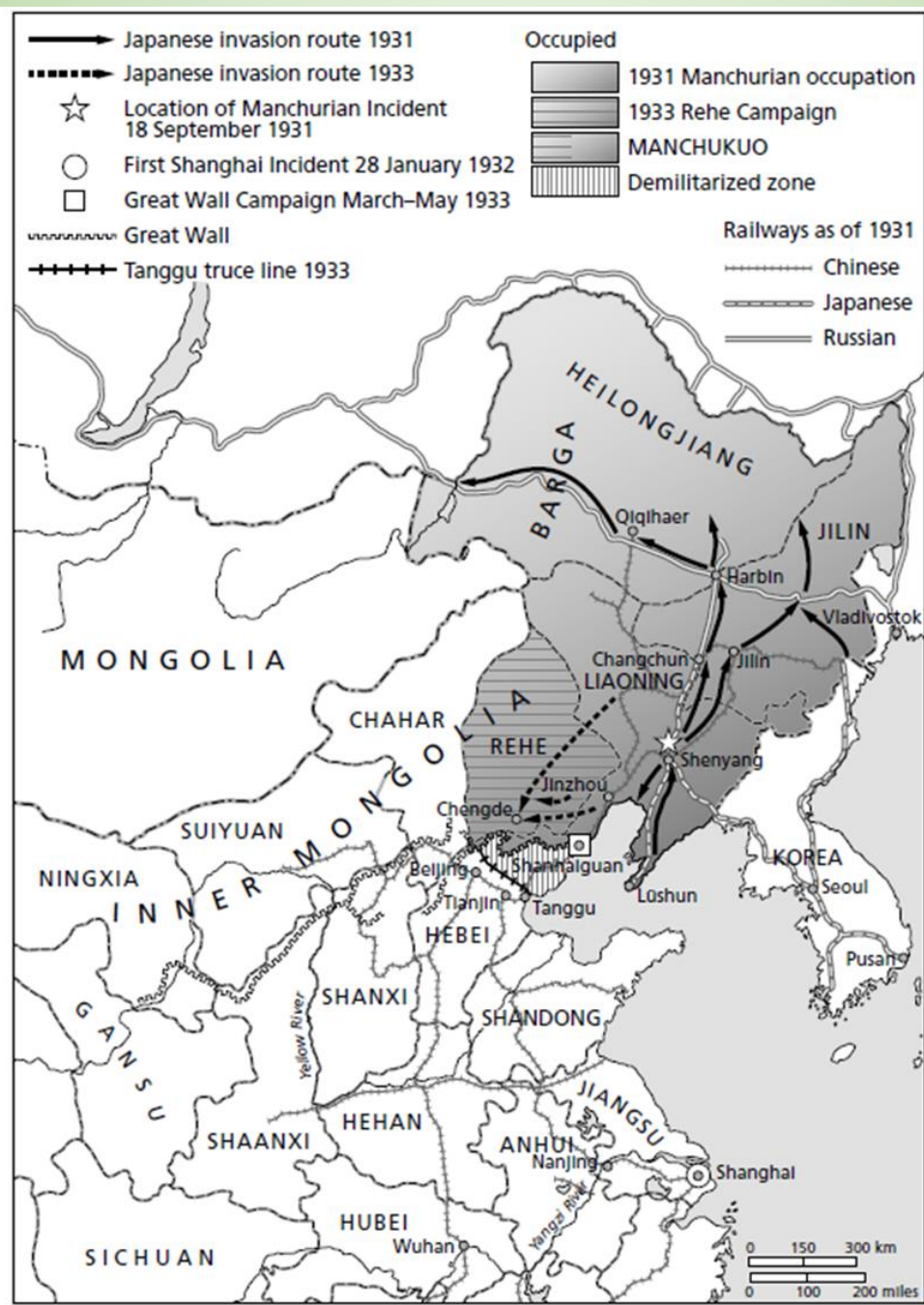
- Japanese experts inspect the scene of the 'railway sabotage' on South Manchurian Railway



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

- Chinese delegate addresses the League of Nations after the Mukden Incident in 1932.





Map 1 Regional War (1931–36): Japanese Invasion of Northern China.

# Paper 1 Practice: Question 2

- Source A:

*Although Japan has undoubtedly acted in a way contrary to the principles of the Covenant by taking the law into its own hands, she has a real grievance against China. This is not a case in which the armed forces of one country have crossed the frontiers of another in circumstances in which they had no previous right to be on the other's soil. Japan owns the South Manchurian Railway and has been entitled to have a body of Japanese guards upon the strip of land through which the railway runs. Japan's case is that she was compelled by the failure of China to provide reasonable protection to Japanese lives and property in Manchuria in the face of attacks by Chinese bandits, and of an attack upon the line itself, to move Japanese troops forward and to occupy points in Manchuria which are beyond the line of the railway.*

Extract from a memorandum by British Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, to the British Cabinet, 23 November 1931. quoted in Fellows, N. 2012. *Peacemaking, Peacekeeping: International Relations 1918-1936*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. P. 184.

**Question:** With reference to its origin, purpose and content, analyze the value and limitations of Source A for a historian studying why Japan was able to successfully occupy Manchuria in 1931.

# What were the results of the Manchurian crisis?

- **Results for International Relations:**

- 1930s saw **deterioration of relations with USA and UK** – they condemned Japanese actions in Manchuria, and that eventually **led to Japan leaving the League of Nations**
- **Kenneth Pyle**, a historian, said that Manchurian crisis was **a turning point for Japan** – It led to **Japanese isolation** because Japan **abandoned Washington Treaty System** – Japan perceived West as holding back the legitimate needs of Japan for racist reasons

- **Results for Manchuria and China:**

- Japan created an illusion that they had only helped Manchuria achieve independence from chaotic China – By 1932 Manchuria was **completely under Japanese control**; Japanese set up an independent government and called the **new state Manchukuo**.
- In 1932, conflict broke out between China and Japan in Shanghai – Japan bombed Shanghai and many civilians died – this intensified Chinese outrage and **inflamed Chinese nationalism**.
- By 1933 Japan controlled territory totalling more than France, Germany, Italy and Austria combined in Manchuria.



Emperor



Empress



MEMORIAL DAY MARCH 1, 1934  
EMPEROR & EMPRESS WHO HAVE  
RETURNED TO THE THRONE OF THEIR  
ANCESTOR'S STATE OF MANCHUKUO.



# What were the results of the Manchurian crisis?

## • Results for the Nationalist Party in China:

- China's response to the Manchurian crisis was **to call on the League of Nations-** Lord Lytton sent to investigate the incident - the **Lytton Report** took almost a year to publish.
- **Jieshi's** forces were ordered not to resist the invasion, since they realized Japanese forces were much better equipped.
- Chinese people were furious – they **boycotted Japanese goods**, however Japan continued expansion into China
- **Treaty of Tanggu** – China accepted Japanese control of Manchuria – Jiang thought Japan would soon get exhausted and stop fighting; he was basically “selling space to buy time” so he could focus on the communists.

## • Results for the Japanese Government:

- Japan **benefited economically** from the occupation of Manchuria – however the cost of sending troops to China was high, which forced them to increase tax
- Following the Manchurian crisis, there was little hope that Japanese government would gain upper hand in controlling the military, and there was a **huge public support for the Kwantung Army's actions in China.**

# Paper 1 Practice

## Source A

- An extract from Kenneth B. Pyle, *The Making of Modern Japan*, page. 189 (1996)

The weakness of the government, the diffuseness of decision-making power, the general confusion and uncertainty attending both the domestic and foreign turmoil – all created an opportunity for resolute action by the Kwantung Army. It pushed ahead to conquer all of Manchuria and establish a Japanese puppet state, Manchukuo. Wakatsuki resigned and was replaced by a Seiyukai cabinet headed by Inukai Tsuyoshi. It was the last party government in pre-war Japan.

**1, A: According to Source A, why was the Kwantung Army able to seize control of Manchuria?**

**1, A: According to Source B, what problems did Wakatsuki face in responding to events in Manchuria?**

**2. Compare and contrast the views in Source A and Source B regarding the weakness of the Japanese government during the Manchurian Crisis.**

## Source B

- Prime Minister, Wakatsuki's appeal to the secretary of the respected Prince Saionji Kinmochi in 1931

**I am not being kept informed by either the Foreign Ministry or the Army Ministry ... I have just warned them through Chief of Cabinet Secretary Kawasaki ... The Chinese forces in Manchuria and Mongolia number more than two hundred thousand [sic] while we have only some ten thousand. I asked the army minister, "What are you going to do if, by chance, your challenge causes something you haven't anticipated – something that given you are so outnumbered you can't stop?" The army minister told me, "We'll send in troops from Korea... indeed, they may have already gone in. " I rebuked him" How can you allow dispatch of soldiers from Korea without government authorization? " He said, "Well, the fact is that during the Tanaka cabinet [1927-29] troops were dispatched without imperial sanction. " I gathered he had not foreseen any problem at all... under these circumstances I am quite powerless to restrain the military. How can his majesty's military act without his sanction? What can I do? Maybe I should not be talking to you like this, but can you do anything? ... I am in serious trouble.**

Cited in *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, page 236, by Herbert P. Bix

# Cartoons - Manchuria



Evening Standard Jan 1933

## Years of Turmoil: The Descent into “the Dark Valley”

After 1932, there was division between government and military as well as divisions within the military, which led to further destabilization of Japan.



# Japanese Domestic issues after 1932 – Political crisis and growing influence of the military

- Two main groups/factions developed within the military

<b>Imperial Way Faction – Koda-ha</b>	<b>Control Faction – Tosei-Ha</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Radical</li><li>✓ Believed in military dictatorship that would deliver state socialism</li><li>✓ Soviet Union seen as main enemy</li><li>✓ War with USSR seen as inevitable</li><li>✓ “Strike North” – expand into Siberia and beyond</li><li>✓ Conquest of Manchuria necessary</li><li>✓ National spirit over material force</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Moderate</li><li>✓ Against terrorism to remove the government</li><li>✓ Wanted good relations with USSR</li><li>✓ Objective - they supported conquest in China, but that required modernization of army and military</li></ul>

- As part of this struggle for power within the Japanese military, **assassination plots** destabilized the government between 1932 and 1936
- **May 1932- May 15 Incident** – army and navy officers attacked banks, party offices and the police headquarters in Tokyo – **Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi** was shot and killed. The trials of conspirators showed that there was wide public support for their actions
- **February 1936** – 1500 Koda-ha officers marched into Tokyo, took over the parliament buildings, police headquarters and Prime Minister's residence – they brutally murdered many officers
- Martial law was proclaimed and the plotters decided to surrender (after emperor stated he would not support coup d'état)
- From then on members of the Tosei-ha were most important members in army planning.
- One effect of this plot **was to make political leaders wary of opposing the military**, thus the result of the attempted coup **was to greatly increase army influence over the government.**

Inukai Tsuyoshi 13 December  
1931 – [15 May 1932](#)



# Paper 1 Practice:

## Source A:

The following is taken from historian Mikiso Hane's book *Japan, A Short History* (Oneworld Publications, 2015, pp.141-42)

One of the officers arrested and put on trial for Inukai's assassination reflected the anguish felt by many soldiers who saw an enormous gap between the seemingly extravagant lifestyle in the cities and impoverished lives of the peasants in rural villages. He said,

- *"In utter disregards of the poverty stricken farmers, the enormously rich zaibatsu pursue their private profit. Meanwhile, the young children of the impoverished farmers of the north eastern provinces attend school without breakfast, and their families subsist on rotten potatoes."*

## Source B:

**Jonathan N. Lipman is a professor of history. The following is taken from his essay 'Imperial Japan: 1894-1945'(2008)**

*"Young men, both military officers and their colleagues in civilian organizations such as the Kokuryukai (Amur River Society), expressed their nationalist passions through assassinations of politicians, industrialists, intellectuals, and others who did not conform to their right standards of "pure Japanese" behavior and beliefs. Prime Minister Hamaguchi was murdered at Tokyo Station in 1930, and Prime Minister Inukai was killed in 1932. Both assassinations were perpetrated by ultranationalists with the corruption of party politics and eager for Japan to be driven by their own heroic values, which were expressed most obviously in the military and the drive to dominate Japan's neighbors, especially China.*

1. *With reference to the origin, purpose and content, analyze the value and limitations of source A to historians studying post-World War I politics in Japan.*
2. *To what extent does source A support the reasons given in Source B for the assassinations of political leaders?*

- **Hirota Koki 1936-37** – became PM after the plot
- He was **weak, and made many compromises** with the military. In May 1936 he agreed that ministers of army and navy have to be serving officers;
- He also signed **Anti-Comintern Pact with Hitler** -If attacked by USSR, Germany and Japan will consult each other for protection. Japan never had Fascist government – they even held elections during WWII (central idea – to oppose communism) Japanese became “Honorary Aryans”
- **June 1937 – prince Konoye** took over the government (after the Diet removed Hirota) – the goal was to restrain the army – but he wasn’t successful either.
- **General Tojo Hideki** – became chief of staff of **Kwantung Army** – and within six weeks of Konoye’s taking the power, he ordered the invasion of China. Konoye could not do anything to stop the war.

# Signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact



# Paper 1 Practice

## Source A:

**Eri Hotta is a Japanese historian who was educated in Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The following extract is taken from her book *Japan 1941***

*“To many in Japan, the Western support garnered [gathered] by Jian [...] represented a betrayal [...] By the end of the 1920s, Japan was equally obsessed with the rise of Bolshevism [...] All these factors compelled Ishiwara and his followers to go far beyond the call of duty to invade Manchuria. Their reckless initiative came as a surprise to most leaders in Tokyo, though the plotters may well have had supporters in the higher ranks of the Army General Staff. At the beginning of the campaign, [Japanese} Prime Minister Wakatsuki Reijiro [...] wanted to contain hostilities. Japanese public opinion, however, fuelled by a jingoistic [nationalistic] media, keenly supported Ishiwara’s adventures.*

***Eri Hotta, Japan 1941, Vintage Books, USA, 2014, p. 45***

## Source B:

**Jonathan Fenby is a British writer, journalist, and analyst. Here is an extract from his book *The Penguin History of Modern China: the fall and Rise of a great Power*.**

*“A leading politician, Prince Konoé [he later became prime minister] thought it ‘only natural for China to sacrifice itself for the sake of Japan’s social and industrial needs.’ Rising unemployment under the impact of the Great Depression, growing hardships at home and food problems made expansion across the sea all the more attractive. For those who had envisaged an anti-communist crusade, the north-east was an ideal springboard for an attack on the Soviet Union.*

***Jonathan Fenby, The Penguin History of Modern China: The fall and Rise of a Great Power, Penguin, UK, 2009, P. 231***

## Question 1:

**Compare and contrast the views expressed in Sources A and B on the reasons for the Manchurian Incident of 1931.**

# The Second Sino Japanese War, 1937

- On 7 July 1937, a full-scale war broke out between China and Japan.
- It started at the Marco Polo Bridge (just north of Beijing) when a Japanese soldier went missing during a patrol and the Japanese Army demanded to search the Chinese section. When the Chinese refused, both sides opened fire.
- there is little evidence showing that it was deliberately set up by the Japanese.
- **Prince Konoye** tried to contain the army, but unsuccessfully. Despite government's disagreements, **reinforcements were sent to China from Korea**, and this led to full scale war with China.



Marco Polo Bridge



# Sino-Japanese War, 1937

- Japan had expected the war to end quickly but it dragged on for years; The war used up nearly all of Japan's resources.
- Japanese forces were **brutal** and terrorized the Chinese population – this forced people to flee inland; potentially the largest exodus in history
- Chinese nationalist government moved its capital from Beijing to Nanjing, but abandoned it as Japanese advanced - Nanjing fell to Japanese on **Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> 1937** – what followed were terrible atrocities of civilians, which became known as **Rape of Nanjing**

## Results of the war for the Japanese:

- Japanese government **hoped that China would quickly capitulate** – this undermined the extent of Chinese nationalism and the outrage caused the Rape of Nanjing
- Chinese refused to negotiate terms of peace, this meant that Japan had to fight further into the interior



# Rape of Nanjing

“There followed in Nanjing a period of terror and destruction that must rank among the worst in history of modern warfare. For almost seven weeks the Japanese troops, who first entered the city on December 13<sup>th</sup>, unleashed on the defeated Chinese troops and the helpless Chinese civilian population a storm of violence and cruelty that has few parallels. The female rape victims, many of whom died after repeated assaults, were estimated by foreign observers at 30,000; the fugitive soldiers killed were estimated at 30,000; murdered civilians at 12,000. Robbery, wanton destruction and arson left much of the city in ruins”.

***Spence, J. 1990. The Search for Modern China***



- Bodies of victims along Qinhuai River out of Nanjing's west gate during Nanjing Massacre.

Second Sino Japanese  
War



- Japan 1931-1938

- In October of 1941 Konoye resigned and **General Tojo Hedeki** (who was leading the Kwantung army) became Prime Minister, placing military in complete control of the country
- In 1940, Japan also advanced to seize European colonies in Asia, since Europeans were busy fighting fascist advances in WWII – this was necessary for the Japanese because of running out of resources



Tojo Hadeki

## Events 1940-41

### The Three Power/Tripartite Pact and the Neutrality Pact

- **September 1940** – Japanese under foreign minister **Matsuoka Yosuke**, signed the **Tripartite Axis Pact**, which agreed that **Germany and Italy would dominate Europe and leave Japan to dominate East Asia**
- Japan was also able to **secure its northern border** after signing a pact with **Soviet Union in 1941**, which became known as **Neutrality Pact**
- Victories of Nazis in Europe created great opportunities for Japan to **take over colonies** of Britain, France and Netherlands. Japan invaded the colonies in August 1941. **USA and Britain were alarmed and immediately froze all Japanese assets** and this brought foreign trade with Japan to a halt
- It seems that Japan entered the war with China without a clear plan on how to end it – **Japan was still fully engaged in war with China when it attacked Western colonies in Nov. 1941**



In September 1940, Japan, Italy, and Germany sign the Tripartite Pact.

Photo: AP/Wide World



TRIPARTITE PACT

"Hear no good!" "See no good!" "Speak no good!"

- The Tripartite Pact, also known as the Berlin Pact, was an agreement between Germany, Italy and Japan signed in Berlin on 27 September 1940 by, respectively, Adolf Hitler, Galeazzo Ciano and Saburō Kurusu. It was a defensive military alliance that was eventually joined by others.



# Neutrality Pact



# Pearl Harbor and the Outbreak of the War

# Why did Japan attack Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> 1941?

- **Economic concerns:**

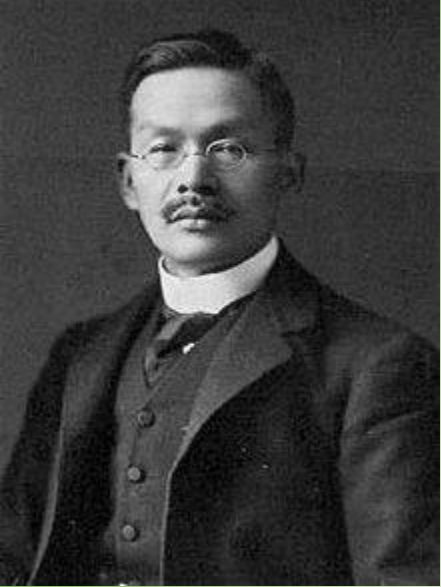
- Economic embargo placed on Japan would be fatal for Japan in the long term – Japan could not sustain the war with China, and its supplies were cut off.
- **Negotiations between Japan and USA continued through 1941** – Washington wanted Japan to respect territorial integrity of its neighbors, and pursue its policies by peaceful means as well as continue with “open door trade policy”.
- Japan could not agree to these demands

- While negotiating with USA, Japan also made **alternative plans**, which were **agreed upon on September 4<sup>th</sup> 1941**

- Empire would prepare for war, while taking all possible diplomatic measures; however if their demands were not met by **October 10<sup>th</sup>**, they would commence hostilities against, US, GB and Netherlands.

- **On Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>**, final imperial conference, **Privy Council President Hara** (advisor to the emperor) said that they cannot accept all American demands, and they can't continue the status quo – he recognized that it was inevitable that Japan must start war with the USA
- **On Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>**, **Japanese bombers attacked US ships** and installations at **Pearl Harbor** in an attempt to destroy the US Pacific Fleet
- The attack incurred huge losses for the USA – **90% of the mid-Pacific air and sea power was destroyed or damaged**. However, Japanese had not destroyed the US aircraft carrier capability
- US Government was outraged – negotiating on one end and attacking on the other was perceived as **deceitful**.
- The attack **killed 2403 and injured 1178**





## Privy Council President – 11/2/41

*“It is impossible, from the standpoint of our present political situation and our self-preservation, to accept all the American demands. On the other hand we can not let the present situation continue. If we miss the present opportunity to go to war, we will have to submit to American dictation. Therefore, I recognize that it is inevitable that we must decide to start a war with the US. I will put my trust in what I have been told, namely things will go well in the early part of the war; and that we will experience increasing difficulties as the war progresses, there is some prospect of success” – President Hara*

# Pearl Harbor

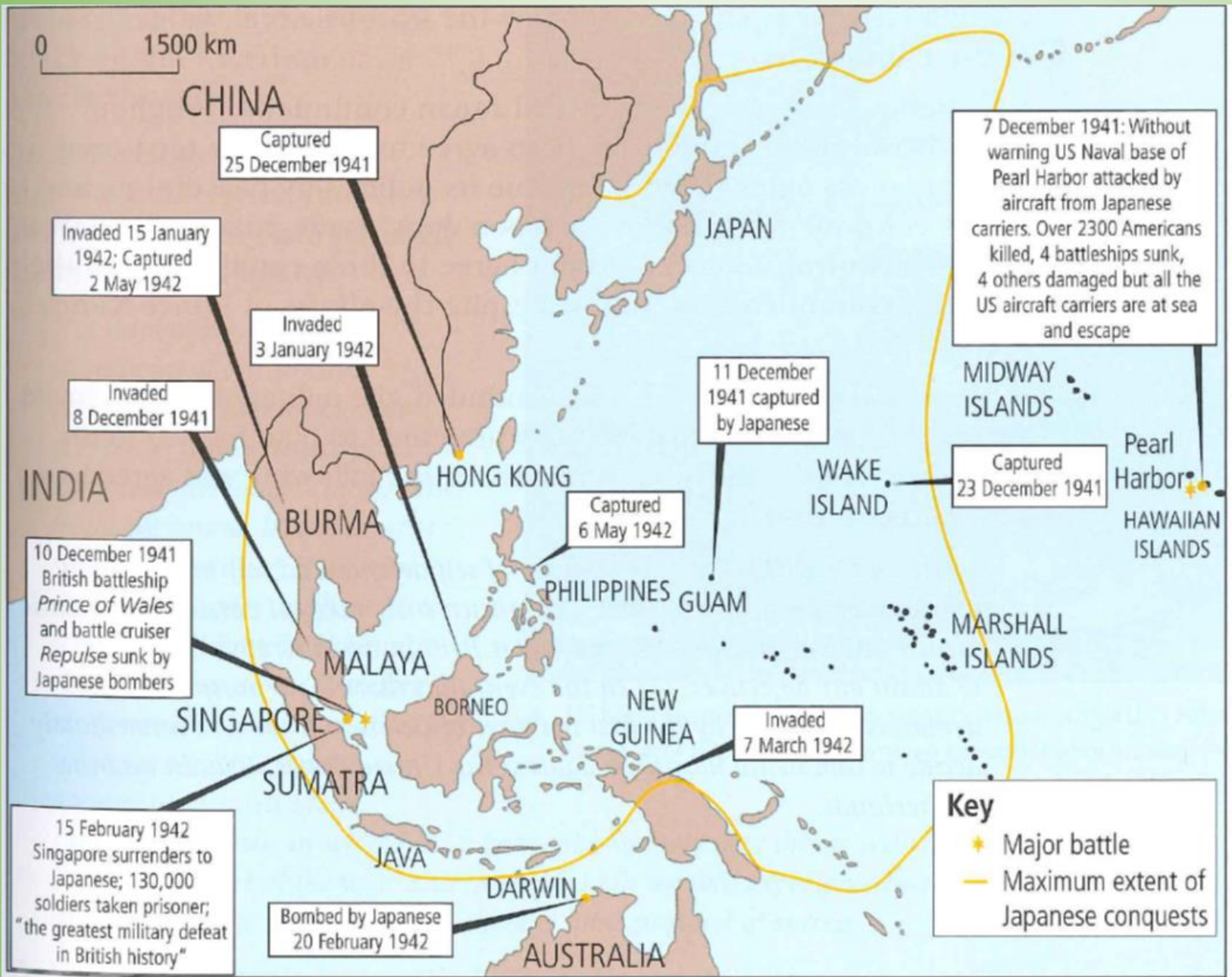
Dec. 7, 1941



© PlanetWare

- **Japanese historian Michiko Hasegawa** argues that the attack on Pearl Harbor was caused by the oil embargo, which forced Japan into War
- **Revisionist** historians claim that Roosevelt deliberately provoked Japan into attacking
- As they attacked Pearl Harbor, Japan simultaneously attacked Hong Kong and Singapore – then went on to attack Dutch East Indies, Philippines and Malaya on Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>.
- By mid 1942, Japan took control over Indo-China, Siam, Dutch East Indies, Malaya, Singapore, Guam and the Philippines





▲ Japanese expansion, December 1941–May 1942



# Perspectives - Historiography

- **Left-wing Japanese historians** date the beginning of the war in the Pacific as 1931 – with the Manchurian incident. The left in Japan tend to hold the “militarist capitalist clique” responsible for a “15 year war”.
- **Right-wing historians in Japan** identify December 1941 as the starting point of the “Great East Asia War” - Japan was freeing Asia from the exploitation of Western colonialism. Japan had been forced into war with the USA by the oil embargo. Some historians on the far right even argument that Rape of Nanking was a fiction (Masaaki Tanaka).
- **Orthodox Historians in the USA** argue that the Pacific War began in 1937 after the Marco Polo Bridge incident. Japan waged the war of aggression and expansion. Pearl Harbor is the key evidence of Japan’s aggression. Japan held solely responsible for the war in the Pacific.
- **Revisionist US Historians** argued that Japan’s actions up to 1941 were primarily aimed at purging Asia from Western corruption. Some suggest that as the USA did not act to resist Japan in China in the 1930s, it encouraged Japanese actions.
- **Traditionalist** historians claim that emperor of Japan did not want war but he had no choice but to submit to the militarists.